

The JOINT CD and FINANCE Committees held a meeting on **Monday, October 10th, 2023** beginning at 6:00 P.M.

CD MEMBERS PRESENT: Committee Chair Mitchell, Oswald, Schneider, Lipian
FINANCE MEMBERS PRESENT: Committee Chair Stewart, Cerra, Davis, Schneider
Excused Absence: Callahan and Tollett
Other Council Members Present: Corbin and Simmons

OTHERS PRESENT: Law Director Deery, Safety Service Dir Lundy, Mayor Whitfield
Finance Dir Pileski, Asst Dir Calvert, Engineer McKillips, CD Manger Almobayyed,
CD Dir Scott, Parks Dir Reardon, Public Works Supt Conner, IT Dir Rothgery,
Building Official Farkas

1. Approval of the Joint Meeting Minutes from September 25th, 2023.

Motion made by Mrs. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Oswald to approve the said minutes.

2. The matter of the PY 2024 Community Development Block Grant Action Plan, 5-Year Consolidated Plan.

(PUBLIC HEARING) *(2nd of 2 Public Hearings)*

Referred By: CD Manager Almobayyed

Chair Mitchell read the ‘Call to Public Hearing’ and asked if there were any proponents.

CD Dir Scott spoke and said they provided funding requests online as well as email to various agencies and to City Departments to request to utilize CDBG 2024 Funds. Those requests were due September 30th. Per HUD guidelines, the administration fees are capped at no more than 20% of the grant, public service is capped at 15%. She has the proposed budget sheet up on the screen for discussion. The first budget sheet is a list of all of the funding requests that were received. The second budget sheet is going to provide proposed recommendations from the CD Dept. The goal is to have the committee vote on a draft budget which will allow them to prepare a draft plan to go out for public comment for the 30 days required by HUD. At the end of that 30 days, the comments will be brought back to the committee and allow one last opportunity to make any final budget adjustments. And then the committee will ask to vote on that final budget on November 27th and then it will go before Full Council for a vote on December 4th.

There is a request for just over \$300,000 in the Housing Rehab Program. Housing rehab activity does pay for salaries and benefits and soft costs to run the Housing and CDBG Housing Program. It will also fund 10 to 15 emergency home repairs. \$180,000 in Code Enforcement pays for a portion of 3 code inspectors in the Building Department. Those code inspectors focus on CDBG target areas.

There is some carry-over in Public Facilities. (Penfield storm sewer). Public facilities – Parks & Rec Dept requested funds for a pocket park development off West Ave. Everything in purple on the budget sheets is Public Services and cannot total more than 15% of the anticipated allocation, that list of requests is on the ‘said’ budget sheet and is available per request. The total requests add to \$887,000 and the anticipated budget is at \$764,378, which is the current amount that they used for the estimated amount. They will have to cut a total of just under \$125,000. When HUD gives their final allocation, they will increase or decrease each activity equally as they have done in previous years.

Mayor Whitfield said if that amount has to be cut, where will that come from. He said they try to make this CDBG simpler for everyone. When they saw 2 requests, they wanted to develop a win-win plan to work for the community as well as the City. The 2 requests they felt there was room to make a difference was the Parks & Rec. Instead of funding thru CDBG they could possibly fund thru ARPA Funds Revenue Replacement or thru the General Fund. It’s the City’s programing and they don’t want to be competing with the community for the services. The other one is the Goodwill Employment Training, since this is Economic Development they could enter into an agreement with them using other funds so they can continue to provide that service to the residents. By moving those two requests out of CDBG, they were able to cut the amount that was needed and then all of the other community partners can get what they requested.

Chair Mitchell asked what the \$115,000 for the pocket park is going to be used for?

Parks Dir Reardon said there were preliminary plans done based on feedback and the engineers estimates came back at around \$200,000. They currently have \$75,000 already allocated in Issue 6. And possibly additional funds for 2024 Issue 6 funds will be able to complete the project based on the engineers estimate for the plan. The park will include benches and there has been a plan to develop the whole park which will include lighting, food truck space, history area. There will be a 100% development of that space.

Mr. Lipian asked if those old instruments that were once at the park near the library, could be incorporated into the new pocket park?

Dir Reardon said the City still has them and they are currently in storage and that is a possibility.

Chair Stewart asked how the Goodwill Industries training request will go to Economic Development?

Mayor said that Goodwill provides employment training and employment placement. Preparing and connecting residents to jobs. What they are proposing to do is to provide training around digital skills for 21st century employment opportunities. The funding will only be utilized for Elyria residents.

Dir Scott said that currently Goodwill receives CDBG covid monies. It's specific to Elyria residents. At the end of the grant period the allocations are based on actual expenditures. If there is carryover money that isn't spent, it leaves a cushion.

