

**JOINT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 28TH, 2021 beginning at 6:11 P.M.**

CD PRESENT: Chair Callahan, Cerra, Oswald, Jessie, Absent: Mitchell

FINANCE PRESENT: Chair Stewart, Tollett, Baird, Jessie, Davis

OTHERS PRESENT: Law Dir Deery, Mayor Whitfield, Safety Service Dir Brubaker, Finance Dir Pileski, Asst Finance Dir Farrell, Building Official Farkas, Engineer Schneider, Asst Engineer McKillips, CD Director Scott, CD Manager Almabayyed, Asst Director Calvert, Councilpersons Keys and Simmons

1. Approval of the February 8th, February 22nd and May 24th, 2021 JOINT Community Development / Finance Meeting Minutes
Moved by Mr. Cerra, second by Mrs. Davis to approve the above meeting minutes.

2. The matter of proposed programs for the American Rescue Plan for Small Business Assistance and Public Services, similar to CARES ACT Funding.

REFERRED BY: Community Development Director Scott

CD Dir Scott said that her office and the administration have been working together to form two proposed programs for the American Rescue Plan Funding; 1.) Public Services Program and 2.) Small Business Assistance Program. They have shaped these programs to mirror what was approved with the CARES Act Funding. The American Rescue Plan money has additional regulations and criteria.

Mrs. Scott began with the requirements for the Public Service Program. These programs could be; food delivery, food banks, internet excess, employment & training programs, community violence intervention program, educational services, social and mental health needs, etc. The Non-profits that would apply would first have to identify a present need and how their program would address that need and how it relates to covid. The process would be; to submit applications to the CD office, which will 1st be reviewed for eligibility and to make sure all items are in place. Then they would grant funding in collaboration with the Mayor's Office as they did with the CARES Act.

Mr. Tollett asked about internet funding, he asked if it can be funded under the act that is in the Senate now? And he asked if the food assistance is something that is being offered through the state of Ohio? Would that program be duplicated?

Mrs. Scott said that she is not familiar with the infrastructure bill. The internet access is an eligible part of this Recovery Money.

There are funding sources throughout the State for Food Banks and it's an eligible activity within these program guidelines. So the City would have to make sure that we're not duplicating expenses so the non-profits would have to verify what funds they are receiving for food assistance, so they would not be able to charge us for that same thing.

Mayor Whitfield said in terms of the internet access, this is what we've been doing with Windstream with computer training. The Infrastructure bill is going to be aimed at things coming in thru the state, which is the Broadband Infrastructure within communities.

In terms of duplication, we will need to be very sensitive to make sure we're not duplicating anything going in the State or the County. There are some gaps that exist with the State Funding and how we might play a role in those gaps. With the support and guidance of Council they will make sure they put guardrails on things that we may not be interested in anyway. There are certain topics that are eligible but may not be priorities. In collaboration with Council and the Community we'll be able to see what those priorities are.

Mrs. Davis asked how they will get the information about the program out to the Small Businesses?

Director Scott said they will advertise on social media. They could also advertise in the newspaper. She said they would take any suggestions on this matter.

Chair Stewart asked if we know what the county is doing with the funds they've received so that we don't duplicate? What is different in this round of funds?

Mayor Whitfield said when we hear Salvation Army's gap analysis, you'll see the County dollars and the gap that exists with the resources that they have. In turn following what the County is doing. The City has had a number of meetings with them and they've expressed interest in partnering with the City. Food assistance was mentioned earlier and Neighborhood Alliance is now at the YMCA and they are looking at expanding their food delivery program, 'Meals On Wheels' and services that will serve the County. We will be very concise to make sure we're not duplicating.

Chair Stewart asked if the CARES Act Funds been used up?

Director Scott said yes, the CARES Act funds have been used up.

Mr. Tollett said that the final set of rules don't have to be completed until July 14th. Are we jumping the gun a little on earmarking funds?

Mayor Whitfield said they will stop taking comments July 14th but they've already provided guidance in these areas already. They've met with the Ohio Budget Management Office and the Treasury Dept. If there is anyone that has feedback to provide to the US Treasury, they can send that to the Administration.

Director Calvert spoke on The Small Business Grant Program. She said this program mirrors the CARES Act Program. One of the changes, which is from the ARP Guidelines, is for eligibility. The Small Business must prove that the funds must be used for financing the challenges of growth and stability and they have to have suffered an economic hardship resulting from covid19, which would be demonstrated in the application process.

Similar to the CARES Act, the funds can be used for re-configuring operations, re-opening or any other costs associated with covid19 or incurred as a direct response to economic hardship resulting from covid19.

