

## **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory Board Meeting**

**February 19, 2019**

The meeting began at 6:04 PM

**Members Present:** *Chol Dhoor, Jessica Hyman, Alissa Faber, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol, Kevin Deutermann, Alex Farrell, James Loop, Mary Riley, Alex Friend, Jane Helmstetter, Sam Beall, Gabrielle Sealy*

**Staff Present:** Marcella Gange, Val Russell

Val welcomed the group and started introductions.

The draft meeting minutes are reviewed and a motion to approve is made and seconded and passed.

**Public Comment** – The floor was opened for public comment, there was none, and it was closed.

Next, Val reviewed the procedures for disclosing conflicts of interest, one person has a COI for one application so they will not vote or participate in the discussion regarding that application. The group then reviewed the Pass/Fail question answers from ECHO.

Next, Val reviewed how the allocation process works, and the materials presented. The Board decided that they wanted to have a conversation about the merits of all of the applications before making any funding decisions.

The group discussed whether to consider the Dream application for funding because it was late due to extenuating circumstances. A motion was made to consider the application for funding and seconded – Vote - 10 yes, 1 no, 1 abstention. - passed

Next the floor was opened for a general discussion about the process of reading and rating the applications.

Then the group discussed whether they would remove any applications from consideration based on number of red dots. A motion was made to remove the Resource application from consideration - Vote - 3 yes, 9 no – Fail. The Board will consider all Public Service applications for funding.

A motion was made to discuss the applications in order of application number, passed unanimously.

### **PS1 ECHO – ECHO Early Learning – Request \$50,000 – Rank 5**

Board Member discussion on application:

- Given the number of kids benefiting it was one of the top choices for one Board Member. Childcare is a big problem in the City, will help kids from 2 years on, really giving them a jumpstart.
- Number of people served is really impressive, likes that it is handed off from the YMCA. Application was a little lacking, but wants to fully fund it.
- The application was poorly written and they didn't follow the directions. Feels like he needed to reject it because they didn't answer the questions and were not articulate.
- Another Member rated them low, they had a low average score, almost as low as the lowest application which we considered removing.

- One Member likes that it seems to be transitional funding, and that after 2 years they could be self-sustaining. Really likes that they also provide education to caregivers.
- Return grantees have better written applications in general but we need to look beyond that for innovation. This Board Member did not feel like the application was written badly.
- The # of beneficiaries is really impressive, the dots are also indicative of how much they asked for versus how much there is to give, not just indicative of how well the application did.
- Wanted to like the proposal, likes that it serves a diverse group of beneficiaries, doesn't understand how the program connects with ECHO's mission. They didn't engage in all of the questions – talked around the answers.
- It offers the services that ECHO provides to new populations. But the issue is about the amount. Likes the idea of exposing more kids that wouldn't be able to go to ECHO with their families.

### **PS2 Lund – Lund Early Childhood Ed. Program – Requested \$40,000 – Rank 3**

Board Member discussion on application:

- One Board Member thought this was one of the stronger applications, feels like we should fully fund this application.
- Agrees, it's very well written, but serves a small percentage of low/moderate income persons compared to everyone else.
- Members discussed the symbolic value of receiving a CDBG grant even if it's a small amount – that it's a seal of approval for other funding.
- Does not seem to be innovative – not adding more participants or new programs.
- Seconds comment above, but wants to highlight that it's the gold standard, a 5 star program. Doesn't like that they use the funding for their mortgage, that's hard to get excited about.
- Lack of quantitative measures when talking about program design is frustrating.
- They are a five star program, they may assume that people know what that means and understand the data behind that, but Board Members would appreciate more hard data.
- Likes that there were clear outcomes, didn't like that the organization experience answer didn't talk about years of experience running the program. Makes them wonder if there is high turnover.

