

**Town of Malden
CDBG Public Hearing
MINUTES
May 20, 2021**

MAYOR'S OPENING REMARKS:

Let's get started, please. **ALL PARTICIPANTS SHOULD NOTE THIS HEARING IS BEING RECORDED AND A LINK TO THE RECORDING WILL BE POSTED ONLINE AT MALDENWA.ORG BY MAY 27.**

Welcome, everyone, to the Town of Malden Public Hearing regarding the town's planned applications for state grant funds to help construct a fire station/town hall building and planning fees for a town park, in-town trail system that connects with the trailhead for the Great American Rail-Trail (locally known as the Palouse to Cascades Trail), development of the trailhead area, and an RV park.

We are hosting this hearing to tell you about both of these projects, answer your questions about the projects, and hear any concerns you may have about the projects or other community needs.

Information about the projects being submitted and about the hearing have been made available on the town's website and hard copies have been available at town hall. Please note that we only have an hour this evening and if we do not get to your question or concern, you may email us at townofmaldenwa@gmail.com or stop by and see me (or Micki) at town hall by Friday, May 28 at 5:00 pm. You can also write down your questions or concerns and drop them at town hall.

Please also note that if you have extensive questions or comments, for the sake of the time allotted and to give as many people as possible the chance to speak, you may be asked to submit your questions/concerns in writing to the mayor or town clerk (by the May 28 deadline).

The town has adopted a grievance procedure and will refer to this procedure if necessary regarding any feedback or questions about the projects being submitted to the state. This procedure is available for residents to review at town hall during business hours and will be posted on the town's website.

Jody Opheim, grant manager for the LTRO, will now take a few minutes to explain the CDBG program, what projects are eligible for funding, and what the town has selected for funding given the restrictions and Malden's particular situation. **Please hold any questions until I open the floor for public comment as this information may help answer any questions you have.**

- 1. What is CDBG?** The Community Development Block Grant program is funded by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to benefit low- and moderate-income residents through city and county projects. CDBG grants to entities in Whitman County are administered through the Washington State Department of Commerce. There are several different kinds of grants, but Malden will be applying for two General Purpose grants, one for construction and one for planning.
- 2. What can these particular funds be used for?** The state has prioritized its general purpose grants for sewer, water and transportation activities that address public health and safety, community facilities, economic development, affordable housing (but NOT new housing construction), and certain planning activities. Funds CANNOT be used to construct government buildings, such as town offices, maintenance shop, or a post office.
- 3. What projects does the town want to have considered for CDBG funding?** For the General Purpose construction grant application, the town is requesting the maximum \$900,000 toward the cost of building a fire station, which will include 4 vehicle bays, work space for public safety vehicles and equipment maintenance, public safety equipment and supply storage, restrooms and shower, a small

kitchen, and a training room. For the planning grant application, we are requesting the maximum \$30,000 to help fund a comprehensive plan for building an in-town trail system that connects to the GART trailhead, the area around the trailhead, an RV park, and a new town park. We believe this connected outdoor recreation system will bring economic benefits to the town, as well as providing beautiful outdoor spaces and recreation opportunities for everyone living in and visiting Malden.

- 4. Why a fire station? Don't we need a library and food pantry first, or funding for our water and sewer systems?** The town has already received funding for water system improvements from the state (\$3.7 million from Public Works) and has multiple requests submitted for federal funding for a new sewer system. Given the allowed activities for the general purpose grant, community facilities most meets our needs. The other community facility, the community center (which will also house the library and food pantry), has other funding sources available (contributions from private, corporate, and foundation donors). These sources will not require the town to pay a prevailing wage for construction; however, both CDBG funds and insurance proceeds will require that prevailing wages be paid. Were we to use any portion of CDBG or insurance funds to build the community center, prevailing wages must be paid for all construction activities. Another reason for submitting the fire station facility is that we are still almost constantly under threat of another wildfire event. We need to be able to defend the town from fire. A new station and upgraded equipment, together with extended water service and additional hydrants as well as creating a defensible fire barrier around the town will put us in the best position to do that. In addition, each resident taking steps to minimize the spread of wildfire around their home and outbuildings will also help us prevent another devastating fire event in Malden. Simply put, a fire station is a critical need that is best met with government grant funding.

