

NOVEMBER 17, 2009 MEETING OF GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE

ITEM 1: Validation Reports

CompEd, Inc., an August 2008 grant recipient, and the Center for Therapeutic and Educational Riding, a January 2009 grant recipient, each submitted validation reports since the last GRC meeting. Pro Swing Sports Academy, a December 2007 grant recipient, submitted a validation report and supplemental information requested at the time of the grant since the last GRC meeting. The committee recommended that Council approve all three validation reports.

ITEM 2: Middletown High School Guidance Department – Learning Lunches

The MHS Guidance Department has requested \$1,200 to support its “Learning Lunches” initiative

▶ Application Materials - Good

The Application was submitted on time according to our policy.

▶ Organization Type – Good – Educational Institution

The school is a secondary education facility in town limits.

▶ Quantitative Factors – Good – (amount, stats, time)

The **amount** of the grant request is reasonable.

A narrative was provided with the application; **statistics** will be available at the 11/17/09 meeting.

The **timing** of the grant request is reasonable – the funds would be used throughout the school year; possibly into next school year.

▶ Qualitative Factors – Good – (benefit, response, financial viability, need, organizational duplication)

The **benefit to the community as a whole** is somewhat evident in the possibility for students in our community to benefit from specialized education and guidance.

The **perceived community response** is mixed – the merits of the program are fine but some residents believe that the State and parents should be the sole supporters or extracurricular activities.

The **financial viability** and the **need** for the program will be established at the 11/17/09 meeting.

Some **organizational duplication** is evident in that the school district, its schools, and its affiliated groups have requested \$57,088 from the Town since September 2006, resulting in twelve (12) M&C grant awards totaling \$26,500.

DISCUSSION:

During the meeting, Keisha Brinkley, a guidance counselor at the high school, attended to speak on behalf of the grant request. She said the grant would help cover purchasing lunches from restaurants outside of the school to help entice students to attend the “learning lunches” about topics such as S.A.T. preparation, college choices, goal setting, managing stress and time management. She said in her previous experience with other school districts, this incentive program tends to work. “Kids respond to food,” she said, adding this time with the students, especially the ninth graders, “makes a world of difference.”

Chairman Lou Vitola explained the grant process and that the Appoquinimink School District has requested more than \$57,000 in grants in the past three years and the Town of Middletown has awarded \$26,500 of that amount. He explained there are certain grants, like this one, that seem to fall into a category that the school district should be funding, not the Town.

Brinkley said she understood that concept, but reiterated that guidance departments at the high school do not get their own budgets. “Sometimes, the school principal will have some money left over in the overall budget, where the guidance department will have some money to do projects like this, but that hasn’t been the case lately,” she said.

Councilman Chuck Dixon said he didn’t like the idea of the Town funding 100 percent of any program. He said he thought the Town could fund one-half of this grant, with the school making up the difference on its end. Board Member Jim Young said he sees this grant as something the school should fund. “I see this as a normal learning experience,” he said, “This is not extraordinarily different, it’s something that should be fit into a student’s schedule at some point in the day. Why isn’t the administration supporting this?”

Town Manager Morris Deputy said he liked the concept of the program, but he also believed it should be funded by the school district. “This is a worthwhile objective and it might be good to put together a strategy between the two high schools, I could really see this as something quite successful,” he said.

Chairman Lou Vitola said he was hearing from everyone that this is a worthwhile event, but not something the Town should support at this time. He said the Committee would not recommend approval to Mayor and Council. However, he said in his upcoming meetings with the school district superintendent and other school officials, he would help ask for support for the program, especially push for the idea of a joint venture between both high schools, but that he would be doing so for the sake of community service, not in his capacity with the Grant Committee.