

CDBG Advisory Board
 MINUTES
 April 12, 2011

Board Members Present: Don Dickson, Judy Dickson, Gretchen Bailey, Carole LaVigne, Barbara Bielawski, Sam Fuller, Carole LaVigne, Jason L'Ecuyer, Fran Cohen, Monica Weeber, Jane Helmstetter, Lisa Lillibridge, Abby Russell

Others Present: Gary De Carolis (facilitator), Larry Kupferman (CEDO Director), Margaret Bozik and Denise Girard (CEDO staff)

The meeting opened at 6:00 with introductions. There was no public comment.

At this point, it looks like there will be a 16.22% cut to the CDBG program nationally. It's not yet clear whether that translates to a prorate cut to Burlington's allocation, as entitlement communities are sometimes added to subtracted from the formula group. However, the group will proceed on the assumption that the city will receive 16.22% less than last year, and make recommendations on that assumption. The Board already assumed a 10% cut, so now needs to account for a further 6.22% reduction.

As previously decided, the Board will apply an across the board cut to Public Service allocations. The Board unanimously decided to give a "leftover" amount of \$120 to increase the award to PS18, to bring the amount up over \$2,000. The final Board recommendations for the Public Service applicants are:

Proj #	Project/Program	Organization	Amount Requested	Recommended Award
Public Service				
Homeless & Housing Services				
PS1	Affordable Housing Preservation & Resident Organizing Project	Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition	\$8,000	\$0
PS2	Daystation/Streetwork Program	Committee on Temporary Shelter	\$10,000	\$6,548
PS3	Families in Transition	Committee on Temporary Shelter	\$12,000	\$7,421
PS4	Housing Assistance Program	Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity	\$10,500	\$6,330
PS5	Safe Tonight	Women Helping Battered Women	\$22,000	\$12,223
PS6	WARMTH Support Program	Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity	\$7,000	\$5,238
PS7	Waystation	Committee on Temporary Shelter	\$10,000	\$6,985
PS8	Turning Point Center Recovery Coaching	Turning Point Center of Chittenden County	\$12,000	\$0
Food Security				
PS9	After School Food Program	Boys & Girls Club	\$5,000	\$2,619
PS10	Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf	Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity	\$12,000	\$6,548

Seniors & Persons w/Disabilities				
PS11	Case Management for Seniors	Champlain Valley Agency on Aging	\$15,000	\$10,477
PS12	Heineberg Senior Center	Chittenden County Senior Citizens Alliance, Inc.	\$6,000	\$2,183
PS13	Homesharing & Caregiving	HomeShare Vermont	\$6,000	\$4,365
Childcare / Early Education				
PS14	Building Community Preschool (The Melting Pot)	King Street Youth Center	\$6,500	\$5,238
PS15	Early Childhood Program & Childcare Center	Lund Family Center	\$12,000	\$5,238
PS16	Parent Sliding Tuition Scale	Burlington Children's Space	\$12,000	\$5,238
PS17	Sara Holbrook Preschool Program	Sara Holbrook Community Center	\$6,000	\$5,238
Youth Services				
PS18	After-School Youth Services Collaboration	Boys & Girls Club, King Street Center, New NE Youth Ctr.	\$24,000	\$6,985
PS19	Healthy City Youth Gardening Initiative	Friends of Burlington Gardens	\$6,096	\$2,084
PS20	Intensive Residential Life Experience Summer Camps	Vermont Association for the Blind	\$2,000	\$0
PS21	New Arrivals	Sara Holbrook Community Center	\$5,000	\$2,619
PS22	YWCA Opportunity Project	YWCA Vermont	\$5,500	\$0
Equal Access and Literacy				
PS23	Community Radio Station Outreach & Training Project	Big Heavy World / 'The Radiator'	\$7,500	\$0
PS24	Credit Action VITA Site Project	Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity	\$3,500	\$2,183
PS25	Project Integration	Association of Africans Living in Vermont, Inc.	\$12,000	\$3,929
PS26	Social and Economic Development Project	Somali Bantu Community Association of Vermont, Inc.	\$5,000	\$2,619
PS27	Technology Training for Hunt Families	Hunt Middle School	\$2,660	\$0
PS28	Volunteer Income Tax Assistance	Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity	\$4,000	\$3,492
PS29	Caring for our Neighbors	Visiting Nurse Association	\$7,168	\$2,837
Health and Public Safety				
PS30	Patient Prescription Assistance	Community Health Center	\$5,000	\$0
PS31	Prevention of Poverty-Inducing Crime & Assistance to Survivors Facing Poverty	Women's Rape Crisis Center	\$5,000	\$2,619
TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED			\$266,424	
TOTAL AMOUNT AVAILABLE				\$121,258