- 5. Why do we need another comprehensive plan?** If funded, the \$30,000 from this grant will be used to expand the scope of work with SCJ Alliance to include a comprehensive outdoor plan for trails, recreation, and green spaces. The current plan covers housing, infrastructure, business district, and roadways. We want to not only provide great, safe spaces for children to play and our residents to enjoy their town, but also to create outdoor recreation that entices visitors and new residents. We also want to maximize the GART trailhead and use this as an opportunity to spur community and economic development (café, coffee shop, laundromat, campground, small convenience store, bike rental business, etc.).
- 6. If you have already decided what you are submitting, why are we here?** The purpose of this hearing is to let residents know the town is applying for two CDBG grants, what projects we are submitting for funding consideration, and to answer any questions you may have about those projects, the application process, or the community's needs in general. A copy of the final applications will be made available on the town's website by June 4 for residents to review if desired and a link to the recording from this hearing will also be available on the town website by May 27.
- 7. Is there a cost to the town to apply?** The town will have to pay for any required environmental or cultural resource reviews related to the proposed construction site. We estimate these reviews will cost approximately \$5500 and this will be paid with FEMA public assistance funds. The grant manager hired by the LTRO will complete the application and the town's mayor and construction manager will help oversee the construction.
- 8. If funded, how much will the town receive?** Each application will request the maximum amount which is \$900,000 for the general purpose construction application and \$30,000 for the planning application. If funded, the amounts granted may not be the full amounts requested.

- 9. The building will also have town offices – how can you use this grant to pay for that space?** We will pro-rate the application as allowed by the state to only cover costs associated with allowable construction (all space related to the fire station and public safety training).
- 10. How will you pay for the town offices and shop?** We will use insurance proceeds.
- 11. How much will this building cost?** Total construction cost is not yet known; however, the deadline to apply for CDBG grants is June 2 and we do not want to miss this opportunity to secure funds for the building. We will have preliminary budget information on the building before the June 2 deadline.
- 12. When will we know if Malden received the grants?** Recipients will be announced in September, along with the amounts granted.
- 13. When will construction start and when will it be finished?** If funded, we are working to have construction start this fall, with an anticipated completion of early Spring 2022.
- 14. Where can I send questions and comments about these projects?**

Questions, complaints, or grievances about the CDBG application process must be submitted in writing using one of the following methods:

- delivered to Town Hall (located at 204 W. Moreland) on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 9am and 4pm
- dropped through the mail slot at Town Hall
- via U.S. mail (Town of Malden, PO Box 248, Malden, WA 99149)
- send an email to townofmaldenwa@gmail.com

If you are unable to write or email your comments, you may stop by in person (or call 509-569-3771) and talk to Mayor Dan Harwood or Micki Harnois, Town Clerk.

ALL CDBG RELATED COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES MUST BE RECEIVED OR POSTMARKED BY 5:00 PM ON FRIDAY, MAY 28, 2021. A written response to your questions, complaints, or grievances will be sent to you within 15 working days where practicable. Please include your name and mailing address. A copy of the town's grievance procedure can be found at maldenwa.org.

Thank you, Jody. I am now opening the hearing for public comment and questions.

1. **These are grants that we are looking at, not funds we would have to repay?** Correct, these are grants and will not have any tax liability on the citizens.
2. **Regarding project eligibility requirements and not being able to construct government buildings/spaces with these funds, would we be able to lease space to the United State Post Office?** We are trying to stay away from having any space that is government-activity related, and leasing that space to the federal government muddies that line and so we are trying to keep it clean and avoid mixing funds for prevailing wage purposes. Concerning the community center, we have two separate buildings [community center building and fire station/town government building] and the rules are very clear on what we can and cannot do to avoid paying prevailing wage, which will considerably increase the cost of any building. We are trying to utilize the funds we have to maximize what we can have for the community. It's nice to support the building industry, but we have to look at what we can do for Malden.

Are there any other questions or comments at this time?

