

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 4, 2013**

ATTENDANCE: M. Evette Brantley; Co-Chair, Lydia Martinez; Co-Chair, Jack Banta, Michelle Lyons, Council President Thomas McCarthy, Warren Blunt, Steven Stafstrom, Jr.

OTHERS: Alanna Kabel, City Clerk Fleeta Hudson, Tyler Fairbairn, Department of Central Grants & Community Development; Peter Gerald, 132nd District; Jeanette Herron, Citizens' Union

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Council Member Martinez. She announced that the Committee would be considering the items from the back of the information packet to the front.

Council President McCarthy said that the Citizen's Union had put together a very comprehensive review of the information and this had been forwarded to the Committee. The Committee then works with the Citizen's Union suggested amounts. There was a meeting with the Committee co-chairs and Ms. Kabal regarding some of the figures. He reminded everyone that the ECDCE recommendation to the full Council is a combination of the Committee's work and the Citizens' Union work. Discussion followed.

Council President McCarthy pointed out that Council Member Stafstrom had not completed a Conflict of Information form. Council Member Stafstrom completed the form and submitted it to Council President McCarthy. Council Member Stafstrom indicated he was a member of the YMCA. Discussion followed as to whether or not he could vote on the Public Service portion of the funds allocation.

A brief overview was given of the HOME funding by Mr. Fairbairn, there were no Committee questions.

Council President McCarthy said that Bridgeport was the central location for HOPWA. He gave a brief overview of the allocations.

Council Member Banta asked why the funds for Refocus Outreach were added back in after the Citizen's Union had removed the funding. Council Member Brantley explained that there had been questions about the funding by the Citizens' Union. Mr. Fairbairn indicated that if there were any irregularities discovered during the course of the year, the

staff would take immediate action. Council Member Brantley said that an agreement had been reached to go ahead with the funding. Discussion followed.

Council Member Brantley said that there had been three projects in this section: Miracle House, Time for Change and Precious Promise, along with a few other applicants including Frank Habanisky Food Pantry and Bridgeport Tabernacle, that were included in that category since these organizations needed to be out in the community raising funds and recruiting volunteers. Mr. Fairbairn explained that Miracle House, Time for Change and Precious Promise were deemed to be ineligible for Continuing Care because they don't meet the new HGS rules.

The food pantry was not eligible because the food pantries are not allowed to be stand alone organizations. These are now required to involve outreach. Mr. Fairbairn gave more details regarding this change. Discussion followed.

Ms. Kabel then came forward and gave an overview of the Section 108 loans that the City had. The annual loan repayment is \$682,189.00. The City is required to repay those funds. At Council Member Martinez's request, the Mayor did send a request to HUD asking for forgiveness of the loans. HUD can not forgive the debt, but they are working with the City in creating some potential repayment scenarios to reduce the 108 payments.

Council Member Brantley noted for the record that City Clerk Fleeta Hudson had joined the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Mr. Fairbairn reviewed his Department's budget with the Committee and the funding for the Housing Delivery. The grant funding covers six staff members along with paper, copier and phone costs.

Economic Development – Mr. Fairbairn then reviewed the various programs proposed by this department. Council Member Brantley listed a number of projects that the Community Capital Fund program had funded that benefited the various districts of the City.

The Committee then discussed the Housing allocations. A staff member spoke about the request and the various costs associated with the construction. Home Owner Rehabilitation had 15 projects and there is a waiting list of residents who wish to enroll in this program. Council member Brantley said that she would like to see the department do a better job of community information and screening. Council Member Brantley said that there had been a recommendation that Maplewood Condo and the Kennedy Center had been allocated funding.

A concern was raised about project compliance. The staff member stated that there was a Construction Manager Officer in the department to oversee the various projects.

The discussion then moved to Public Facilities. Mr. Fairbairn then reviewed break out for the three categories of Economic Development, Housing and Public Facilities. 20% is allowed for administration and another 15% for Public Service. Unfortunately, the number of Public Service requests greatly exceeds the amount of funding

Council Member Blunt asked about the anti-blight funding, the NRZs and the demolition. Ms. Kabel explained that there have been two other sources of funding identified. Discussion followed.

Council Member Brantley noted that Peter Gerald from the 132nd District had joined the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Council President McCarthy announced that the Mayor requested him to convey that the Mayor believes that full funding should be given to the Public Parks improvements, the tree plantings and the Be Green project request. Council President McCarthy said that he had promised to let the committee know this. Discussion followed.

The discussion moved to the City's portion of the matching funds for the Lighthouse programs. Council President McCarthy reviewed the figures for the Department of Aging Senior Center and how this will be handled. It was suggested requesting \$10,000 for the City of Bridgeport Department of Aging, Senior Citizens. Council President McCarthy said that the Mayor had requested the remaining \$5,000 from the YSB grant be assigned to the Conservation Corps project. The Mayor would also like to have the \$5,000 taken from FSW and transferred into the Mayor's Conservation Corps for a grand total of \$110,000 for the Corps.

