

MINUTES
CDBG Advisory Board
February 20, 2013

Board Members Present: Jen Dextrateur, Russ Elek, Japhet Els, Karen Freudenberger, Jane Helmstetter, Jim Holway, Jason L'Ecuyer, Lisa Lillibridge, Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur

Also Present: Amy Carmola, United Way; Gary De Carolis; Marcy Krumbine; Denise Girard

The meeting opened at 6:00 p.m. with a welcome from CEDO Director Peter Owens and introductions. On a motion by Jason L'Ecuyer and a second from Jim Holway, the minutes from the 1/29/13 meeting were approved without change.

Denise and Gary next explained that the 1/29/13 meeting was improperly warned. Based on a reading from the City Attorney's Office, the Board is being asked to ratify their vote from that meeting for the record. The Board vote was to include for consideration CDBG Application PS3 Housing Assistance Program from CVOEO, which was received at 4:23 pm, just past the 4:00 pm deadline. Jim Holway moved, seconded by Russ Elek, to ratify the vote. All were in favor.

There were no public comments.

The Board then discussed the Public Service applications; identified conflicts of interest, as well as "interests," i.e., relationships with organizations or programs that are not conflicts but that other Board members might want to be aware of; and identified any pass/fail questions.

Jason L'Ecuyer noted that in order to keep to the timeframe, the Board would have 3.5 minutes to discuss each Public Service Application.

Marcy asked Board members to provide both positive and constructive feedback related to their review that she could share with applicants.

PS1 Daystation (COTS)

Conflicts: No

The application mentions both qualitative and quantitative outcomes, but only provides qualitative. In general, United Way grantees seemed to do a better job at this because they are required to do it as part of the United Way grant process.

The request is for staff as opposed to the actual program.

PS2 Families in Transition (COTS)

Conflicts: No

The application lacks a broader connection to National Objectives. Discussion turned to lobbying, and it was stated that Federal funds cannot be used for lobbying.

PS3 Housing Assistance Program (CVOEO)

Conflicts: No

The budget section leaves some information blank. Under Community Support Section, some Board members would rather see them refer to other sections of the application for the information, rather than leave it out.

General comments:

Some applications appear to include a token demonstration of innovation.

Many of the applications seem to be better done than in the past. Perhaps this is due to the new layout.

PS4 Safe Tonight (WHBW)

Conflicts: No

The budget includes very large increases. It is unclear whether these are projections or actual and whether they are viable.

PS5 Waystation (COTS)

Conflicts: No

PS6 Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf (CVOEO)

Conflicts: No

This Application lacks a clear evaluation piece. It seems as though they didn't answer the questions properly. The Board was impressed with how the project not only provides food but also culinary job training and financial education.

PS7 Case Management for Seniors (CVAA)

Conflicts: No

PS8 Heineberg Senior Center (CCSCA)

Conflicts: No

Discussion centered around outcomes (i.e., change lifelong eating habits and unduplicated services). Amy responded from the United Way perspective. She explained that they must use the Champlain Valley Area Agency survey to collect data which is not tailored to the services offered by Heineberg. They lack the capacity/resources to change the data collection process but are more than willing to look at other means to collect data. (?).

PS9 Homesharing & Caregiving (HomeShare VT)

Conflicts: No

Comments included: Excellent application! Displays great opportunity to leverage money and grow the program. A solid model.

PS10 Building Community Preschool (King Street Center)

Conflicts: No

This program serves children in the neighborhood (within walking distance). Discussion followed regarding how agencies can share resources. This agency lost Turrell funding. Although the program is compelling, the application lacks budget detail.

PS11 Early Childhood Program & Childcare Center (Lund)

Conflicts: No

The application doesn't show the number of children who would be served based on the amount received from CDBG.

General comment:

It is apparent that some agencies hire grant writers and others do in-house.

PS12 Parent Sliding Tuition Scale (BCS)

Conflicts: No

It is unclear whether the budget is for the project or the agency.

PS13 Sara Holbrook Preschool Program (SHCC)

Conflicts: No

PS14 New Arrivals (Sara Holbrook)

Conflicts: No

PS15 Teen Program (SHCC)

Conflicts: No

All teens in the New North End have access to this program, but they are not included in the total number served.

