



HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

January 26, 2021

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Clarksville Housing and Community Development Committee was called to order by Chair Wanda Smith on Tuesday, January 26, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. in the Housing and Community Development Conference Room, 1 Public Square, Suite 201, Clarksville, Tennessee. This meeting was conducted via Zoom.

ATTENDANCE

The following members were connected to the meet:

PARTICIPATING VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM:

Council Members Wanda Smith and Wanda Allen, Housing and Community Development Staff members Lisa Walker, Deborah Johnson, Sirena Clark and Tammy Kilgore and Internal Audit Staff Cala Knight

PHYSICALLY PRESENT:

Council Members Jason Knight, Trisha Butler, and Travis Holleman, Housing and Community Development Staff members Dennis Newburn and Brittney Cates

APPROVAL OF ELECTRONIC MEETING

Chair Smith read the notice for the approval of the electronic meeting due to current COVID-19 concerns.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve meeting electronically. The motion was seconded by Councilman Holleman and passed unanimously.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Councilman Knight made a motion to adopt the minutes of the January 19, 2021 meeting as read. The motion was seconded by Councilman Holleman and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

CDBG-CV applications and funding recommendations resolution

Dennis Newburn stated that at the last committee meeting on January 19, 2021, a discussion was held in regard to the CDBG-CV Coronavirus applications. The process actually started approximately October/November, 2020 and concluded with the previous committee actually reviewing and scoring the applications. Mayor Pitts and Mr. Newburn then reviewed the applications and are now sharing their recommendations with the committee.

Mr. Newburn explained there were eight proposals received through the application process. The most important thing about the application process is that activities must in some way shape or form address the issue of the Coronavirus. The City expects to receive approximately 1.4 million dollars that will be used to address this issue. This funding is a special allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds.

With respect to the ideas and opportunities that came up as a result of the discussion, utility assistance relief, persons who are on the verge of being evicted as relates to Covid, job creation and health care are all examples of things that need to be addressed with regard to Covid and are consistent with the rules governing the program.

The proposals were reviewed to check if they (1) address the issue of eligibility; (2) address the issue of need; and (3) address the issue of availability of funds. After the review, the following matrix was created.

The United Way submitted a proposal and initially requested \$100,000. Housing and Community Development will be working with them to address the issue of eviction prevention. There are many families in this town that are subject to eviction based upon Covid and the funds used will go directly to landlords to basically pay for arrearages for rent or in some cases deposit assistance.

Chair Smith stated that she noticed the United was allocated \$600,000 and the other organizations were allocated smaller amounts. She stated that normally United Way gives funding to other organizations and it was stated earlier that these funds would be

going to landlords. She explained that she did not have a problem with the amount of money being allocated to United Way, but questioned why United Way was receiving so much and how it was going to be disbursed. Mr. Newburn explained that historically the Clarksville United Way has been doing this type of work and are set-up to do this very well and to do it with efficiency. For all of the organizations that applied for these funds, it was felt this would be the best organization to partner with to literally get these funds out the door. Chair Smith asked if the landlords would have to apply for these funds, how long would it take them to get it, and what would be the actual process? Mr. Newburn explained that the process is yet to be finalized but what is envisioned is a process whereby the community is notified of the availability of funds along with the requirements of the receipt of funds. There would be an intake process that would be managed by the United Way for this money and if the applicants are successful, then the United Way through their intake process, would be contacting the prospective landlords to provide direct assistance.

The Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Care Center initially requested \$75,000. Mr. Newburn stated he was very happy to announce that this proposal has been increased to \$300,000. The justification for this increase is there are many people in this community that have been adversely affected by Covid and need health care. This contribution would help to provide free health care services on a first come first serve basis for those that have been affected by Covid and especially those who are homeless.

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee – Mr. Newburn explained that both he the Mayor are of the opinion as foreclosures continue to loom with the moratorium, there would need to be a vehicle present to make certain families that are facing foreclosure or eviction can know what their rights are under Tennessee law and federal law and in some cases to be able to receive legal representation through Legal Services. This is the first time Housing and Community Development has ever partnered with this organization to this magnitude. Mr. Newburn stated that we are looking forward to working with Legal Aid and being able to refer clients to the organization to help people who either don't understand landlord tenant law or are faced with the possibility of losing their home to provide legal assistance. Councilperson Allen stated that Legal Aid has certain criteria that a person needs to meet. They review past year taxes and other similar items. She asked for this funding, would Legal Aid specifically look at Covid specific situations for potential clients to access this service or will they go by their normal criteria? Mr. Newburn explained that it must be Covid related and would also be by the funding program requirements and not necessarily Legal Aid's. In terms of being able to access resources to legal services, it should be much easier. Mr. Newburn stated the key words is that it must be Covid related. Chair Smith asked for an example of a Covid related incident. Mr. Newburn explained a family or an individual in a family could have been gainfully employed and lost their job because they became ill. Because of the loss of this job and the loss of income, they are now in a situation that perhaps they are losing where they live so Legal Aid would be able to help them. Council Person Allen asked if this money that would be allocated to Legal Aid is not to represent clients buy it's just to give them. Mr. Newburn explained there will be a small portion that will be used in the event that potential clients would actually require counsel through the courts. Most of the

funding will be used primarily to provide staffing assistance but there will be a small part of it that will be used for representation.

