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# Shelby - Utica News



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# Shelby, Utica dispense federal grant money for community development

BY SARAH WOJCIK

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SHELBY TOWNSHIP/UTICA — Both Shelby Township and Utica participated in the 2016 Community Development Block Grant program. Macomb County receives money from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and distributes it to 21 of its smaller municipalities.

Shelby Township received \$173,217, with \$37,054 available for public service agencies. The county also deducted \$6,250 for its Chore Program from Shelby. Utica received \$11,266, with \$2,817 available for public service agencies.

Shelby Township Planner Glenn Wynn said a number of township residents participate in the Chore Program, which is administered by the Macomb County Community Services Agency and provides home maintenance

assistance for residents ages 60 and older who meet income eligibility guidelines.

The CDBG program, previously run in a revolving three-year cycle, returned to distributing the money annually this year, so communities saw smaller allocations than in the recent past. Officials said federal funds varied over the years, so certain municipalities would receive more than others on the staggered three-year schedule.

Wynn said the federal government in 1977 established the CDBG program, which uses taxpayer dollars authorized by Congress. The funds are distributed according to population and other factors, he said.

The money can be used for brick-and-mortar projects or public service agencies, provided that they meet one of three objectives. The programs must benefit low- or moderate-income residents, address blight or address urgent com-

munity needs, Wynn said.

Macomb County must vet and approve each project and service agency, and each service agency must petition municipalities in order to receive financial assistance.

Based on Wynn's recommendation, the Shelby Township Board of Trustees voted unanimously Feb. 16 to disburse \$30,500 of

its available \$37,054 to public service agencies — \$4,000 to the Shelby Township Senior Center, \$3,000 to the Shelby Township Library, \$3,000 to MCREST, \$3,000 to Turning Point, \$3,000 to Care House, \$3,000 to Samaritan House, \$5,000 to the Shelby Township Lions Club, \$3,000 to Macomb Literacy Partners, \$1,500

to the Macomb Warming Center and \$2,000 to the Hope Center in Macomb.

“On one hand, it’s a joy that these organizations exist and come in here to let us know what their needs are,” Shelby Township Supervisor Rick Stathakis said. “On the other hand, that we need these

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# Money

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kinds of services and that 650 people need a meal here in Shelby Township is a wake-up call.”

The township allotted its remaining \$136,467 to the construction of a sidewalk on the west side of Hixson Avenue, between Auburn and Durham roads. Without sidewalks, residents are forced to use the street to walk or bike through the neighborhood. The situation is dangerous because a concrete plant exists at the north end of Hixson, which generates significant volumes of truck traffic.

On Feb. 9, the Utica City Council unanimously agreed to disburse its \$2,817 evenly between seven agencies — \$402.43 to Wigs for Kids, Care House, Macomb Literacy Partners, Turning Point, Play Place for Autistic Children, MCREST and the Utica Pioneers, Utica's senior citizen group.

“Each (agency) has merits and values to the community,” said Utica Mayor Pro Tem Kenneth Sikora, who ran the meeting in Mayor Jacqueline Noonan's absence. “(Splitting it evenly gives each) more than they came in with before they got here, and that would be somewhat fair — the best we can be to everybody.”

The city allotted its remaining funds for interior improvements, including carpeting, to common areas of the city-owned senior housing complex, Riverside 175.