

To: Rye Board of Selectman

From: Rye Regional Association Committee (RRAC)

For: Presentation to the BOS Meeting on October 10, 2023

Date: October 4, 2023

The Rye Regional Association Committee is pleased to submit our review of the 2024 funding requests submitted by 21 associations. Included with this cover letter are copies of the Request for Funding Forms submitted by each association, an Excel Spreadsheet with detailed information on each association as well as additional information, if necessary, on those associations we did not approve or recommend at the level requested.

This year's requests for funding totaled \$80,400. This did not include a request for funding from Home Health VNA who had previously been given funding of \$9,995, however, they did not submit a Request for Funding Form for this year.

We review the associations requests looking at need, relevancy, and proportionality with a focus on the needs of individuals and families in the town of Rye and surrounding communities. Donations to non-profits by Rye and many other communities in the Seacoast area, began over 40 years ago, probably to show support and appreciation for the work they did for the people of Rye.

Keeping this in mind, we spent more time in our review on proportionality and the amount each association requested and previously received. The donations from Rye are not to fund programs or give grants and more importantly, are not given to reimburse the associations for the individuals they serve in Rye.

We found the average amount requested was \$1,500 to \$2,000 which we used as a baseline during our review. We did approve some with much higher amounts, but with careful review found there was a great need for the services they provided. It is important to note that just because an association requests funding at a certain level, it does not mean this is the amount they should receive. Most of these associations have individuals dedicated to the job of fundraising and they understand they may not receive the amount requested.

We have submitted to you a spreadsheet reviewing all 21 requests for funding. After our review of all the associations, our recommendation for funding for the 2024 budget is \$40,966. The associations on the spreadsheet with comments in red are the only ones we did not approve or recommend at the level requested, and the following will be a detailed explanation.

1. **AMERICAN RED CROSS** – They are an exceptionally well-funded organization. Their funds for general operating expenses, unexpected disaster and overall budget are over \$8 million. We recommend a reduction in funding from \$3,000 to \$1,500 which is in keeping with the majority the associations we fund.

2. **BIG BROTHER/BIG SISTER** - The number of individuals they serve are the same number as last year. They served 3 Rye families and 232 regionally. They match caring mentors with at risk youth (ages 6-18). The average length of match is 3 years with a proven track record of prevention. In keeping with the funding amounts of other associations, we recommend a reduction from the \$3,000 they requested to \$1,500.

3. **CENTER FOR WILDLIFE** - This organization provides a place to call with questions about wild animals or to bring in an injured or orphaned wild animal. There were 59 Rye residents who brought in injured or orphaned wild animals, as well as 100 called seeking help identifying species in their backyard to information on best lawn care for the environment. They are located in Cape Neddick, Maine. They serve the area from Falmouth, Maine to Newburyport, Massachusetts. Our focus and mission is to help the people of Rye and the surrounding communities with the many economic and health challenges that are part of so many lives. They requested funding of \$10,000. We do not recommend using taxpayer dollars to fund this organization and request they be removed from the Request for Funding list.

4. **CROSSROADS HOUSE** - This homeless shelter offers supportive services, school transportation, visiting nurses, and it is the designated emergency shelter for Rockingham County. They have served 463 Seacoast area residents. Two individuals from Rye have stayed there for the over a year for a total of 469 bed nights at \$108 per bed night. This unfortunately is the result of the unavailability of affordable housing in the area. We do not recommend funding this organization for the requested funding of \$12,000, but we do recommend funding of \$2,500, which is above our usual funding.

5. **GREAT BAY SERVICES** – This organization is based in Dover and serves 31 individuals in the Seacoast and Southern Maine area, providing advocacy and individualized job training for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They are requesting \$14,184 to fund a new nutritional program. We are not a grant or project funding organization. Last year they requested \$5,000 an increase from the previous year of \$1,500 stating without COVID funds they would have gone under. Last year we recommended keeping the funding at \$1,500 as we were not responsible for keeping them afloat. Therefore, we recommend not to fund the nutritional program for \$14,184. We recommend funding of \$1,500 in keeping with the funding levels for most of the associations.

HAVEN – This organization is very well funded, with Federal and State grants alone of over \$1.7M. They did not indicate how many they served in Rye or the surrounding area. They provide much needed support for violence prevention and improvement in the well-being of children. They receive one of the town’s highest donations. It is our recommendation that we reduce the funding request of \$3,250 to \$2,000 keeping them in line with similar donations.

6. **HOME HEALTH VNA OF NH** – They were formally known as Seacoast VNA, but are now Home Health VNA that is part of Home Health Foundation, all of which are under Tufts Home Medical Care at Home, a large Massachusetts based organization. They notified Janice in September that transformer blew in their building, and they were unable to access their computers. As of our meeting on September 27th, no information has been submitted. Last year this multi-million dollar organization requested the largest amount of funding of all the associations. The EIN # they submitted belongs to Tufts. We recommend the Request for Funding Form not be sent to this organization next year and they be removed from the Funding list.

7. **MILLSTONE WILDLIFE CENTER** - Sections of the Request for Funding Form were unanswered. They provided no financial information. They stated they received no financial backing or source of income, but instead relied only on donations. They did not submit any financials, budgets, or IRS tax filings. The Center is run out of a couple’s home, questioning why we would donate money when there is no accountability on how donations have been used in the past or will be used in the future. Even with the lack of information, we do not support using taxpayer dollars to support a wildlife organization as they do not meet our focus and mission of helping the people of Rye and the surrounding communities. We recommend they do not receive funding and that they be removed for the funding list.

8. **NEW GENERATION** - Although this is a worthy organization, they are part of N.H. Catholic Charities. They also provide services through New Frontier Church. We feel that we should not be supporting religious organizations in keeping with the separation of church and state and fairness to all denominations. We recommend we not provide funding and recommend they be removed from the Request for Funding list.

9. **SEACOAST SHIPYARD ASSOCIATION** - This organization is a lobbying group for the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. It is not a 501(c)3 organization, but a 501(c)6 which is given to groups such Business Leaders, chambers of commerce, real estate boards, etc., created for the improvement of business conditions. There are some tax benefits, but only for the organization. Any donations are not tax deductible. We do not recommend any funding for this lobbying organization. We recommend removing them from the Request for Funding list.

We are requesting approval of the Rye Regional Association Committee’s carefully researched and considered recommendation of \$40,966 for the 2024 Budget.

Respectfully,

Linda Toumpas, Chair
Susan Cole-Ross, Vice Chair
Ronna Werner, Clerk
Valerie Fagin