Butterfly Moments/Housing and Community Development – Housing and Community Development is proposing to provide a joint venture with this organization. This organization is relatively new to the community with respect to what they do. Mr. Newburn stated it is our hope that by working with them, we will be able to provide utility relief assistance on a case by case basis. It would be an experiment for them and an experiment for us since we would be working directly with the organization to make certain that the program rules and regulations are completed. Mr. Newburn then stated it is also our hope that as a result of this partnership, this organization will gain needed experience and will be able to apply for other sources of money down the road. Chair Smith asked since this organization is so new, would a plan be laid out as to how they are to distribute this money? Mr. Newburn stated that Housing and Community Development will be with the organization every step of the way to make certain that they understand the rules and processes and also with regard to the distribution of funding. He explained it's a relatively small amount but a wonderful opportunity to partner with this organization to get funds out and to get them in a situation whereby they're able to do bigger and better things in this community. Chair Smith stated she noticed the funding was limited to utility relief assistance. She asked if there would be a certain amount of a utility bill that could be paid. For example, if a client had a bill of \$300, could the full amount be paid? Mr. Newburn explained we are in the process of establishing caps since there will obviously be a lot of people who need assistance. Tentatively, we're thinking somewhere in the area of a maximum of \$1,000 which would cover arrearages and would also cover down payment requirements from the utility companies.

Plum Street House Rehabilitation – Mr. Newburn explained that Housing and Community Development owns the house located at 160 Plum Street. He stated we would like to rehabilitate the house so it can be used in conjunction with Urban Ministries to house families who are in one of their facilities and may have contracted Covid and need to be isolated. For now, this would be the primary use of the house. Eventually, we would expand the use of the house to be used for fire burn-out victims as well as in some cases our rehabilitation program where clients may need to be temporarily relocated to do housing rehabilitation. Chair Smith asked if it can be used as a transitional house as well as for isolation depending on what the circumstances are at that moment. Mr. Newburn stated that was correct but its primary purpose once it is rehabilitated will be for Covid. Councilperson Allen asked if there was a timeline on how long it would take to get this house rehabilitated. Mr. Newburn stated that the staff is currently getting ready to send it out for bid so perhaps by the next meeting he could tell exactly where it is in the construction process.

Program Administration - Mr. Newburn explained under the rules of the Community Development Block Grant Program Coronavirus, we are allowed to take 20% as program administration fees. That figure of \$287,952.20 is not our number but it is what the federal government has allowed us to take for use to run our programs.

Mr. Newburn explained this represents the Mayor's vision with respect to the funding opportunities presented with the Coronavirus funds. This represents some of our best work in terms of identifying those activities that will have the greatest impact for persons who either have been affected by Covid or prevention mechanisms in the event to protect from Covid. Mr. Newburn stated he believed the utility pieces as well as the partnership with Matthew Walker and with Legal Aid Society are huge. He stated that he was very excited about the partnership with Butterfly Moments and capping it off with the rehabilitation of the house on Plum Street. These are all very good services that will help address Coronavirus in this community.

Councilperson Butler asked how many organizations applied or submitted proposals for this funding. Mr. Newburn stated just as a note with respect to Community Development Block Grant funds, we serve either non-profit entities or for-profit. There were eight organizations that applied for funding. Councilperson Butler asked which organizations were turned down for funding. Mr. Newburn stated we could provide the council members the names of those organizations. Chair Smith stated there was a thorough survey and a question and answer period for each organization. Each organization was required to write a proposal for their funding request. The Housing and Community Development Director and his staff reviewed the proposals to determine the need and then the Mayor and his staff made the final decision with Housing and Community Development. Mr. Newburn explained that prior to the arrival of the new Council, the former committee evaluated the proposals. He stated that we would make sure the new committee members receive a briefing book on all the proposals that were submitted.

Councilperson Allen asked if a letter had been sent out to the organizations that were denied as to why they did not receive funding. Mr. Newburn explained that these organizations will not receive anything from our office until the process is completed. This process involved the former committee members and now the new committee. There is another step assuming the committee passes the resolution at today's meeting. The next step would be to go before the full City Council where there will be two meetings that this will be discussed again. No notices will be sent out until such time as the Council has had the opportunity to review and respond to this request. Chair Smith stated there was one organization that failed to submit their proposal on time and was not able to be considered.

Councilperson Allen asked if for example, someone went to United Way and their request was denied for any purpose, would there be an appeal process set up for that person to be able to appeal the decision of United Way. Mr. Newburn stated we do not have one. He explained that given the fact that this issue is such a prevalent problem, these funds are going to be available on a first come first serve basis and a potential client would either qualify based on Community Development Block Grant rules or would not. An example of that would be income. There are income requirements that are established. There are also household requirements that are established as a condition of the receipt of these funds. All of these requirements are provided up front as part of the application process so when a person goes through the intake process, they either qualify

based on the criteria that has been established by Housing and Community Development or they don't. This is point one. Point two is availability of dollars. It's on a first come first serve basis. Most likely, if a potential client does not qualify, it's because they didn't meet the income requirements as established by the federal government or the house did not belong to them, or there was insufficient information to basically qualify for the application, or the funds are gone. Typically, the organizations that we deal with or we fund have their own policies with respect to this issue. The only time Housing and Community Development does this is for the programs that we actually operate and which would include the housing programs.

Chair Smith asked for a motion to accept the CDBG-CV funds as recommended to the various organizations. Councilman Knight made a motion to accept as recommended. The motion was seconded by Councilman Holleman and passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMENTS *(five minutes each)*

In accordance with the Alternative Public Comments procedure, requests must be made no less than 48 hours prior to the meeting.

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Councilman Holleman to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Knight and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:24 p.m.