### **PS3 of SHCC – Elementary After School Program – Requested \$25,000 – Rank 2**

Board Member discussion on application:

- Would have liked to see more Burlington based data and less State-wide data.
- Likes that they talk about the connection that the program has made with the schools and this particular community. Their budget is so small it's amazing that they are running the program on that budget.
- Likes that they have so many volunteers – they have a lot of community support.
- Thought it was a great application, they are doing a lot, they are providing translation, increasing time that students are engaged in programming, and reducing the down time afterschool. Thinks we should fully fund this one.
- They serve 100% low income students and a lot of their students have behavioral challenges.

**PS4 – The Dream Program Inc. – Dream Summer Day Camp Scholarships – Requested \$40,000 – Rank 4**

Board Member discussion on application:

- Outcomes and measurement tools were weak, youth surveys. Ten hours per week seemed to be a lot of staff time to spend on evaluation if it's only the surveys, wondering about that.
- Budget concern, why are they allocating 5% towards the Director and Operations staff salaries? Thought the best section of their app. was the outcomes. Many answers were vague would prefer them to tell it straight.
- Didn't score it well, but likes that it is focused on serving at housing sites, a key location for serving low income youth. Had concerns about the budget, if you look at Agency budget they are anticipating a huge jump in private donations next year, is that promised?
- They have resources and access to foundations that other programs do not have, they get funding from colleges, which might be the private funding they are anticipating.
- Feels like they are promising too much, disconnect between the application and the outcomes, wanted more detail on the outcomes and how they connect to the Mission. Struggled with fully understanding the outcomes.
- They have a small staff and the app was late, so one member was worried about their ability to complete the reporting. Another Board Member spoke about how many Summer programs have a barebones staff in the winter so that makes sense for this type of organization.
- Struggled with application, it was late, the situation that caused it to be late, is terrible and the Board Member feels bad about that, but he is wondering why there was not another staff member to take over writing the application. Doesn't like that it was late, thinks that's indicative of a bigger problem. Doesn't want to fund it. Thinks that data was well articulated.
- They are also using a lot of volunteers, they have access to a lot of college students.

**Discussion of PS5 – ReSource YouthBuild - \$15,000 Requested – Rank 6**

- Likes that it serves people that need an alternative avenue for education.
- Gave it the highest marks, they have precise data, is a great program for Youth gives them usable skills and benefits the community by making homes more efficient. Shouldn't penalize them for being funded under the minimum.
- Supports people in 2 ways but doesn't feel like a lot of bang for the "CDBG buck".
- Strong application focuses well on their core mission. Struggled with low number of people served and the high cost per beneficiary.
- Major decision point for one Member was around what would happen if they didn't get the grant. It wouldn't stop them from doing the training but they would have to prioritize other types of jobs.
- Thinks this funding is not the best match for the program.
- Really likes that this program produces people who are trained in a field that is lacking skilled labor – those 6 people could go on to work in that field for 25 – 30 years.
- They are working with people who are blind and visually impaired. That is a population that we don't see in other apps.

**Discussion of PS6 – CVOEO – VITA – Requested \$10,000 – Rank 1**

- At end of app it said they would cut evening and weekend hours if not fully funded. That struck one Member. It was his highest scoring app, but he found that concerning.
- Why would they cut those hours first? That doesn't make sense to another member.
- For one member - \$176 is a lot of money for a low income family to save. And it's a really small grant to be able to supply that. Great application, lets fully fund it.
- Great value for little CDBG \$, great program, likes the simplicity. Is wondering how many people actually pay people to do their taxes or if they struggle to do it themselves. Another member pointed out that people are afraid of doing their taxes, there is a stigma or people are intimidated especially people who are low income.
- Another person knows that people miss a lot of money by getting renters rebate or low income tax credit, this would be really helpful.