3. **Will part of one of these grants be for the RV park?** The planning grant we are applying for (\$30,000) would include outdoor space and

recreation and that would include an RV park to maximize the use of the trailhead area.

4. **Would this be a free RV park or would the town collect income from that?** That's yet to be determined, but we are leaning toward this being a fee-to-use RV park because there will be maintenance costs that will be incurred with its operation.
5. **There was mention of a park. Is this an additional park or is it the same Malden park?** The same park. This will be the town park for Malden.
6. **Why are we holding off on building any kind of fire department until we can get this kind of funding? Why can't we use insurance funds to build back a fire department? Would we be able to have this funding to expand that rather than have no fire department until spring of 2022? What are the options there for us to build back a smaller building more quickly and using this funding later to expand and include the additional space for training, more trucks, etc.?** One of our concerns is the cost of materials, we anticipate we will have a facility to store fire trucks in to keep them warm over the winter. Also, if we start working on the building, that pretty much nullifies or makes it very difficult to use CDBG funds to finish off that building later because there are environmental review and cultural review requirements and that will make it almost impossible to apply for a CDBG grant to add to that building.

Does anyone else have any comments or questions? This is very important to us to interact with the community. Let us know what you're thinking. Please ask questions.

7. **Will the RV park impact property values?** We hope that it will increase property values by showcasing what we have in our town and letting folks come visit, and then down the road they may remember the little town of Malden along the Palouse to Cascades trail and realize they may have a future here.

8. **I would not want to see an RV park fall into disrepair and have a negative impact on property values around the park.** Yes, if we do this correctly. It doesn't have to be a 20 lot park to start. We can start with 5 spaces and if we have success we can increase **the size. It doesn't have to be big to serve the purpose.**
9. **To clarify, this would be short-term RV camping, people would not be living in the RV park?** The rules that we have in place will not allow someone to live in that facility for more than 2 weeks without permission of the town council. This has been consistent for the last 5 years.
10. **The Pathfinders are planning to raise funds for the park (sports field, for instance). Would this be in addition to their funds? Would that impact their fundraising or would they be combined?**
The \$30,000 grant application is for planning purposes only, we cannot do any construction or other work with those funds. But given the wants for a trail system in town, the RV park, development around the trailhead, etc., there are a lot of things we can do fundraising for and that they can assist with. There are a lot of needs that can be handled with different fundraising opportunities. They will certainly be able to fundraise for things if they want to.
11. **Wouldn't the recent grant from the Center for Disaster Philanthropy be applied to the funds available for the park?**
Yes.
12. **Where will the RV park be located?** No definite location as of yet, that is why we are applying for additional planning funds.
13. **The town needs to take care to make sure the RV park is not located near places where our children would be frequenting or playing, such as the library or town park, as we do not know who will be staying in the park. We need to keep Malden and our kids safe and the townspeople need a voice in where it's located.** Absolutely. This is a planning grant, not an implementation grant, and there is a possibility it may not even fit in with the town's final plans.

14. Will the people working on the planning grant be working with the state's park department to coordinate efforts and determine who will take on what role/duties and get things accomplished?

Everyone will be working together with the reminder that we are a town that is a state park and we will cooperate and work with the state as they will with us. I had a conversation with state parks personnel today and they are looking forward to working with us on this. Whether they have an overnight camping spot there or not is yet to be determined.

15. Since the trail goes through town, is the state bound by our zoning [for the portion that goes through town] if we made the trail mixed use, etc.? No idea at this point. That will be part of the planning process.

Any other comments or questions? This is the time, please let us know. If we don't have more questions/comments in the next couple of minutes, we will consider the meeting finished.

MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS

It is now 7:41 pm. We are at the end of our allotted time for this hearing and public comment is now closed. If your questions were not answered, or if you have comments or questions you would like to submit, please do so in the following manner:

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Thank you for attending the hearing this evening and for your comments. We will notify residents of a second hearing, if one or both of the projects is funded, to discuss progress. This public hearing is now concluded.

NOTE: This document is not intended to be a full transcript of the public hearing. These minutes will become part of the CDBG application.