On the Development applications, the Board unanimously decided to exempt the very small awards (NG6 and NG8) from further cuts and to prorate cuts across the remaining awards, with a “leftover” \$469 awarded to DEV10. The Board’s final recommendations for the Development applications are:

Proj #	Project/Program	Organization	Amount Requested	Recommended Award
Development				
Housing				
DEV1	Burlington Dismas House	Dismas of Vermont, Inc.	\$16,000	\$13,489
DEV2	Ethan Allen Residence Water Conservation	Ethan Allen Residence	\$12,000	\$0
DEV3	Housing Initiatives Program	CEDO	\$90,300	\$81,840
DEV4	Preservation & Creation of Permanently Affordable Housing	Champlain Housing Trust	\$125,000	\$69,750
DEV5	ReTRAIN YouthBuild Energy Efficiency Construction Project	ReSOURCE (formerly Recycle North)	\$35,000	\$30,690
Economic Development				
DEV6	Building a Community Food System	Intervale Center	\$12,000	\$8,835
DEV7	Business Financing & Technical Assistance	CEDO	\$108,500	\$93,000
DEV8	ReBUILD Waste-Not-Products Project	ReSOURCE	\$25,000	\$11,160
DEV9	Sustainable Economic Development Strategies	CEDO	\$147,100	\$126,480
DEV10	Women's Small Business Program	Mercy Connections	\$10,000	\$7,440
Neighborhood Development				
DEV11	Burlington Brownfields Program	CEDO	\$30,000	\$27,900
DEV12	Heineberg Senior & Community Ctr	Chittenden Senior Citizens Alliance, Inc.	\$125,000	\$0
DEV13	Increased Services for Burlington College Students & Community	Burlington College	\$15,000	\$0
DEV14	Neighborhood Revitalization	CEDO	\$50,300	\$46,685
NG1	Edmunds Stage Curtain Replacement	Wards 1 and 6	\$8,500	\$0
NG2	WHNA Dumpster/Recycle/Reuse Mingler	Ward 2	\$1,319	\$0
NG3	Burlington Skateboarding Park	Wards 2 and 3	\$5,000	\$3,720
NG4	Integrated Arts Academy Performance Space Renovations	Wards 2 and 3	\$4,634	\$0
NG5	Learn, Share, Grow, Show (Sustainability Academy at Barnes)	Ward 3	\$5,975	\$3,720
NG6	Rose Street Clean-Up	Ward 3	\$138	\$138
NG7	Picnic Park on the Avenue (Leddy Park)	Wards 4 and 7	\$13,300	\$0
NG8	Bobbin Mill Apartments	Ward 5	\$605	\$605
NG9	Lakeside Gateway Project	Ward 5	\$7,493	\$0
NG10	Replace Stage Lighting Power Supplies (BHS)	Ward 7	\$8,500	\$0
TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED			\$856,664	
TOTAL AMOUNT AVAILABLE				\$525,452

The Board then reviewed the allocation process, and in particular the following questions:

How much did you use the rating criteria in evaluating the applications? Were there criteria you didn't use? Should they be eliminated?

- As a new person, I found it really helpful that we discussed the criteria at the orientation.
- The process of posting the criteria on the wall, including the anti-poverty goals, and using dots to determine the highest rated criteria, was useful.
- I didn't use the criteria of "support the capacity of local organizations" because I didn't know what it meant.
- I didn't use the criteria of "demonstrates collaboration." It wasn't clear what it meant and how it relates (or doesn't) to leveraging. I had a hard time interpreting whether an application was good or bad on this criteria.
- The leveraging criteria plays out in multiple ways. Some agencies are able to leverage other funds whether they get CDBG or not. Some projects are able to leverage other funds from getting a CDBG award. We should also keep mind that leverage includes non-cash resources.
- We should get more information about how to use leverage as an evaluation tool. I do like to see who the applicants are working with.
- Board members can suggest other funding sources to applicants.
- Access to disadvantaged groups should be a minimum requirement for all applications. Do we need it as a separate criteria?
- The question really is whether programs are exclusionary vs. inclusionary.
- Not clear how we weigh the targeting of disadvantaged groups. Maybe the application or the criteria should be phrased differently?
- Since these are federal dollars, all agencies should be open to the widest possible population.

Were there other factors that entered into your evaluation? If so, what were they? Should they be added to the criteria? Are we getting the priorities right for spending this money?

