

**Economic & Community Development  
Department  
CDBG Policy Committee Special Meeting**

Thursday, November 7, 2024 at 4pm  
City Council Chambers

ATTENDEES: Chairman Howard Schmelder, Commissioners Thomas Hick and Mickey Goldwasser, and Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Dawn Leger, Grants Administrator; Justin Malley, ECD Executive Director; David Sgro, Housing Rehab & Project Specialist (Zoom)

**AGENDA**

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Schmelder called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and lead all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Approval of minutes of the Special Meeting of June 18, 2024**

Chairmen Schmelder requested a motion to approve the Minutes from the June 18, 2024 Special Meeting. Commissioner Hick made the motion to approve the Minutes which was seconded by Mayor Caggiano. There were no changes or additions noted. All were in favor and the Minutes were accepted into the record.

**III. Allow for any public comment on agenda items**

There was no public comment.

**IV. Residential Rehab Program**

Dr. Dawn Leger proposed CDBG Residential Rehabilitation policy change to move from a grant program to a no-interest loan program. There has been a growing demand for the Residential Rehab program which currently operates as a grant with a 10-year, prorated payback schedule to the city. Currently, if after 10 years the home remains under original ownership from the time the grant was awarded, none of the grant funds are repaid to the city.

The Residential Rehabilitation program is federally funded by HUD. The amount awarded to the city has decreased each year, while the demand for the program continues to increase. The proposed change from a grant program to a no-interest loan program allows for the program to be more self-sustainable.

As a loan, the homeowner only repays the city when the property is sold. It was confirmed that the loan operates as a lien against the property, with the city being paid first, and in full, when the property is sold. Repaid loan funds would allow the Residential Rehabilitation Program to be more self-supporting in addition to using the yearly

awarded HUD funds. With fully repaid loans, more projects can be completed, and the gap between available funding and high demand will narrow. Discussion followed, including a homeowner's ability to return for a second grant, the timeframe for that option, and what the cap amount on the grant(s) would be.

After the discussion, the Policy Committee submitted the following guidelines for consideration:

- An initial loan award cap of \$15,000.00, with a lifetime cap of \$25,000.00
- A homeowner who received an initial loan may apply again within the following two years

Mayor Caggiano read the following Proposed Motion regarding the proposed change to the CDBG Residential Rehabilitation Program:

*Motion to move the Residential Rehabilitation Grant Program from one of a grant award process to a loan program process in which the full CDBG award is repaid upon transfer of the property, certain refinance, or other significant event, pending consultation with, and approval by, the Economic and Community Development Board, and the program has an individual program cap of \$15,000.00 and a maximum lifetime program cap of \$25,000.00.*

*Motion to initiate program change for CDBG Housing Rehabilitation projects initiated on or after January 1, 2025.*

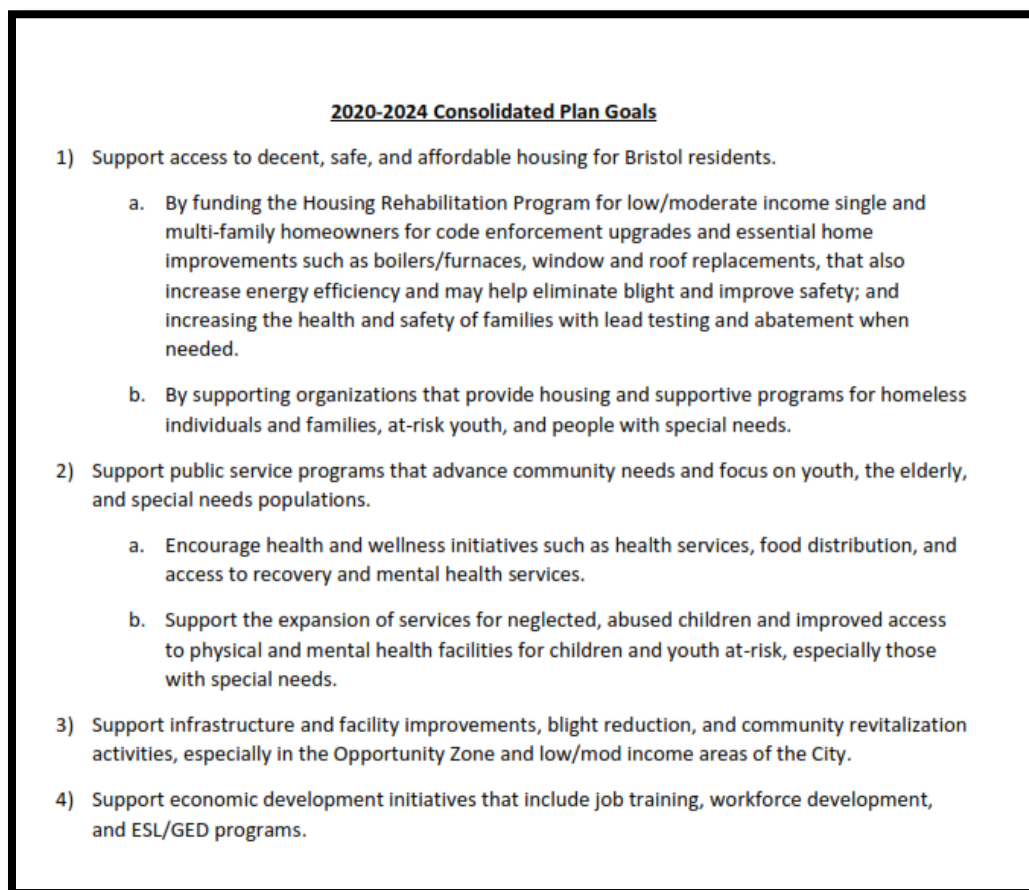
Commissioner Schmelder seconded the Motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor and the Motion passed into the record.

**V. 5-Year Consolidated Plan**

Dr. Dawn Leger spoke about the results of the survey that had circulated through numerous agencies and their boards, as well as to the public, over the last year. She noted a possible shift in priorities, and recommended the Consolidated Plan Goals shift, moving #4 up to the #3 spot to focus more on economic and community development. (The 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan Goals are provided as Fig. 1. below for reference).

Dr. Leger also mentioned that, with the reduction in HUD provided funds each year, and the limited time frame of one year for project completion, it's been increasingly more difficult to fund public facilities projects. As a result, In the previous CDBG Year 50, no public facilities projects were funded, and the survey data supports a shift to workforce development and job training.

Fig. 1.



Justin Malley advised that there is room for improvement with the workforce component in the city. Chairman Schmelder noted that the latest HUD audit of the city's CDBG Program was clean, with the funds allocated in alignment to the city's Consolidated Plan. The Committee was in agreement that adjusting the order of the guidelines would be acceptable.

Public Hearings will be scheduled starting after January 1, 2025 for grant applicants to speak at, and also for city residents to provide additional input on the 5-Year Plan. These are two separate items which yield separate meetings.

Dr. Leger made a note that broadband access and climate preparedness, or climate resiliency, are two new items that have come out of the survey in recent years. Currently, 94% of Bristol residents have broadband access, and she continues to stay informed regarding the city's climate preparedness. Discussion followed that included other areas of concern including homelessness.

## **VI. Adjournment**

With discussion conclude, the Chairman made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 4:29pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego  
Recording Secretary

Unapproved