The program is written for up to fifty thousand dollars in grant funds. The expenses would have to be incurred between March 3rd, 2021 through December 30th, 2022. These are dates provided by the ARP Guidelines and the March 3rd date cannot precede that date.

The applications would be reviewed by the Elyria Economic Development Committee and if approved those applications would be brought to City Council.

Director Calvert completed her overview and there were no questions.

Speakers from the audience were asked to come to the podium.

1. Roger Dorsey, 160 Burns Rd., Elyria, Executive Director of Good Knights of Lorain County. As of last June they were part of a National Organization that builds beds and provides them to families with children.

They saw there was a great need for that here in Lorain County and Elyria and they started 'Good Knights'. They kicked off the local program last September and they were able to deliver 100 beds to children in Wilkes Villa and have totaled over 260 beds to children in Elyria, Lorain and Lorain County. With volunteers and donations being down they have continued moving forward with private and in-kind donations. Their goal at the beginning of this year was to deliver 1200 beds and half of those to be delivered to children in Elyria. If they are able to get a grant from this program, 100 percent of the money that is given will go directly to putting 260 kids in beds whether those kids live in Midway Crossing, Colonial Oaks, or wherever they live.

Mr. Dorsey is passionate about this program because when he was a child, the closet was his bed, so he knows where these kids are at. To see these kids finally able to lay their heads down on a pillow in their own bed makes this program worthwhile! The organization is all volunteers, from himself as Executive Director, Jeff Baxter is the President. One hundred percent of any funds would be accounted for, it would buy lumber to build the beds, mattresses, sheets, pillows, pillow cases and blankets.

Mr. Baird said this is very enlightening and positive thing for the children. Mr. Baird thinks the City will be able to support this organization because it's a worthwhile endeavor. And he thanked Mr. Dorsey.

Chair Stewart said that he feels this is just tremendous. It speaks value of the character of The Good Knights. He asked if we need to move money into different accounts like we did with the CARES Act. Example, maybe there's more of a need for this into the Public Service Program or for the Economic or Small Businesses Act, does that hold true here?

Mayor Whitfield said that what he is hoping to walk away with today is let's open it up and see what's out there in both small business and public service community organizations. To open up our portals so we can start to get applications and we can see what's out there and make an assessment about what those needs are and then what the requests will be. Even when we're thinking about small businesses there was so much criteria and was only for reconfiguration and reopening. As they sat in those Economic Development Meetings we saw business that we can't help because our hands were tied. With these resources we have an opportunity to open it up and see what kind of applications come in.

Mr. Stewart asked if there's been any comments in regards to the CARES Act?

Finance Dir Pileski said the audit is wrapping up. The CARES Act money was the focus of the single audited act because it outdistanced the Block Grant Fund as far as receipts, so that focus was on the CARES Act. The results have not come in yet.

Mayor Whitfield said this go around has a lot more reporting requirements. Director Scott will work with these organizations to make sure they know from day one that this money comes with strings. Applicants will have to demonstrate that they will have to follow through on the reporting requirements and that will be built into the agreement. They are hoping to open the portal at the July 6th Meeting and they wouldn't administer any grants until after August 1st. So there would be a month for taking in applications and reviewing those applications.

The next speaker is:

2. Capt. Tracey Knappins of the Salvation Army. She thanked City Council for allowing Salvation Army to participate in the CARES Act money. They have been able to help a significant number of families in Elyria. Ms. Knappins said there have been some un-met needs.

The Salvation Army works closely with United Way and through the local 2-1-1 service. There has been 43 percent of un-met need calls that have come into 2-1-1 which has been mostly around mortgage assistance.

There is assistance with Job & Family Services with rent and utilities which many have been referred to that program so that they are not duplicating and are utilizing dollars the best way they can.

But those dollars do not assist people who own their home, nor do they help homeowners with utility assistance. So there is a population of folks who have had significant covid related issues and now they can't get assistance.

Ms. Knappins's organization would like to see some of these dollars be focused on mortgage. When people become foreclosed, it causes another set of problems with blight and other things within the community. So we want to keep people in their homes, whether they're renters or homeowners.

Another un-met need is utilities which has a long-term effect. There are 24 percent of families saying they could not get their need met for that. Another un-met need is phone and internet service. They also see people who cannot get into shelters who are homeless or facing eviction.

The mission of the Salvation Army is to meet human need wherever they can and do the best way they can. They want to do the most good for the most people in the most need. The social work office has a good handle on everything that's available in the county. They refer people to other resources as needed.

They can apply at the Salvation Army building in person.

The Job & Family Service Program offers great programs, but they have to apply on-line and some people don't have the skills, don't have computers or don't have internet access to do that.

Though there are significant dollars out there, some people are falling through the cracks.

