

CDBG Advisory Board Meeting
3/17/15

Meeting begins. Group begins with introductions.

Present: Russ Elek, Jen Powell, Jim Langan, Linda Chagnon, Maleka Clarke, Tina Hubbard, Bianka Legrand, Matt Cropp, Molly O'Brien, Ben Hatch, Jane Helmstetter

Staff: Marcy Esbjerg, Max Webster (AmeriCorps Member)

Marcy initiated welcome and introductions.

Marcy asked for a motion to approve minutes from last meeting. Members examined the minutes and agendas for the current meeting. Molly O'Brien moved to approve the minutes. Vote in favor: 11-0.

There were no public comments.

Marcy introduces a review of Public Service CDBG allocations from last meeting. Committee reviews and confirms results. Group votes 10-0 in favor of approving funding requests.

Marcy initiated a review of the allocation process and the rules. The board had a display of the average ratings of all Development proposals and the median funding amount proposed from each individual Board member's allocations. Colored dots on the display under each application proposal represented the percentage of funding awarded by the Board members as follows:

- Blue Dot: 75-100% of the amount requested
- Green Dot: 50-75% of the amount requested
- Yellow Dot: 25-50% of the amount requested
- Red Dot: 0-25% of the amount requested

For budget balancing rules, no applications with multiple red dots were to be considered without further debate. The Board determined that no applications should be dismissed and that all were eligible for review.

Marcy introduces a review of funding allocated to development. Additional funding available of \$69,637 allows for the amendment of certain budgetary values for current applicants. Two one-time applications had submitted increased amounts for their applications. After considerable discussion, the Board suggests the option to offer additional funding to all applicants. The Board expressed concern that organizations might not have the capacity to manage excess funds or be able to spend the funding appropriately if granted without proper review.

Declaration of potential conflict of interests are made. Molly O'Brien disclosed her spouse has benefited from Women's Small Business training Mercy Connections. Matt Crop was previously employed by Pathways Vermont and works with a board member of Mercy Connections. Tina and Maleka live in a Champlain Housing Trust facility. Board members abstain from voting on proposals where they have conflicts of interest.

Recalculation of errant scores in response to declarations of conflicts of interests: Mercy Connections average score moves 114 from 104, Pathways Kitchen Co-op from 93-101

Order of review declared based on new scoring:

- DEV 2 ReSOURCE YouthBuild Energy Efficiency and Rehabilitation **114**
- DEV 1 Champlain Housing Trust Affordable Housing Opportunities **112**
- DEV 4 Ethan Allen Residence Expansion/Awaking Sanctuary **107**
- DEV 3 Mercy Connections Women's Small Business Program **114**
- DEV 5 Pathways Wellness Co-op Community Kitchen **101**

DEV 2 Resource YouthBuild Review

Comments:

- Like that they have multiple beneficiaries: train youth in marketable job skills and provide affordable housing services to those in need.
- Very high job placement rates proof that program works.
- Demonstrated need but light on details.
- Lack of explanation about what "incomplete" outcomes for participants mean within the context of explaining program outcomes.
- Concern that there is lack of service work in Burlington.
- Like to see more targeted outreach towards "at-risk" youth, New American populations.
- Organization does try to do outreach to new American populations through school district and refugee groups.
- Only one teacher which makes it difficult to respond to students with language needs. Don't have ELL staff.
- Lost substantial grant money from YouthBuild recently.
- Not enough emphasis on English language training as job skill training.

Requested \$51,795. Board proposed average award: \$50,336.

Vote: 5 stay at average, 6 to increase amount awarded, no consensus. Jane proposes awarding full amount requested of \$51,795. Vote 11-0 in favor. Awarded full amount request on first round of voting.

DEV 1 Champlain Housing Trust Review

Marcy provides clarification: funding pays for soft costs(personnel) for projects not actual construction costs.

Comments:

- Projects in line with the housing goals of the City.
- Concern that using voluntary surveys for data collection is an unreliable measure.
- Not enough non-subjective, independently reviewable, measures of success.
- Application doesn't develop throughout the years, stays largely the same between application cycles.
- Translation services offered but not English language proficiency training or assistance resources. Need to keep it specific to organization and housing goals but organization should provide interpretive services and referral services to ELL sources. Should elaborate on what current services look like.

Requested \$85,000. Board awarded average \$83,500. Vote 6 increase award amount, 3 to award the average. Russ proposes funding at \$85,000. Vote 8-1 in favor. Awarded \$85,000 amount requested on first round of voting.