- I used the ratio of CDBG money vs. number of people served. It would be helpful to see that upfront.
- But, you can't compare one type of service to another (housing vs. picnic tables). The question really is, What are we buying with this money?
- It would be good to know what are the actual outcomes are.
- But, most agencies are not set up to collect follow-up data. Takes staff time and money.
- But, could require it as part of the application process.
- Track record and reputation were important to me.
- Did I think there were other places they could get the money? I considered that.
- I thought about how important would our contribution be to them? Is it a lifeline? But maybe that's best kept to the discussion stage of the process.
- In some instances, I used age - early intervention is more important and effective.

How should CEDO's applications be handled? Should the Mayor be able to set aside a "CEDO allocation" up front? Should that amount be taken out of the Advisory Board review process?

Should the Advisory Board review CEDO applications at all? Should they continue to be judged against other applications?

- I value the Mayor's input but feel the Board should still be free to advise. The Board should know up front that the Mayor is going to be providing a recommendation.
- If the Mayor is going to change the Board's recommendations, he should take the money out up front. Don't waste our time making hard decisions that aren't meaningful.
- It wasn't clear why the Mayor was coming to us, since he has the power to change what we're going to do anyway.
- This was an unprecedented year and things were moving fast. I appreciated knowing why CEDO needed the money. You felt you could hear what the Mayor had to say, make a decision, and not necessarily be bound. And, City Council has the last word.
- I don't want to set a precedent. We should continue to include the CEDO applications in our discussions and allocation process.
- The request to fund CEDO at a particular level this year created confusion and controversy.
- I don't feel CEDO should be part of this process. The Mayor should be able to give the Board input regarding priorities, but the Board doesn't have to see that as binding.
- I didn't want to be told in that way. We should look at the way CEDO is funded. But those are two separate issues.
- Is it time to revamp this process? Discussions need to include the Board, CEDO and the Mayor. There should be community involvement in assessing CEDO, but maybe not as part of this process.
- You could divide the CDBG pot between competitive and non-competitive grants and maybe take CEDO out of competitive process. But, you would need to ensure there's still enough money for competitive grants and that there was some reasonable control over how much CEDO was getting – otherwise there's the temptation to keep taking more.
- Having CEDO in the mix gives an evaluation of the relative importance of CEDO vs. other programs.
- Right now, we're generally happy with what CEDO's doing, but there should be safeguards in place in case that changes in the future.
- Why should CEDO be different than any other City Dept. in terms of how the public oversees them?

Should we fund neighborhood grants out of CDBG? If so, should they compete against other applications? If they don't directly compete against other applications, how should they be judged when we decide how to allocate CDBG resources, and who would decide how much to give them?

- Some say yes, some say no.
- These projects could be funded out of the local capital fund.
- It was better when we had a smaller pot of money for neighborhood grants. It's hard to compete against larger projects.
- Do we need to change criteria for neighborhood grants, because they don't necessarily keep people out of poverty?

- Having them compete allows us to weigh and evaluate the neighborhood grants against all the other worthy needs.
- Could CEDO apply for one neighborhood grants pool?

Should predictability of decision-making be important? Should applicants know that they will continue to receive around the same amount of funding each year? Do we reach a good balance between continuing to fund many applicants while allowing room for new applicants? Is it good that new eyes review applications each year?

- What are the applicants' expectations? What are they told? After all, the city's allocation will vary widely from year to year.
- I try to give programs that have been effective more money, but wouldn't want to be bound to that.
- The financial situation so volatile right now, can't predict what we will be able to give.
- Changing appropriations are a form of feedback to applicants.
- Small non-profits come to rely on certain funding streams. Difficult for new organizations to break in.
- When less money is available, I don't fund new programs.
- There's a learning curve to this process. Having both seasoned members and new ones is good.
- The Development applications more challenging to review than the Public Service applications.
- I appreciate the new perspectives when there are new people on the Board.

Should there be changes made to the application form?

- Summarize follow-up equal opportunity questions sent to all applicants and incorporate that into the application form.
- Too many follow-up questions are needed. Review those follow-up questions and try to ask up front in the application form. And, give applicants more feedback at the workshops.
- Have the questions in application directly relate to the rating criteria.
- Perhaps new Board members should be invited to the CDBG workshop.
- If you can't put a budget together and have it add up in your application, perhaps you are not able to administer a program.

Would you be interested in participating in a focus group this summer, one that included past Board members as well, to look at these questions again once we know what future CDBG funding looks like?

- Yes.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.