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BOND REQUESTS SUBMITTED

Mayor seeking \$9.5M for senior center and park

By Jim Ash
Publisher

Mayor Arthur Vigeant has submitted a bond request in the amount of \$6.5M to construct a new senior center at Ward Park. At the same time, he is also seeking \$3.0M for upgrades to the park. The City Council's Operations and Oversight Committee will review the requests in the coming weeks before a final vote of the council is taken. Eight votes from among eleven councilors will be required to approve the bonds.

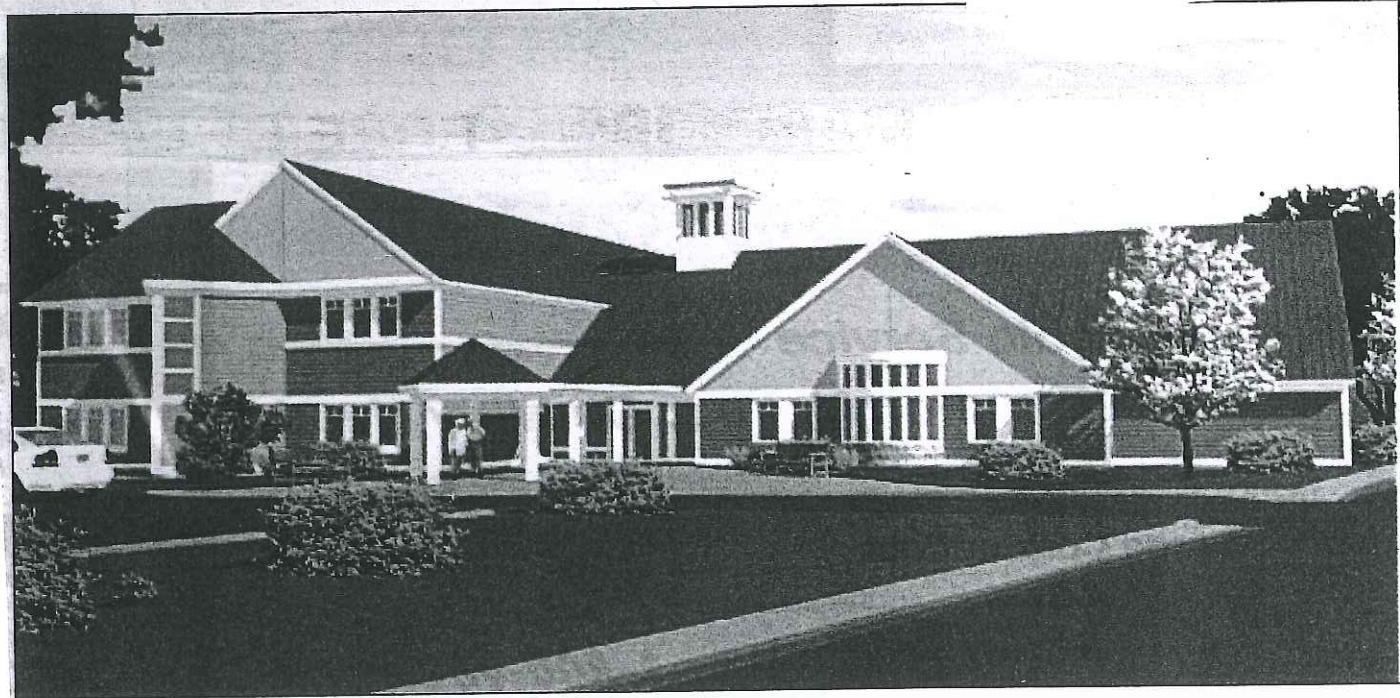
Included with the requests for money, the mayor attached cost estimates for both projects, \$8.05M for the senior center and \$3.9M for Ward Park. The \$8.05M figure includes \$500K in design funds that have already been approved. That roughly leaves a \$1.0M differential between the cost estimate and the bond request for the senior center and a \$900K differential between the cost estimate and bond request for the park upgrades.

"The budget outlines submitted to the council provide a more complete overview

of the costs and considerations undertaken over the past several months," said Michael Berry, executive aid to the mayor. "We expect to have more precise estimates in advance of the Operations and Oversight Committee hearing. The amounts listed in the bond requests reflect the amount the mayor is seeking council approval on. We do not expect the projects to exceed those amounts."

Asked how the budgeted costs will be reduced to meet

Continued on page 4



What will the council do? - Mayor Arthur Vigeant is requesting a \$6.5M bond for a proposed new senior center he wants to build at Ward Park in Downtown Village. He is also seeking \$3.0M to upgrade the park. See story above for details.



Shown (l-r) Marlborough Home Depot Assistant Manager Don Wyne, along with Dave Strassner and Dave Schena outside the senior center. Manager Mike Aubin (not shown) managed the work party.