Mrs. Davis made a comment about the fact that no one is ever able to reach someone in Legal Aid and they are asking for funds and aren't even available to the residents.

Dir Scott said that someone from Legal Aid is in attendance this evening.

Melanie Shakarian, an attorney with Legal Aid, 1530 West River Rd. She appreciates the comments from Mrs. Davis. The investments of CDBG dollars is going to be focused on the expansion of their clinics in neighborhoods. Their phone number goes to the Elyria office often gets overrun with phone calls and they've heard complaints and they are doing work to have more in-person clinics. They are working with the library system to host more in-person clinics.

Mayor Whitfield said that is something he's heard as well.

Dir Scott said the health services with the Lorain County Urban League would be a good fit for remaining CDBG Covid dollars as well as the Salvation Army Utilities request. There is a deadline to spend that money so these funds can be used. There would be \$3000 remaining to put toward the Employment Training and they could use the \$2683 remaining in CDBG Covid funds.

Chair Stewart asked if there was an additional recommendation that was here that was one of the options that was considered.

Dir Scott said yes, that is correct, that was sent to Council Clerk prior to making the amendment and suggesting these other pockets of money.

Chair Mitchell asked for proponents;

1. Holly Brinda, 263 Windward Dr., Elyria, CEO Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Lorain County, 1917 North Ridge Rd., Lorain. They are asking for \$10,000 to continue to expand their big Futures career and college readiness program. The funds will be used to pay for a quarter of a match support specialist position that's responsible for delivering supporting and evaluating career aligned matches and delivering careers in college readiness curriculum to 40 additional big futures participants at EHS. A pilot program was funded with CDBG funds at EHS a few years ago. That was successful and it help leverage funds from the State of Ohio. This is urgently needed. The State standards in English and Math have changed, as well as preparation for career and college readiness has fallen back and many students need their services.

They offer college readiness curriculum and they also offer social emotional learning and they hire certified teachers to provide Math and English instructions and help to achieve graduation seals. They have more requests than they have staff.

They have had 400 referrals from parents and educators for students at EHS. The CDBG would allow them to serve 40 additional students.

2. Alicia Foss, Pres. & CEO of Neighborhood Alliance, 265 Washington Ave., Elyria. They are requesting funds for their Home Delivered Meals Program is what they are requesting funds for. That program is now operating out of the former YMCA in part to the funding that was previously approved by Council which allowed them to build the kitchen and it's up and running. Through July of this year they've served 265 Elyria residents and they have 100 more on the waiting list. The funding they are requesting will help to provide another 1,875 meals to Elyria residents over the next 4 months. This is emergency funding for them. The number of older adults in the county continues to grow.
3. Rachel Andrey, 957 Livermore Land, Elyria, Director of Spark Theater Co. which is under Youth Programming. They are non-profit and provide 100% Outreach Services for schools, community centers and libraries. They've been using CDBG funds for several years. They now offer Saturday classes in topics like playwriting, improvisation and film making. They do that at South Park every Saturday. It's in a high demand, they have 23 students. Last year they offered free assemblies for their Fall Arts. The teachers really appreciate these.

Chair Mitchell asked for more proponents and asked for opponents three times. She declared that this Public Hearing has been held.

Dir Scott reminded the committee that they do go through a funding request process and generally don't accept late applications. There are certain federal requirements that need to be met with this funding, so they need to be certain whoever they partner with would be a 501c3 and would have to meet a national objective and the funds being utilized would be eligible under the CDBG program. The final vote will take place at the Nov 27th meeting and if anyone has any questions or would want to discuss anything to contact the CD office.

Chair Stewart asked what the \$41,490 will be going toward under the Goodwill Employment Training? And if we're moving forward with the Parks & Rec programs; Open Rec, Reach & Rise and Senior Programming and that will come out of ARPA Funds. And he asked what is unappropriated in ARPA Fund.

Finance Dir said there is \$3,348,378 in ARPA that is unappropriated. And in the 2016 half percent income tax fund there is \$1,117,617 that is unappropriated. He believes they are talking about next years budget and they'll be starting from scratch.

Dir Scott said the draft that will go out to the public for comments is the 'Community Development Recommendation #2'. The other two spread sheets are for working purposes so it's this specific spread sheet. Changes can be made by the committee after the public comment period. This budget is what is proposed and not the final determination.

Law Dir Deery said this matter will come back to committee on November 27 and the committee will vote on it at that time.

CD Manager Almabayyed said all of their sub recipients have great programming and her office wants to make sure that everyone gets funded. Her question is they want to make sure that Council is in support with using ARPA Funding for the Parks & Rec projects and Issue 6 dollars to fund the Goodwill programs.