The Board took a break at 7:45 and reconvened at 7:55pm

Next the group reviewed the Budget Balancing Rules and voted on how to proceed though the applications for the budgeting process. A Board Member made a motion to start with highest ranked and move towards to lowest rank. Vote – 6 yes, 6 no - Fail

A motion is made to start with the lowest ranked and move to the highest – Vote - 11 yes, 1 no - Pass

Next the Board Members proceeded through the budgeting process:

**Resource**

Board Member proposed to fund \$0 - vote taken for consensus – 6 yes, 6 no – Fail

Member proposed to fund at \$10,000 – Vote: 2 yes, 10 No – Fail

Member proposed to fund Chol \$5,050 – Vote 2 yes, 10 No – Fail

Board Member makes a proposal to start over with the highest ranking application and move down to lowest. Vote: 12 Yes - pass.

**VITA**

Board Member proposes funding at **\$10,000**. Vote: 9 yes, 2 No, 1 abstain – Passed

**SHCC**

Board Member proposes funding at **\$20,000**. Vote: 7 yes, 5 no – Passed

**Lund**

Member proposes funding at \$20,000. Vote: 4 yes, 8 no - Fail

Member proposes funding at \$25,000. Vote: 5 yes, 7 no – Fail

Member proposes funding at **\$23,018**. Vote: 8 yes, 4 no - Passed

**DREAM**

Member proposes funding at \$40,000. Vote: 4 yes, 8 no - Fail

Member proposes funding at \$0. Vote: 6 yes, 6 no - Fail

Member proposes funding at **\$0**. Vote: 7 yes, 5 no – Passed

## ECHO

Member proposes funding at \$0. Vote: 3 yes, 9 no - Fail

Member proposes funding at \$40,000. Vote: 5 yes, 7 no - Fail

Member proposes funding at \$35,000. Vote: 5 yes, 7 no - Fail

Member proposes funding at \$30,000. Vote: 6 yes, 6 no - Fail

Member proposes funding at \$25,000. Vote: 5 yes, 7 no - Fail

Member proposes funding at **\$27,000**. Vote: 9 yes, 3 no – Passed

## ReSource – YouthBuild

Member proposes funding at \$13,000. Vote: 6 yes, 6 no - Failed

Member proposes funding Sara Holbrook an additional \$5,000, funding ReSource \$0, and funding Lund an additional \$6,000.

Three separate votes were taken, one for each part of the proposal:

Vote **\$25,000** to Sara Holbrook – 10 yes, 2 no – Pass

Vote \$31,018 to Lund – 5 yes, 7 no - Fail

Vote **\$0** to ReSource – 10 yes, 2 no - Passed

A Board Member made a new proposal to split the remaining \$8,000 between LUND and ECHO's applications. Two votes were taken, one for each part of the proposal.

Vote to fund Lund **\$27,000** – 8 yes, 4 no - Passed

Vote to fund ECHO **\$31,000** – 9 yes, 3 no – Passed

Next the Board voted for consensus on the final Public Service budget. Motion made and seconded.

Vote: 12 yes, 0 no – passed

ID #	Project Name	Organization	Amount Requested	Board Recommendation	Rank
PS1	ECHO Early Learning**	ECHO	\$50,000	\$31,000	5
PS2	Lund Early Childhood Ed Program**	Lund	\$40,000	\$27,018	3
PS3	Elementary Afterschool Program**	Sara Holbrook Community Center	\$25,000	\$25,000	2
PS4	Dream Summer Daycamp Scholarships**	The Dream Program Inc	\$40,000	\$0	4
PS5	YouthBuild	ReSource	\$15,000	\$0	6
PS6	Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program	CVOEO - Chittenden Community Action	\$10,000	\$10,000	1

**Total Funding approved: \$ 93,018**

Next Val reminded the group of the homework deadline of Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup> at 4pm and answered Board Member questions about rating development applications.

**Meeting Evaluation**

What worked well: discussing all applications first and then moving on to the budgeting process.

What could have been improved: a more precise voting process around accepting late applications.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Val Russell  
Community Development Specialist

DRAFT