HELPING HANDS FROM HOME DEPOT

Housing Director Douglas Bushman estimates about \$10,000 in value

By Joan F. Simoneau
Contributing Writer

A team of workers from the Marlborough Home Depot spent several hours last Thursday and Friday working in the courtyard at Liberty Hill Apartments at 240 Main Street. In preparation for repairing the walkway from Windsor Street to the senior center door, they removed asphalt and bushes and poured cement in the sidewalk area.

The crew power washed and repaired the brick wall and edged the area for raised beds to make it ready for spring planting. Another group of workers from The Home Depot will return in the spring to plant flowers and bushes. Earlier this year they donated new patio tables and chairs to provide comfort for housing residents, their families and others who visit the senior center.

Marlborough Housing Director Douglas Bushman estimated the savings to Marlborough Housing to be almost \$10,000. He expressed gratitude to Valerie Wilkinson who works for both Home Depot and the Housing Authority, who was instrumental in making it all happen.

Bushman commented, "The repair of this area is critical to the walk way. This will make the property safer for all residents that live here or visit the area."

In his report to the Community Development Authority last month, Bushman noted that several construction projects have already been completed in the city's senior housing complexes.

At Liberty Hill Apartments, the elevator, water pipe and bathtub projects have been completed. Boiler maintenance and asbestos removal have been attended to at Pleasant Street housing and paving and deck renovation have

been completed at 20 Front Street. At the Bolton Street location, the flooring, electrical panel and parking projects are finished.

The State Department of Housing and Community Development recently conducted a site tour at the Liberty Hill Apartments and have notified Bushman that the city will receive full funding for a new back-up generator that will also power the elevators in addition to what the existing backup generator can handle. Bushman said the current generator delivers power to the basement and several first-floor offices.

According to Bushman's report, the state waiting list for occupancy in Marlborough senior housing includes 85 elderly Marlborough residents, 69 elderly non-Marlborough residents, 81 non-elderly Marlborough residents, and 62 non-elderly non-Marlborough residents.

Grant will help families achieve self-sufficiency

By Joan E. Simoneau
Community Reporter

Marlborough - Many individuals who are unable to provide housing for themselves and their families often feel trapped, and even though they would like to become independent, do not have the ability and resources to do so. Several Marlborough residents will have an opportunity to change their lives through a \$38,000 grant recently awarded to the local Housing Authority by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Housing Director Doug Bushman told the Community Development Authority (CDA) at a recent meeting that he had been notified by HUD that Marlborough was one of three Massachusetts recipients of the special funding that allows grantees to hire a service coordinator to manage the program.

"The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) grant will allow the CDA's Housing Division to better assist struggling families in Marlborough currently receiving Section 8 housing vouchers who are working to improve their lives by developing the skills necessary to find gainful employment," said Mayor Arthur Vigeant. "The end goal of this program is to better position individuals and families to become

more independent and reduce their overall need for government assistance. I give Housing Director Doug Bushman credit for putting together a great application. This grant will make a positive difference in many lives."

"The program will officially start in December," Bushman said. "I am anticipating that before the end of the year, notices will go out to all who are eligible. There are about 130 local families receiving Section 8 vouchers. I am hopeful all will apply," he said. Participation will be limited to 46 individuals.

Bushman said the search for an FSS coordinator is currently being conducted. The coordinator will work directly with qualified residents to connect them with local organizations that provide education, job training and placement opportunities, along with childcare, counseling, transportation and other services. The coordinator will also provide family members with the support, encouragement and the on-going case management they need in order to take the initiative to follow through on goals listed in their respective contracts.

He said he will be working closely with the mayor and his staff who have implemented a successful jobs program that included a jobs fair, resume workshop, Summer Youth

Employment Program and a Public Service Intern Program.

"This is one of the government programs that everyone can support and appreciate," Bushman said. "It is all about ending people's reliance on government support programs. This is done by education, training, and most importantly showing the clients

that with some effort and hard work they can join the middle class and change their lives for the better," he said.

HUD measures the success of the FSS program not only by the number of families who achieve self-sufficiency, but also by the number of FSS families who, as a result of participation in the program,

have family members who obtain their first job or who obtain higher-paying jobs, no longer need benefits received under one or more welfare programs; obtain a high school diploma or higher education degree; or accomplish similar goals that will assist the whole family in obtaining economic independence.

