# Salem gets help with fire grant

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SALEM — It was clear what the residents wanted.

They did, however, make it clear this wasn't simply a desire, it was an absolute need.

Dan Wagner from the Appalachian Council of Government was on hand for a public hearing at Salem town hall to discuss a possible Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

While efforts have been made by the Salem council to establish a full-time fire department within the town's limits, it was apparent the community also backed that wish on Wednesday night.

"I'm here to better understand what the needs of this community are," Wagner said. "That way, we will have a better idea of what to apply for."

After Wagner outlined a list of concerns and compliments from residents about their small mountain town, the majority of the audience voted that a fire department needed to be at the top of the list of things to improve.

If Salem is awarded a CDBG, the amount would total out at just over $500,000. A stipulation with the grant states that the awarded town would put forth a 10 percent match, in this case, $50,000.

Because Salem is a low to moderate income area, the town is eligible for these CDBG annual grants, which set aside nearly $7 million for the applications.

"I believe this to be a very good project," Wagner said. "I see it scoring very high."

John Like, a Salem resident, was very enthused about the efforts and the prospect of a better equipped fire crew.

"I live in a development that was once said to be serviced by the Keowee Key department," Like said. "That turned out not to be the case, and we were soon covered by Salem. But because the station didn't have a full-time crew, our insurance went up by nearly 20 percent. There are 15 residents near me that have figured there is a $7,000 difference. We would like to be able to spend that money on the department rather than our insurance."

Salem could receive an answer about the grant as early as November.