DEV 3 Mercy Connections Review

Comments:

- Application print too small to read; application must fit within 8 pages.
- Provides opportunity for women to showcase skills and abilities in a non-confrontational environment instead of feeling insubordinate to men within traditional learning environments.
- Would like a statement from organization on whether there are there accessible alternatives for men in position of need who could benefit from similar services and does Mercy Connections provide that information?
- City priority to provide support to single mothers and female head of household families. This population representative of the highest proportion of people living in poverty.
- Program is tailored to women however culture of the organization is nondiscriminatory towards men. Promote nondiscriminatory hiring processes.

Requested \$15,000. Board average award: \$15,296.

Vote 2 stay at average 7 down, no consensus. Ben Hatch proposes to fund at original \$15,000 asking. Vote 9-0 in favor. Awarded full amount requested on first round of voting.

DEV 4 Ethan Allen Awakening Sanctuary Review

Comments:

- Creates housing for a population that is in need and growing.
- Great approach to care services.

- Concern that there is a lack of understanding of the various components in the scope of scale of the project. They have applied for in the past and had problems managing resources.
- Organization is a leader in Vermont using local resources to provide an holistic care structure for residents.
- Awards they have won speak for the success of the organization.
- Concern around the effective use of alternative medical practices and how they are used in cooperation with traditional western medical treatments.
- Excellent encompassing view of elderly care.
- Not enough attention towards educating the public on organization's care practices and how to care for individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's in a community setting.

Jane motions to allow \$50,000 budgetary amendment that would add \$20,000 to budget from original \$30,000 asking price. Vote 7 in favor, 3 to reduce funding, 1 to increase funding. Awarded \$50,000 on first round of voting.

DEV 5 Pathways Wellness Co-op Community Kitchen Review

Comments:

- Admire use of peer support and cultural awareness.
- Not having formal intake process allows for a broader service population.
- Great combination of providing access to healthy food as well as skill development.
- Passionate, committed workplace.
- Could do better demonstrating need and using local data to justify need.
- Weak connection in explaining how to use program as an anti-poverty tool.
- Lack of a description of overall program quality.
- Not a good enough job leveraging existing community resources to realize goal. Similar programs exist at already active organizations. Has the organization approached exiting community organizations with similar services about having partnerships to support services?
- Not clear definitions about who is going to receive services or benefit from the use of an enlarged kitchen
- Existing kitchen programs fill specific community needs. Community kitchen space a large community need. Program meets the need of responding to a population experiencing mental illness.
- Need to provide meals on weekends where there is a definite lack of existing access.
- Important for CDBG funding that the facility be open to public use.
- Does not lift individuals out of poverty but does provide training and provides opportunity to meet basic needs.

Ben Hatch proposes funding proposal at original amount \$41,424. Vote 4 in favor, 4 down 2 up, no consensus. Maleka suggests table funding until more information is

provided. Russ asks for revote on \$41,424. Vote 6-4, funding approved at \$41,424 after first round of voting.

Total Funding after first review: \$243,219. Remaining outstanding balance of \$49,637.

Marcy offers suggestions for addressing extra funds:

- Return to organizations and propose that they request additional funding for existing needs or provide clarification for proposals to receive full funding
- Leave money as a contingency fund

Discussion of a proposal that existing balance be offered to Ethan Allen Residence. A general consensus existed among Board members being uncomfortable awarding additional funds to any organization unless all had the opportunity to request additional funds.

Marcy suggests removal of additional \$20,000 from Ethan Allen Residence until a fair allocation process can be determined for all applications to use remaining balance.

Board Vote: 10-1 in favor. Funding for Ethan Allen Residence expansion returned to original \$30,000. \$20,000 added to balance.

Marcy suggests adding balance of \$69,637 to contingency fund or to return to organizations and allow them one week to submit a proposal for a revised budget. Organizations would submit a cover sheet and revised budget to add a new amendment to the budget proposal they have already made.

Vote for offering a week revisal: 10-1.

Wrap-up notes. Next meeting will be March 31st. Board members will get the revised requests and then present revised budgets to Marcy no later than March 30.

- Board members should separate concerns about organization practices in general from whether they believe organizations deserve the funding they have requested
- Strong group from the Board commitment to do the right thing and find appropriate solutions
- Voting process for the budgeting works well
- Problem that there is fewer applications than there is money available
- CDBG grants increasingly difficult to manage and deliberate
- Use business associations/organizations to promote the grant process. BBA, VBSR, LCRCC, Vermont Chamber, Business Roundtable, GBIC