Senior Tax Program in full swing

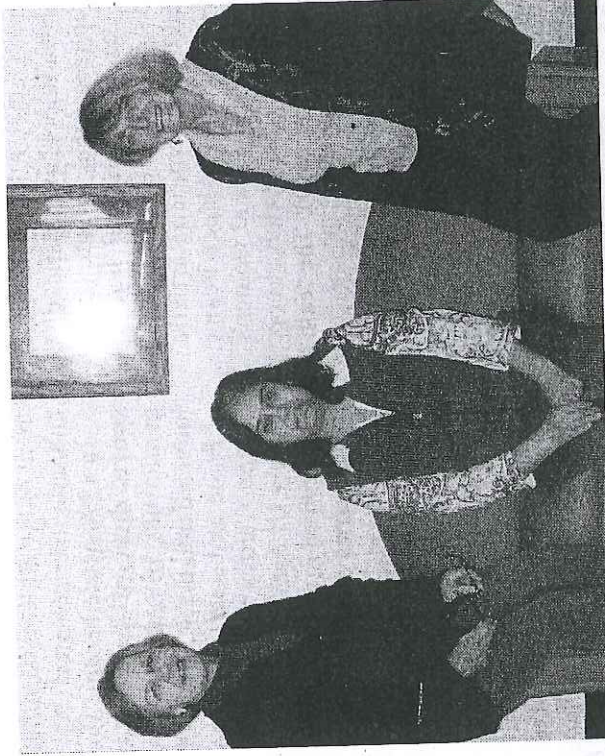
By Joan F. Simoneau
Community Reporter

Marlborough - Several local men and women are having an opportunity to apply their talent and work experience, which is making them feel productive and appreciated once again as they participate in the newly established Senior Citizen Residential Property Tax Work-Off Program (SCRPT).

Bob Fagone, a teacher with prior experience as a Section 8 housing inspector, has been assigned to the Community Development Authority Housing office working with Marlborough Housing Director Doug Bushman in his office in the Walker Building. He said he thoroughly enjoys his duties.

"It is a great opportunity for me and the city," Fagone said, "I'm saving money on taxes, and I feel like I am helping with clients in the housing program."

A former real estate agent and long-time volunteer at the Marlborough Senior Center,



Among the 25 Marlborough residents participating in the city's first Senior Citizen Residential Property Tax Work-off program are (l to r) Marian Mamayek, Zolla Mercado, and Jean Peters. They are assigned to duties the Senior Center, 250 Main Street and in city offices in the Walker Building.

Paulina Lynch is enjoying her new position as greeter in City Hall. She enjoys interacting with staff people and visitors and looks forward to her hours of service on Mondays and Thursdays.

"I direct people to various departments in City Hall, always with a smile," she said.

Both department heads and volunteers are offering positive comments about the program, according to Council on Aging Director Jennifer Claro.

"Many of our volunteers are working more than three hours a day," she said. "Some are working eight hours two or three days a week and en-

joying it."

"I can personally speak on how nice it is to have individuals with professional skills, dedicated work ethic and a wonderful array of talent at your side when you need help," Claro said.

"One of our SCRPT volunteers at the Senior Center, Marian Mamayek, a retired nurse, was working on a spreadsheet when one of the seniors hit her leg on the corner of her car door. It bled profusely and one could see she needed to get to the hospital. I was alarmed, so I asked Marian to take a look and she immediately handled the situation professionally and with ease."

The program, proposed by Mayor Arthur Vigean and approved by the City Council, allows the city to provide local property owners over the age of 60 a reduction of up to \$1,000 on the amount paid on their property tax in exchange for volunteer services provided by them to the city of Marlborough. Currently 25 residents are participating in

the SCRPT program, chosen from a field of 50 candidates, according to Mike Berry, executive aide to the mayor. Other city offices participating in the program are the Retirement Board, Phoenix Program, Special Education, Early Childhood Center and Public Works.

Claro said she is looking forward to a gathering of all SCRPT volunteers to hear of their experiences "working as a pioneer in the city's first Property Tax Rebate Program. I also plan to send evaluations of this program to participating department heads on their experience with implementation of this new program." She said she will share her findings with the mayor and his staff.

Applicants must be at least 60 years of age and a resident of the city for at least five consecutive years. They must own their own home and have an annual income less than \$52,000 per year for a single filer; less than \$65,000 if head of household, or less than \$78,000 if married and a joint filer.

PHOTO/SUBMITTED

Public Service Internship Program to continue in Marlborough

INTERNSHIP

Continued from front page

Vigeant said he received over 20 applicants for 13 available paid internships during the program's first year. Interns were paid \$8 per hour and worked approximately 30 hours per week for eight to 10 weeks.

In anticipation of the mayor's request, Councilor-at-Large Michael Ossing, who is also the Finance Committee chair, said he spoke with

Vigeant and told him he would be able to "find the necessary funding" for the program to continue. Ossing added that he would share that information with the full council at its next meeting, when the formal request will be made.

Among the remarks made by city department personnel was a statement from Public Works Commissioner Ron LaFreniere, whose department had three college in-

terns working with Supervisors Tom Cullen, Chris White and Dave Lavallee.