Finance Dir Pileski said there is 3.3 million dollars unappropriated in ARPA Fund and 1.1 million dollars in the 2016 half percent income tax fund (Issue 6). These items for funding will be part of the 2024 permanent appropriations. They will be starting a new budgeting process shortly. They will appropriate those funds at that time.

Mayor Whitfield said they are looking for support for this because otherwise we run the risk of not supporting our Parks & Rec Dept. CD wants to make sure council will approve that as well as using Issue 6 funds for training programs thru Goodwill.

Chair Mitchell said that she doesn't like this process, it's not the way they usually do it. She likes the way where the committee and council decide who get what and how much they get. It's always worked and if it's not broke don't try to fix it. To be clear, she asked the committee if they are all in agreement to do recommendation #2?

Chair Stewart said he is questioning the Goodwill portion of this and he would like to continue discussion on that. CD would need some type of funding mechanism or go back to the original funding. He said he would have reservations when it comes to the vote.

Mr. Lipian said he has similar reservations, that there is no safety programming. He understands there is a lot of artistic and educational programming which is important. His hope is that there would be a comment period after this where they could make some changes or suggestions.

Chair Mitchell said they don't have anything for safety because it hasn't been brought forward by a non-profit. Anyone can apply during the time period that applications are accepted. That application period expired at the end of September.

Mayor Whitfield wanted to provide context that the alternative to this process is to present recommendations considering the expertise of the department. What they've seen in the past is Council has had long meetings like this and moving monies around to different non-profits. Sometimes what's not taken into account with senior services is each dollar that is cut is an actual impact in the community.

What they are proposing is something that will fund all of the Community Partners and allow to continue the City programs.

Mr. Lipian said it's reasonable to say that there are some disagreements with some of what's on this program. It's okay to voice concerns.

Mayor Whitman said the work of administrators to present to the committee, their recommendations are the purpose of why they've tried to make it easier and it's worked the past two years. They can look at other resources looking at the 2024 budget and ARPA and other funds that could support public safety. The proactive measure would've been to have an application in by the deadline date. We can't change the process to accommodate that.

CD Manager Almabayyed said this programming sounds like it would be a good activity. They would like to see an application from a nonprofit for this. Sometimes subrecipients don't spend all of their funds and they could do an amendment to possibly fund a safety program in the future.

Chair Mitchell said thanked everyone and said they are going to move on.

3. The matter of a Downtown Facade Improvement Application for 200 East Ave.

Referred by: CD Manager Almabayyed

CD Manager Almabayyed said this is from the Venue Church. The EEDC approved this application and the grant is for up to \$10,000 and the application is for \$6,500 for signs on the building and it is an eligible activity and meets the criteria for the program.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

Motion was made by Mr. Lipian and second by Mr. Schneider to authorize an ordinance authorizing the application for exterior signage on the building located at 200 East Ave.

MOTION CARRIED

COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

FINANCE:

Motion was made by Mr. Schneider and second by Mr. Cerra to authorize an ordinance authorizing the application for exterior signage on the building located at 200 East Ave.

MOTION CARRIED

COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

4. The matter to partially forgive a Rehabilitation Lien at 792 W. River Rd., N.

Referred by: CD Director Scott

Dir Scott said the owner of this property, Andrea Hall entered into a Community Housing Impact and Preservation Program Agreement with the City in September 2016 for a total contract amount of \$32,400.

Included in the scope was replacement or repair of one basement wall which was for an amount of \$2,910. After it was completed the wall ended up cracking and there were issues with that. They ended putting the project back out to bid and she went under contract in the CDBG program to have it fixed. Now, a new lien has been placed on the property for the same thing the prior lien was for. There is a 20% lien remaining on the first agreement.

Ms. Hall is requesting the basement portion of that 20%, be removed, which would be \$2,582 and the rest would remain on the property. CD recommends reducing the lean for the portion of the lien for the basement only. The remaining balance would be due and payable when Ms. Hall would transfer, sell or convey interest in the property or no longer occupies residence of the property.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

Motion was made by Mr. Oswald and second by Mr. Schneider to authorize an ordinance authorizing to reduce the 'said' lien in the amount of \$2,582.00.

MOTION CARRIED COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

FINANCE:

Motion was made by Mrs. Davis and second by Mr. Cerra to authorize an ordinance authorizing to reduce the 'said' lien in the amount of \$2,582.00.

MOTION CARRIED COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

Seeing there is no further business for Community Development Chair Mitchell asked for a motion to adjourn the Community Development portion of this evening's meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Oswald and seconded by Mr. Lipian to adjourn The Community Development Committee Meeting at 7:15 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED

The evening's meetings continued with The Finance Committee Meeting which began at 7:20 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Colleen Rosado, Secretary/Administrative Assistant