They are getting ready to open up an after school learning center. They know there are great programs in Elyria, but there are still kids that are falling through the cracks.

Ms. Knappins wanted the committee to know that the non-profits really do work together and they do their best to make sure they're not duplicating and that they are able to serve as many families and individuals as possible.

Chair Stewart asked if this is only for renters to help them pay rent and utilities?

Ms. Knappins said the current program is only for renters.

Chair Stewart thanked Ms. Knappins.

Mayor Whitfield said there is another speaker. He said that the City is trying to get ahead of summer violence since kids have been pinned up and to prevent any outbreaks of violence and keep these kids on the right track.

3. Dante Tillman, 245 George St. He is not part of an organization, he's speaking on behalf of himself and of the Mayor.

At risk youth are often the ones who can benefit from opportunities of personal development and essential life skills provided by Youth Development Programs. Those at risk youths seldom benefit from the traditional style of these youth programs. As a result and evaluation of the Youth Programs and often they don't show an impact of these at-risk audiences and they're very hard to reach.

So, how can we engage in this important population?

Leaving the comfort of traditional programming while engaging in non-youth, traditional settings can also bring the disconnected youth into the programs.

This will result in youths being more apt to participate and enable the development of professionals and communities to target these unreachable audiences. Having the ability to be implemented in diverse communities and building on existing social networks to create awareness for these programs

They also provide activities that appeal to these youths, which may not be the traditional style of after-school programs, to find the way to appeal to those youths.

An option is to provide incentive programs, which they are looking into doing. Also, to reach out to find out how we can get them to communicate with each other.

Mr. Tillman said he was picking up a kid at one of the parks and ended up having to break up a fight. And he found out that the kids were arguing and fussing and fighting because they didn't know each other, which is a real disconnect with the kids.

Mr. Tillman believes that by building partnerships between agencies and youth development programs to help reach out to these specific audiences within the youth.

Community Development involves creating opportunities for young people to connect with each other and develop and utilize skills which allows them to be contributing members of the community.

Mr. Baird said that identifying that group and how to get to that group is a big part of this and to help find a solution.

Mr. Tillman said it's difficult and strenuous process and he believes that if people actually get involved and aren't afraid to get in front of them. And to reach out to the younger generation and having them actually talk about what needs to be done. Like a place where these kids can go to and get to know each other. We need to get back to the non-traditional ways of trying to engage our youth.

Mr. Baird said he gives Mr. Tillman a lot of credit for getting out there with these youths and being visible and respected. Mr. Baird also gave credit to our Police Chief and his department on their training and involvement with the youth in the community.

Mr. Oswald asked where is the involvement with the parents?

Mr. Tillman referred to the at-risk youths because they just don't have the family foundation that a lot of us were blessed with. We need to go back to the motto that 'it takes a community to raise a child'. He's pretty sure if parents see everyone helping that they will eventually come on board. A lot of parents don't know where their next meal is coming from, let alone to be worried about why their kid is outside playing or what they are actually doing.

Mrs. Davis asked what the name of the organization is?

Mr. Tillman said it's called 'Streets to Success' program.

Mayor Whitfield said that there is actually no organization, per se, they're looking at trying to partner with one of the community organizations to work through.

Mr. Tillman said he goes around to different places in Elyria and sits down and talks to these kids to see where their heads are at. Once he just happened to be at a park where a fight broke out and he helped to get it under control.

Chair Callahan thanked Mr. Tillman for his presentation. And thanked him for providing good for the City. The community working together with volunteers is a start and nothing but good can come out of it.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Mr. Cerra moved, second by Mr. Jessie to recommend an ordinance to authorize the use of American Rescue Plan dollars to be used for Public Service Programs in the amount of \$500,000.

MOTION MADE

COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Mr. Baird moved, second by Mrs. Davis to recommend an ordinance to authorize the use of American Rescue Plan dollars to be used for Public Service Programs in the amount of \$500,000.

MOTION MADE

COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Mr. Cerra moved, second by Mr. Jessie to recommend an ordinance to authorize the use of American Rescue Plan dollars to be used for Small Business Assistance Programs in the amount of \$500,000.

MOTION MADE

COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Mr. Baird moved, second by Mrs. Davis to recommend an ordinance to authorize the use of American Rescue Plan dollars to be used for Small Business Assistance Programs in the amount of \$500,000.

MOTION MADE

COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

Mr. Cerra moved and second by Mr. Jessie to adjourn this evening's Community Development portion of the Meeting at 6:55 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted by,

Colleen Rosado, Council Clerk Secretary

(Committee Meeting was attended by Secretary Rosado ~ Meeting Minutes were transcribed by Secretary Rosado)