



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

7A
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: September 10, 2024

Title of Item: Request Public Hearing- CDBG-CV Broadband Grant

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	Action Requested: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing*
Submitted by: Mark Jeffers		Department: Administration
Presenter (Name and Title): Mark Jeffers, Economic Development Coordinator		Estimated Time Needed: 10 minutes
Summary of Issue: CDBG-CV Broadband Grant closure requires a final public hearing once construction is completed. All construction is complete as of 7-23-24.		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:		
Recommended Action/Motion: Schedule public hearing to review the ordinance. Suggested public hearing date and time: September 24, 2024 @ 10:30am.		
Financial Impact: <i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i> <i>Is this budgeted?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>		

Legally binding agreements must have County Attorney approval prior to submission.

MINNESOTA SMALL CITIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

MONITORING REPORT

Aitkin County

Broadband Last Mile

CARE-21-0011-O-FY21

Prepared by Chris Nordeng

August 12, 2024

**Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Division of Business and Community Development
Office of Community Finance
Great Northern Building 12th Floor,
180 East Fifth Street,
Saint Paul, MN 55101**

INTRODUCTION

On August 8, 2024 Chris Nordeng from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Business and Community Development Division (BCD) met with Mark Jeffers, Aitkin County Economic Development Coordinator, at the Aitkin County Courthouse. The purpose of the visit was for on-site monitoring of the Small Cities Development Program, (SCDP-CV) Grant CARE-21-0011-O-FY21 in the areas of Grant Management, Financial Management, Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Employment, Environmental, Public facilities, and Labor Standards. An exit meeting was conducted on August 16, 2024.

GRANT MANAGEMENT

Relevant grant documents were found in the files that are maintained by Aitkin County. These included the approved application, signed agreement, contract between the County and Mille lacs Energy Cooperative, annual progress reports and reimbursement request forms that were submitted to DEED. All policies and plans were in order. These included Residential Anti-Displacement, Drug-Free Workplace, Prohibition of Excessive Force policies, Section 3 plan, and Fair Housing plan.

Annual reports have reported fair housing activities for 2023, and 2024.

Upon grant closeout, all grant records will be maintained by the county for six years after the grant closeout.

There is no findings or concerns in this area.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Copies of all pay request to DEED were located. Invoices and copies of cancelled checks and lien waivers were provided documenting SCDP payments. Disbursement requests were being signed by authorized personnel.

Two randomly selected disbursements were sampled. There were adequate supporting documentation of the expenditures and no evidence of ineligible costs. All expenditures were incurred during the grant period.

Single audit report (A-133) for fiscal year ending December 31, 2023, and 2024 will need to be submitted as federal funds exceeded the reporting threshold. This will be reported in the final annual report.

The County had followed local and federal government requirements on all procurements and has inserted all the contract requirements stated in the grant agreement in their contracts.

All grantee's staff costs charged to the grant are supported by time distribution records. There was no indirect cost charged to the grant.

There is no findings or concerns in this area.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Aitkin County has taken affirmative steps to solicit contracts with small, minority-owned business and women-owned businesses through marketing and flyers.

Bid documents and contracts contain Executive Order 11246 and Uniform Administrative Requirements pertaining to Minority/Women Business Enterprises Contracting.

There is no findings or concerns in this area.

ENVIRONMENTAL

A centralized file was maintained by Aitkin County and all records were reviewed for accuracy. DEED clearance letter and authority to use funds was in the Counties environmental review records.

No draws from DEED were made for any construction-related expenses before the date of the environmental clearance.

The Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds received a comment from SHPO that did not require a response or result in a change/adjustment to the project.

There were no Findings or Concerns in this area.

CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC FACILITY

Construction of public facility must meet the federal objectives of benefit to low and moderate income on an area basis or meet urgent Community Development Need.

The goal for public facility activity is the construction broadband last mile. The broadband project for last mile has been completed.

HUD LMI mapping was reviewed to determine that over 51% of the community is LMI. The income limits used for the county were 2011-2015 income limits. The federal objective was met with 54.88% benefiting LMI households.

Bid specifications were available for review. There were no changes in the project since the application or the grant agreement.

Federal debarment checks were being performed on contractors. Section 3 certification forms and Women or Minority-Owned business reporting forms from contractors were being collected.

Chris Nordeng conducted an on-site visit on completed project.

There are no concerns in this area.

LABOR STANDARDS

Federal Labor standards rules must apply to projects using SCDP-CV funds that involve public facility improvements. Compliance with Davis Bacon and related Acts must be met.

Labor Standards were reviewed for public facility improvements. Labor Standards provision (HUD 4010) and correct wage decision were attached to the bid packets and construction contracts.

Labor Standards notice; notice of contract award and contractor/subcontractor certifications were in the file. Final compliance report will be submitted once the project is closed.

Administrator had conducted interviews and documentation shows that the correct wage decision, HUD 4010 forms and "Notice to All Employees" had been posted at the job site.

Payrolls were submitted weekly. Interviews were completed and compared to payroll reports received. Additional classification requested is listed in the payrolls. Restitution was not necessary on the available payrolls.

There were no Findings or Concerns in these areas.

SUMMARY

I wish to thank Mark Jeffers for his assistance and cooperation during the monitoring visit. The project has been administered successfully to date and the completed project will have a clear impact on the County.