Council Member Brantley asked the Committee to keep the recommendations that the \$5,000 at FSW since the Committee has gone over and above in terms of allocating all of the requests that the City had made at this meeting. The FSW program is viable and provides job skill training throughout the City of Bridgeport. One of the Citizens' Union participants explained that the reason that FSW was not allocated funding was because the group has strong outside funding. While it is a worthwhile program, the CU felt that the \$5,000 should go to other programs. Discussion followed.

Ms. Kabel said that Mission of Peace was the number one foreclosure prevention agency in the City. They typically turn in the highest numbers of foreclosure prevents to the HAS. However, with the increase of foreclosures and the economic downturn, there are still over 1,000 households in Bridgeport that are in danger of foreclosure. The more staff that could be retained would be excellent because the Connecticut Housing Finance Agency now requires that any clients who are applying for the State Emergency Mortgage Program must go through a counseling agency like Mission of Peace for funding.

A lengthy discussion followed about the pros and cons of funding a summer jobs program or allocating the funding to a job training program. The Lighthouse Program now has been moved under Groundwork and the youth summer job employees are being given marketable skills.

It was agreed that the \$5,000 from HSW would be put into the Conservation Corps. It was agreed to put \$10,000 into the Senior Citizen program. This total \$450,870.00, which is the maximum allowable for the Public Service category.

Council President McCarthy said that he would not be voting as he only is allowed to vote if there was a Council Member who was absent.

Council Member Stafstrom had two conflicts of interests, the Bridgeport YMCA South End Community Center and another YMCA request. He will be abstaining on voting these items. Council President McCarthy explained that Council Member Stafstrom could vote on the total sum.

Council Member Lyons asked about the Rafaela Taylor program. Mr. Fairbairn reviewed the program scope. Council Member Blunt had a question about another program increase last year. Mr. Fairbairn and Ms. Kabel reviewed the details about the green businesses that were involved. Discussion followed.

Mr. Fairbairn reviewed the changes: the Department of Aging Senior Center has been increased to \$29,500; the Mayor's Conservation Corps has been increased to \$105,000 and the COB Lighthouse Service Bureau is now \$35,000.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CDBG PUBLIC SERVICE ALLOCATION AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CDBG PUBLIC SERVICE ALLOCATION AS AMENDED PASSED WITH FIVE IN FAVOR (BRANTLEY, BLUNT, BANTA, LYONS, AND STAFSTROM) AND ONE ABSTENTION (MCCARTHY).**

Council Member Brantley requested that this be placed on the consent calendar

Council Member Martinez asked if there were any abstentions with the Public Facilities portion of the CDBG funding. Council Member Stafstrom explained that he had a conflict of interest due to his position on the Board of YMCA.

Council Member Blunt has a question regarding the Recovery Net programs. Discussion followed about the details of the request regarding a malfunctioning sewer lateral.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CDBG PUBLIC FACILITIES ALLOCATIONS AS PRESENTED.**

City Of Bridgeport
Economic And Community Development
And Environment Committee
Special Meeting
April 4, 2013

**** COUNCIL MEMBER STAFSTROM SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CDBG PUBLIC FACILITIES ALLOCATIONS PASSED WITH FAVOR (BRANTLEY, BLUNT, BANTA, AND LYONS) AND ONE ABSTENTION FROM THE FURNANCE REPLACEMENT FOR THE BRIDGEPORT YMCA (STAFSTROM).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CDBG HOUSING ALLOCATION AS PRESENTED.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CDBG HOUSING ALLOCATION AS PRESENTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CDBG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATION AS PRESENTED.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CDBG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATION AS PRESENTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CDBG ADMINISTRATION ALLOCATION.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CDBG ADMINISTRATION ALLOCATION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CDBG SECTION 108 LOAN REPAYMENT.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CDBG SECTION 108 LOAN REPAYMENT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CDBG HOPWA ALLOCATION.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CDBG HOPWA ALLOCATION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CDBG HOME ALLOCATION.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER STAFSTROM SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CDBG HOME ALLOCATION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Fairbairn then read the following statement into the record:

The Department of Housing Community Development anticipates a 5% funding cut to all of its entitled grants during the course of Program Year 39, which is the budget that is being voted on at this meeting, from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. In the event that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development applies funding cuts to the City of Bridgeport grant funds, the percentage cut will be distributed evenly among all funding recipients. Funding recipients through the City's CDBG, HGSG and HOPWA programs will be notified in writing of any funding cuts and how said cuts will affect their grant award.

He went on to explain that this was not a fixed dollar amount, but a percentage of their grant amount.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED ACTIONS IN THE EVENT OF THE 5% REDUCTION IN THE TOTAL GRANT AWARD.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE ENTIRE YEAR 39 CDBG FUNDING REQUESTS AND ALLOCATIONS AS PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER STAFSTROM SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE YEAR 39 CDBG FUNDING REQUESTS AND ALLOCATIONS AS PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City Of Bridgeport
Economic And Community Development
And Environment Committee
Special Meeting
April 4, 2013

