

CDBG Advisory Board
3/18/14

Members Present: Karen Freudenberger, Jen Powell, Jim Langan, Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur, Bianca LeGrand, Jim Holway, Sterling Scoville, Jane Helmstetter, Fauna Hurley

Excused: Lisa Lillibridge, Russ Elek

Staff Present: Marcy Krumbine, Denise Girard

Introductions / Review of Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented on a motion by Sterling, and seconded by Karen.

Public Comment

None.

Marcy outlined the agenda, noting two additions:

1. Have not yet received final word from HUD on 2014 CDBG allocation, so would like direction from the Board on how to change allocations based on whether we get more or less money than we're expecting.
2. If we have time left following allocations tonight, consider reviewing the process this evening rather than at a final meeting in April.

Review of Allocation Process & Budget Balancing Rules

Marcy reviewed the allocation process explaining that the Board doesn't have to allocate the total amount available, noting that we are spending some of last year's contingency this year.

Development Application Discussion, Conflicts

Marcy asked if there are any conflicts of interest with any of the development applications. There are none.

DEV1 CHT / Preservation & Creation of Affordable Housing

No conflicts.

Comments:

- Inconsistencies in application
- Solid
- Clear in every objective

DEV2 ReSOURCE / YouthBuild Energy Efficiency & Housing Rehab

No conflicts.

Comments:

- Was not as well put together.
- Talked about the stipend being cut. Disappointed that they didn't put money in the budget to make up that cut. Can we suggest that they do that?
- While they lost participants, they gained really committed people.
- Important to convey to them. Lost YouthBuild grant.
- It isn't unduplicative; there are other programs that do similar things.
- Are there programs serving this population?
- Can we be more efficient at job training rather than such specific populations?
- They have AmeriCorps members; great way to leverage additional aid.
- Marcy had conversations with them about cultural competency and diversity. Only one teacher, and it's difficult to reach out and diversify classroom. We're pushing them to grow in this area.
- How diverse is the dropout population?

DEV3 ArtsRiot / Kitchen Collective

No conflicts.

Comments:

- Application doesn't hit any of the criteria. No correlation with CDBG goals of keeping people out of poverty, moving out of poverty, etc. Misses the mark.
- They seem to be at a stage of figuring it out.
- For-profit organization. Marcy noted that there is nothing in the regulations that says it has to be a non-profit, but they have to meet the national objectives.
- Great project, but this is not what CDBG money is intended for.

DEV4 Mercy Connections / Women's Small Business Program

No conflicts.

Comments:

- Much stronger application this year, tied into the goals, descriptive of what they do, more targeted. Much improved.
- Strongest criticism is that they're using CDBG to keep tuition funds down for all participants. Prefer they use funds to cover costs and provide tuition subsidies for low-income participants. Everyone gets the same subsidy, regardless of income.
- Should be sliding fee scale.

DEV5 Burlington Dismas House

No conflicts.

Comments:

- Using funds up front to reduce operating costs later on is a good idea. Really like that.

- Really liked this application. Great organization.
- They wrote an application that really connected to their goals. Impressed that they were able to draw that connection.

DEV6 Ethan Allen Residence Expansion

No conflicts.

Comments:

- Heard really good things about their facility in Bristol. Integrated into community.
- Focused on Medicaid eligible clients. So needed.
- Treating that population with the same level of respect and service as expensive senior housing.

DEV7 CHC Safe Harbor

No conflicts.

Comments:

- Great project. Increasing capacity, one-time infusion of money.
- Such a need. They go into the woods and meet people where they are.
- They hire skilled people to work with this population.
- Outreach and patient increase is phenomenal.
- Concerned that current estimates are based on only one contractor. Marcy explained that, if funded, they will have to get bids before they go to contract. The grant is reimbursable, so they must spend and then request reimbursement.

Development Allocations

DEV3 ArtsRiot / Kitchen Collective

Received nine red dots indicating that Board members funded at 25% or less.

Jennifer WB suggested taking this application off the table.

Fauna seconded Jennifer's suggestion, noting that it doesn't fit within the CDBG guidelines.

Comments:

- Suggest we let them know that they need to meet the goal structure of CDBG if they want to apply in the future.
- We shouldn't zero fund, because there is some benefit to what they're proposing.
- They could apply for funding from other sources, but CDBG is not the right pot of money. Applaud the work they're doing, but CDBG is not the right funding source.
- Their mission is good, but it must fit within the goals of CDBG. The entire application included language about profit-making.
- There was \$8,000 unaccounted for in their budget.

On a vote of 9-0, this application was removed from consideration.

DEV4 Mercy Connections / WSBP

Funding at \$10,000 passed on a vote of 9-0.

