

Economic & Community Development Department

CDBG Policy Committee Special Meeting

Wednesday, December 7, 2022 – 3:00 PM

City Hall East – 150 Main Street, Conference Room A and on Zoom

ATTENDEES: Chairman Howard Schmelder, Commissioners Tom Hick and Mike Massarelli

ABSENT: Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano

STAFF PRESENT: ECD Executive Director Justin Malley, Grants Administrator Dawn Leger, and Sr. Admin. Assistant Sharon Arsego

GUESTS: None

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Schmelder at 3:00pm followed by a moment to remember Pearl Harbor Day and those who lost their lives that day. In the absence of an American flag the Pledge of Allegiance was not recited.

There was no public present for Public Participation.

II. Approval of minutes of the Special Meeting of October 20, 2022:

Chairman Schmelder requested a motion to accept the minutes from October 20, 2022. The motion was made by Commissioner Hick, Chairman Schmelder seconded the motion without further discussion requested, and the minutes were accepted into record.

III. Review and act on Letters of Intent for reallocated CDBG-CV3+ funds, and request complete applications from these agencies:

Howard acknowledged the receipt of the applicant packets for the second round of Covid funds for review and noted that a new situation has arisen which Dawn will cover as it will impact most of the decisions today.

Dawn Leger advised that Mayor Caggiano and she met with both Manny Martinez, the new President of the United Way, and Christine Theborge, the Director of the St. Vincent DePaul Shelter. These agencies are seeing a large influx of people seeking shelter and services including all the soup kitchens up 50% to 100% in requests for food. The need is higher across all support efforts in the city with a large percentage being the elderly with canes and walkers and general mobility difficulties. This is not a group that is comfortable with, or able to adapt to, tent living or living in their cars.

One reason for the change in the homeless demographic is the end to the moratorium on evictions. Residents are being evicted and rents are going up making finding a new home more difficult than usual. Christine and Manny are also seeing more folks from New Britain as they hear Bristol has more resources to offer and they're using the free bus service to come here for help.

Chairman Schmelder asked if the service could be reserved for or prioritized for Bristol residents. Dawn advised that many of the homeless do not have identification to distinguish their home city.

Dawn advised the shelter is full including the overflow area. St Vincent DePaul is opening up an additional area to help with rapid rehousing program as a space to work with folks on the applications. They're doing a great job moving them through to new housing. They're also opening a transitional housing facility but it won't be in effect this winter. That is the long-term plan which is needed. Task Force on Homelessness has been tackling this problem looking at the end product, and Christine is very focused on finding solutions to help people get back on their feet.

With these funds we could address this immediate crisis now. Dawn provided a summary of all the Covid funds awarded during the first round in January 2022 to illustrate what was already granted, the remaining Covid fund amount and the new requests they received

Howard asked for clarification on the need for food. Dawn advised the food needs are being met between food banks, pantries and foods being prepared with no food crisis that they're presently aware of based on the conversation at the Task Force on Homelessness. It was then agreed that the top priority for CDBG in the five-year plan is housing.

In addition to St. Vincent DePaul's application which is for shelter and related services, the Human Resources Agency of New Britain (HRA) has applied for enough funding assistance to keep folks where they are to avoid them becoming homeless. HRA has requested \$10,000.00. Howard proposed the balance of available funds after the \$10,000.00 should go to the shelter for the homeless need, to address both current and long-term goals.

Mike Massarelli agreed and said he is seeing more of the elderly population among the homeless needing healthcare in his private sector work. Tom also agreed and expressed concern about how to address this issue going forward. Howard advised it's a city-wide issue with CDBG doing what they can with the available funds.

Howard was distressed about what the elderly are facing and will bring this up to ARPA for consideration of their available funds. Justin agreed the ARPA conversation is a great idea and advised that Christine has some long-range plans to address the homeless situation as a whole. Discussion continued with HRA being awarded \$10,000.00 and St. Vincent DePaul being awarded the remaining balance of \$31,561.75. It was agreed that the shelter would need to provide details of the second overflow location and a deadline to provide that update so the funds can be used to address the immediate need.

Justin asked if full applications were needed or, given the timing, could the letters of intent only be used. These applicants provided their information in January 2022 for the first round of applications. Howard felt the application process should be followed. Dawn suggested a shortened version of the application and would attach the financials from January 2022 applications to put it all together with deadline of submission in a week and the members agreed.

Mike suggested that with \$10,000.00 to HRA and \$31,000.00 to St. Vincent DePaul, and the remaining \$561.75 be given to another applicant. Howard felt it best to award the full \$31,561.75 to St. Vincent DePaul.

The following motion read by Mike with an amended date from the original draft:

- IV. PROPOSED MOTION: Motion to accept Letters of Intent from HRA of New Britain for \$10,000.00 and St. Vincent DePaul Mission for \$31,561.75 for reallocated CDBG-CV3+ funds, and to request a shortened applications from these agencies for the programs identified in their letter(s) with a due date of December 15th at 3:00 p.m.

The motion was seconded by Tom Hick. All were in favor and the motion carried.

- V. Motion to adjourn
Chairman Schmelder requested a motion to adjourn. Mike Massarelli raised the motion which was seconded by Tom Hick. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 3:23 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Arsego - Recording Secretary