"As I have said during every Finance Committee review of our budget, the college intern program is one of the most cost beneficial programs run in the city," LaFreniere noted.

"The program is absolutely necessary for our department to maintain the delivery of services we have historically provided over the years."

The summer intern assigned

to Community Development Housing Director Douglas Bushman reviewed legislation concerning public housing, researched and formulated a preventive maintenance policy and other policies and procedures beneficial to the housing department.

"The intern program was an extremely worthwhile program. I was able to undertake important projects in a timely manner, due to the help provided," Bushman said in his statement.

Other departments partici-

pating in the program include the mayor's office, City Council/Comptroller, Human Services, Public Library, Council on Aging, Facilities, Conservation, Legal/Procurement, Marlborough Economic Development Corporation, City Clerk and Information Technology Department.

"Once the funding is approved, we intend on advertising this program throughout the city to hopefully grow the applicant pool and allow students to plan ahead," Vigeant noted to the council.

Presentation on procuring government contracts for businesses

Marlborough – The Marlborough Economic Development Corporation and the Marlborough Regional Chamber of Commerce have joined together to present “The ABC’S of Procuring Government Contracts.”

This event will be held on Friday, Sept. 13 from 7:30 to 9:15 a.m. at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, 181 Boston Post Road West. A full complimentary buffet breakfast will be served.

A panel of experts will discuss how to do business with governments from local to international levels. The panelists are Beverly Sleeper, procurement officer for the City of Marlborough; Doug Bushman, director of the Housing Authority for the City of Marlborough; Bar-

bara Miller, director of training, outreach & marketing in the Operational Services Division for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; David Polatin, assistant district director of the U.S. Small Business Administration, reporting on the federal level; and Melissa Branzburg, international trade specialist at the U.S. Commercial Service, a division of the Department of Commerce.

This event is open to all businesses large or small who want to learn how to do business with all the government entities.

Registration is required by Sept. 9 by calling the Chamber office at 508-485-7746 or by emailing marlcham@marlboroughchamber.org.

Community Advocate Aug 30, 2013



Marlborough thanks public service interns

Marlborough – Mayor Arthur Vigeant stands in front of City Hall with some of the young men and women who served as Marlborough's public service interns for 2013. (l to r, top) Andrew Skoog, Sebastian Cordoba, Michael McGuire, Michael Santos, and Jacquelyn Kurina; and (l to r, bottom): Kayleigh Fay, Marisa Duplisea, Amanda Sharon, Colin Beaumont, and Ariana Hershon. Not pictured: Alex Green, Steven Forster, Marc Spera, Aidan Steadman, and Melissa Scott. See story on page 10.

Mayor asks council to approve new Senior Center funding

By Joan F. Simoneau
Community Reporter

Marlborough – Mayor Arthur Vigeant has requested that the City Council approve bonds totaling \$9.5 million for construction of a new Senior Center and for renovations at Ward Park, where the center would be located. The request was made via a communication to the council at its Aug. 26 meeting.

Vigeant asked the council to approve two bonds - \$6.5 million for the center's construction and \$3 million for the renovation of the courts, fields and parking at Ward Park.

"After many discussions, hearings and planning over the past nine months, we have reached a point where I feel we have a design in place for a building that we all can be proud of," said Vigeant in the communication. "Ward Park has long been neglected and in dire need of investment and upgrading. The time has finally come to make a com-

mitment to ensuring that Ward Park is given new life so that its potential can be fully utilized by families and groups of all ages and interests."

The bond requests were referred to the Operations and Overview Committee for study and recommendation to the full council.

The mayor is proposing a facility to be built in the northeast end of the park that will have a footprint of 14,500 square feet. He unveiled a conceptual plan and building layout at a public information forum in June. Architect Joseph Rizza made the presentation.

Vigeant said at that time, that Ward Park is the best location because it offers seniors the benefit of a meeting place that is adjacent to recreational land and because it is city-owned, no land purchase price will be incurred. That will also help the timeline to completion be expedited, he added.

Strong objection to the Ward Park location has been voiced by residents in the

immediate area, led by Paul Brodeur of Hayden Street and Michael Nickolas of Water Terrace. Their objections are based on an Open Space and Recreation Plan which they say prohibits building on protected park land, such as Ward Park. The city's legal department and outside attorneys have stated the project, however, passes legal requirements.

Early in August, opponents to the proposed Senior Center announced that they are seeking financial contributions from the community to cover legal costs associated with their efforts to stop the center from being built at Ward Park.

Among other locations suggested for a Senior Center during the past 18 months were the former Department of Motor Vehicles building at 525 Maple St., the Meeting House on 86 Pleasant St., the former Post Office on Mechanic Street and an office building on Forest Street.