

*Public Hearing
NYS CDBG Application – 2025 Program Year
July 24, 2025*

The Public Hearing on public comments on Tioga County's community development needs, and discussion on the possible submission of one or more Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications for the 2025 program year was called to order by the Chair at 10:02 A.M. Legislators Aronstam, Brown, Bunce, Ciotoli, Monell, Roberts, Sauerbrey, and Standinger were present with Legislator Flesher being absent.

There were five people in attendance.

The Clerk read the legal notice as published in the official newspapers.

Sara Zubalsky-Peer, Economic Development Specialist spoke. "The New York State Homes and Community Renewal allows funds from the government for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. It can assist us in projects ranging from infrastructure like water and sanitary upgrades, home repair grants, public facilities improvements for senior centers and community centers, and demolition of blighted structures under their Administration Program. It can also help with small business loans.

"We are holding this public hearing to allow us to receive input to apply for these funds for potentially multiple projects. It is only available to municipalities, so cities, towns, villages, and counties are the applicants, but we have the ability to sub-grant the funds. So, in this case, one of the projects is the demolition of blighted projects for the Land Bank and as part of the process we solicit public input if anyone has any suggestions for projects that might fall under the eligibility criteria."

Legislator Monell spoke. "How much is the grant for? What is the dollar amount?"

Sara Zubalsky-Peer spoke. "We do not have a set dollar amount at this point. We have to go through this process first to see what potential projects come in and then a dollar amount will be established for the application."

Legislator Aronstam spoke. "Is this the program where different municipalities seek a certain amount of dollars where you grant the funds and they administer it or is it for a specific project?"

Sara Zubalsky-Peer spoke. "We have to apply for specific projects under those different categories. The funds would come to the County and then the County would sub-grant to the municipalities."

Chair Sauerbrey spoke. "Sara, have you received any input regarding the pull back or slowing down of funds because I was reading there is a potential cut back in CDBG funds and delay in funding?"

Sara Zubalsky-Peer spoke. "We reached out to Homes and Community Renewal and their consultant and at this time the funds are currently still there, so they are accepting these applications under this round of funding. They are not sure about future funding availability."

Chair Sauerbrey spoke. "I am thinking that you have specific plans in mind for the Land Bank. All the money seems to have shifted to housing apart from manufacturing. The Land Bank is the one that can apply for funding to get projects done. Over all the years I have been here, I have watched this economic development process. For years, it was manufacturing where we did the Best Buy, Fed Ex, Crown Cork & Seal projects. Now, it has changed to housing, and this is where the funding is directed so the Land Bank now is very active and has a great opportunity to make headway in the community by cleaning up housing, rehabilitation of housing, etc."

Legislator Roberts spoke. "Do they have plans for standing infrastructure like sewer and water for these sights or funding to upgrade?"

Sara Zubalsky-Peer spoke. "Right now, all the sights we have in our inventory already have access to all utilities. Under this, we are specifically looking to subsidize the demolition costs of some of the properties we are acquiring because it would free up our Land Bank Initiative funding, which is much more flexible, so we can apply this funding and put it to other project costs. At this time, we do not have any plans to do infrastructure under our current grant funds."

Legislator Brown spoke. "How many properties are you looking to demolish?"

Sara Zubalsky-Peer spoke. "Right now, we have two properties, but we might have additional ones."

Legislator Aronstam spoke. "Do you put requests out to the municipalities to determine what blighted properties they have?"

Sara Zubalsky-Peer spoke. "I believe ED&P Director Woodburn has done some outreach. Right now, we are basically dealing with properties within our

current inventory because of the recent Supreme Court case. There have been complications on how they can receive properties from local municipalities, so we have not pursued that avenue at this point. This specifically is for properties currently in our portfolio."

Legislator Bunce spoke. "You mentioned the Supreme Court decision that changed the way you receive properties. Can you explain this?"

Sara Zubalsky-Peer spoke. "There was a Supreme Court case that occurred where someone came in after the fact when a County did a foreclosure process and gave properties to their Land Bank. Someone came in and stated they actually had a right to that property after the fact saying the County made a profit of the property, so now it changed the rules that generally the property has to go through two public auctions and not sell at the auction before the County can give the property to the Land Bank."

There being no further comments, the hearing was adjourned at 10:12 A.M.