DEV7 CHC Safe Harbor

Funding at the average amount of \$74,782 failed by a vote of 8-1.

Funding at \$77,877 passed by a vote of 9-0.

DEV6 Ethan Allen Residence Expansion

Funding at \$36,000 passed by a vote of 9-0.

DEV5 Burlington Dismas House

- Discussion regarding why the residents who live there can't help with the remodeling work. Would be a great learning opportunity.
- Liability risk.

Funding at \$22,385 passed by a vote of 8-1.

DEV1 CHT / Affordable Housing

Funding at \$85,000 passed by a vote of 9-0.

DEV2 ReSOURCE / YouthBuild Energy Efficiency

Funding at \$50,395 passed by a vote of 9-0.

Following allocations, there was a balance of \$11,083 in the Development pot. Marcy explained that this will carry over as a contingency for future CDBG needs.

Next, Marcy asked for the Board's direction relating to Public Service projects should we get a larger allocation from HUD. She noted that last year we added back to those that were cut in the final allocation.

In this case, we would go back to the first vote for CVAA Case Management (\$12,722), VT Works for Women Fresh Food (\$22,333) and CHC Dental Care (\$7,000). The Board agreed, and there was consensus that the remaining amount would be split in half and allocated to the two top scorers (COTS Families in Transition & Homeshare).

If we receive less than anticipated, the amounts would be lowered proportionally to the amount we originally recommended.

The Board agreed to match the percentage of the total amount originally allocated; however, Project Integration would get a minimum of \$5,000.

Karen asked that we be sure to hear from everyone regarding the evaluation of the meetings and process, since Russ and Lisa couldn't be here tonight.

Meeting/Process Evaluation

Delta

- Cost per beneficiary unclear.
- Collaboration – don't want laundry list. Give specifics.
- Suggestion about cost per beneficiary on CHT calculation. Hard to count people when dealing with units of housing.
- Font size should be at least 10 or 11.
- Some had no margins.
- Should have a funding limit for Public Service requests. Marcy noted that we need to treat applicants the same for next year, and then change for the next round.

Plus

- Had money to spend for DEV.
- Like-minded tonight – easy.
- Quality of applications much better this year.
- Scoring grid was easy to use.
- Less meetings this year.
- Topics for two-year applications.
- Allowing only one application per organization.

Changes for next year:

- Extraneous step in voting. Not sure why we need consensus. When you're dealing with 20 applications and each has 6 votes, it's too much.
- Perhaps have conversations about streamlining voting process.

Marcy will collate these responses, minutes and evaluations and send to Board members. Will send an invitation to get together to discuss the voting procedure.

Fauna asked if we could add a quick reference line on the individual scoring sheets to add your favorite thing and least favorite thing about each application.

Marcy asked Board members to share their favorite applications and why.

- Jane – Safe Harbor Clinic and VITA
- Jen P – Dismas House
- Jennifer WB – Dismas House
- Fauna – CHC Dental Care
- Sterling – CHC Dental Care, Mercy Connections and Dismas House
- Jim L – COTS Families in Transition
- Bianka – Safe Harbor and VITA

Jennifer WB expressed disappointment that Project Integration didn't do better, and feels that CVAA consistently gets knocked down. Wishes they could do better.

Marcy asked for feedback about having her facilitate rather than an outside facilitator. Jane felt it was too much for Marcy to be doing, noting that she needs to keep us on task. Marcy noted that she doesn't mind doing it, but it pulls on both sides of what she should be doing. However, it saves us money.

Jen P commended Denise and Marcy for their top notch work!

Karen appreciated that the staff listened and was responsive.

Next Steps

Marcy explained that we will present the Board's recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, and they will become part of the Action Plan. The draft Plan will be ready by April 9 for a 30-day public comment period. A Public Hearing will be held before City Council on April 28. Anyone can submit comments. Two weeks later, the Council will approve the Action Plan. Marcy added that there has never been a time where the Mayor and Council did not take the Board's recommendations. They really trust this process.

Marcy noted that she'll also send a communication to each applicant letting them know the Board's recommendations.

Denise will send out draft minutes from tonight's meeting, and asked that Board members let her know if they have comments/changes.

Jennifer WB asked about the protocol for talking to applicants who might contact Board members about their recommendations. Marcy asked that they be directed to contact her, and that she would forward to the CEDO Director and Mayor, if necessary.

Karen added that the bottom line is there isn't enough money to address all of the community's needs, and that people should contact their congressional delegation.

The topic for next year is early childhood, education and youth for 2 year grants and equity for 1 year grants.

Marcy thanked the members for their service and commitment to the process. She noted that NPA representatives typically serve for 2 years or more. She asked that they consider continuing to serve.

The meeting ended at 8:00 pm.