PS16 Cultural Integration and Preservation Project for New Americans in the Old North End (Vermont Performing Arts League)

Conflicts: No

This is a new program, but seems duplicative and doesn't seem sustainable. The budget indicates they are seeking long-term city and CDBG support.

PS17 Dress For Success Burlington

Conflicts: No

This agency is not currently a 501(c)(3), but they have applied. Marcy will review for eligibility. A Board member noted that the request appears to be for gap funding until they become an established 501(c)(3) and have access to the ability to fundraise. Discussion then centered around the services they provide: clothing for interviews and employment,

coaching on how to dress and present yourself, career center, etc. Perhaps they could partner with, rather than compete with, other agencies already providing these services (i.e., COTS).

PS18 Project Integration (AALV)

Conflicts: Karen Freudenberger

This is an improvement on past applications from this agency.

PS19 Credit Action VITA Site Project (CVOEO)

Conflicts: No

The average cost for tax preparation seems high. Clever that they combine tax preparation, counseling, and financial literacy.

PS20 Dental Care Services for Homeless Residents (Community Health Center)

Conflicts: No

PS21 Support, Workshops and Training for People Living with HIV/AIDS (VT Cares)

Conflicts: No

The application doesn't quantify the population they are working with. What is the potential? It also doesn't address the number of people who will retain or obtain housing. Discussion followed regarding why people can't access these services elsewhere.

The Board took a 15-minute break at 7:30 pm.

The Board next discussed the Development Applications. Marcy indicated that HUD suggests a 3-year completion schedule for Development projects.

D1 Preserving & Increasing Affordable Housing Opportunities in Burlington (CHT)

Conflicts: No

Would prefer a timeline on their proposed projects.

D2 ReTRAIN YouthBuild Energy Efficiency Project (ReSOURCE)

Conflicts: No

Appreciate that this a multi-facted project.

D3 Intervale Farms Program: Microenterprise Development for a Sustainable Burlington (Intervale Center)

Conflicts: No

The application doesn't provide clear poverty data.

D4 Womens Small Business Program (Mercy Connections)

Conflicts: No

They appear to serve more non-low-income residents. The application lacks clear documentation for the number of people served.

D5 Heineberg Senior Center Kitchen Renovation (CSCA)

Conflicts: No

Marcy indicated that they would spend grant money from 2009 and 2010 in the next 3-4 weeks.

The application doesn't adequately explain the need for kitchen renovations. The outcomes are unclear. This sounds more like a Public Service project.

D6 Emergency Shelter Kitchen Renovation (WHBW)

Conflicts: No

The application does a good job outlining action and accomplishments; however, the last 2 sections of the application are weak.

Marcy then explained the assignment for the next meeting. She asked the Board to send their completed Rating/Budget sheets to Denise by Monday, March 4. Denise will send another copy of the Rating/Budget sheet to Board members via email.

Marcy asked Board members to indicate their top Public Service and Development applications.

Public Service

Dress For Success (1)
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (2)
Emergency Food Shelf (1)
HomeSharing & Caregiving (4)

Development

Champlain Housing Trust (1)
ReTRAIN YouthBuild (5)
WHBW Kitchen (1)

Karen suggested that in the future, the City should decide its priorities first and then solicit applications to address those priorities.

Discussion followed regarding the funding strategy. Marcy asked the Board to consider the work they've already done when considering funding for applicants.

Meeting Evaluation: Board members liked the Cheese Doodles, time-keeping, United Way insight, State Rep Jane Helmstetter. Board members would like tea & coffee (warm drinks), guidance on number of beneficiaries (people benefitting from CDBG only), more discussion around process and what to expect, and not to change the pre-set meeting dates.

Discussion followed regarding funding priorities. Financial literacy, early childhood investment, and investing in a better Burlington were identified. Some of these agencies do good work and need the money, but produce a poor grant application. Perhaps offer training on how to write a better application. Marcy noted that feedback from the Board would be beneficial to applicants.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.