

September 16, 2020

A. CALL TO ORDER BY PRESIDING OFFICER & WELCOME

The Gresham Community Development and Housing Subcommittee (CDHS) meeting was called to order by Ryan Johnson, Chair, at 5:16 P.M. on the sixteenth day of September 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

CDHS COMMITTEE PRESENT: Warren Scott, Ryan Johnson, Travis Stovall, Jessica Brzuskiwicz, Aaron Larson, Uriah Edmunds, Heather Ricks

CDHS COMMITTEE NOT PRESENT: Wayne Shielee

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilor Janine Gladfelter

STAFF PRESENT: Ashley Miller, Community Revitalization Manager; Rachel Nehse, Program Analyst

B. REVIEW AND APPROVE 6/18/2020 MEETING MINUTES

The subcommittee members reviewed the draft minutes from the June 18th, 2020 CDHS public hearing. Travis Stovall moved to approve the minutes. Uriah Edmunds seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

C. REVIEW 2019-2020 CAPER

Ashley Miller greeted the group and thanked them for their attendance. She explained that the City receives an annual allocation of CDBG funds directly from HUD and HOME funding through the Consortium with the City of Portland and Multnomah County. The Consolidated Plan (Con Plan) is a five-year plan that describes community needs, goals and priorities for this funding and each year the City creates an Annual Action Plan to carry out projects that address the needs, goals and priorities described in the Con Plan. The first need identified in the Consortium's 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan is "Affordable Housing Choice" and the goal associated with this goal is to "Increase and Preserve Affordable Housing Choice." The second need is "Basic Services and Homeless Prevention and Intervention" and the goal associated with this need is to "Reduce Homelessness and Increase Stability." The third need is "Community and Economic Development" and the goal associated with this need is "Infrastructure, Facilities and Economic Opportunity." The Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) outlines the goals and achievements for projects included each year in the Annual Action Plan. Achievement data for the HOME funds are included in the City of Portland's CAPER because they are the Consortium lead, however we do include information about HOME projects in the narrative of the CAPER. The 2019 CAPER is the fourth of five annual reports under the 2016-2020 Con Plan.

Rachel Nehse provided a summary of the 2019 CAPER and reviewed the CAPER summary document with the subcommittee. In 2019 the City had CDBG entitlement, carryover and program income totaling approximately \$1,225,000 and HOME entitlement, carryover and

program income totaling just under \$1,100,000. Each project funded by the City must fit under one of the Con Plan goals previously described by Ashley, so the CAPER summary document is organized by goal.

The first goal is to “Increase and Preserve Affordable Housing Choice.” CDBG projects funded under this goal included the Adapt-A-Home program, which completed accessibility and rehab projects for 23 Gresham household, and their Mend-A-Home program, which provided critical home repairs for 15 households. Both programs are administered by Unlimited Choices and both nearly met their annual goals, falling short by just one household each. This goal also includes Community Energy Project’s DIY Weatherization Workshops, which met its annual goal of providing workshops and home weatherization kits for 25 Gresham households.

The City also funded two homeownership programs with HOME funds under this goal which are included in Portland’s CAPER and are mentioned in the narrative sections of the Gresham CAPER. The City’s WELCOME HOME program provided 9 families with down payment assistance loans and Proud Ground provided homebuyer assistance to an additional 2 Gresham households.

The second goal is to “Reduce Homelessness and Increase Stability.” Projects funded under this goal included two Tenant Based Rent Assistance (TBRA) programs. The City funded Human Solutions with CDBG and HOME to provide rent assistance to prevent homelessness for 46 Gresham families. This was well below their annual goal of 70 families due to increasing rent and the need for longer term assistance for each household. The City also funded JOIN using HOME funds, which provided rent assistance and deposits to house 15 formerly homeless Gresham households.

The City also funded several public services projects under this goal with CDBG funding. El Programa Hispano Catolico’s Latinx Economic Stability Project assisted 1,297 Gresham residents with emergency services. This was well below their goal of 5,100 clients due in part to the pandemic forcing them to cancel in person services and classes. Family of Friends Mentoring matched 5 supportive adults with low income children for long term mentoring relationships. This was also short of their goal of 8 due to the pandemic preventing them from completing recruitment activities. Both El Programa and Family of Friends shifted budgeted funds to provide a higher level of service to their existing clients with our funds in response to the pandemic providing delivered food boxes, supplies and activity kits to clients. AARP Experience Corps Mentoring exceeded their annual goal to provide services to 30 students by training 4 senior mentors to support 39 K-3rd grade students at Hall Elementary. Human Solutions Willow Tree provided stabilization services to 89 homeless and at-risk households, exceeding their goal of 77.

Lastly, the third goal is “Infrastructure, Facilities and Economic Opportunity.” Living Solutions, which provides job training and placement for low-income Gresham residents, exceeded their goal of 95 individuals served by providing services to 143 individuals. This goal also includes the two flashing beacon projects that the City funded but had not yet completed in 2018. Both flashing beacons were completed in 2019 and are estimated to serve over 30,000 residents who live within walking distance of the improved crosswalks. The City did not make progress toward our goals for businesses assisted because MESO, who was providing microenterprise support in Gresham, withdrew their application for funding in 2019.

There were also payments toward two section 108 loans which funded previous infrastructure projects in Gresham made using CDBG. The final payment on the loan for the Nadaka Park Pacific Street Improvements was made in 2019 and payments were made toward the loan for the Children's Fountain.

Ashley asked the attendees if they had comments or would like to discuss the outcomes reported on in the 2019 CAPER. Uriah Edmunds noted that it was good the report describes why progress could not be made toward certain goals and why some subrecipients fell short with their annual accomplishments. Uriah also asked about sections in the draft CAPER that stated updated information was coming from the Portland Housing Bureau. Rachel explained that the data in those sections comes from Home Forward and Portland's office of homeless services and the CAPER would include finalized information for those sections before it is submitted to HUD.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ryan opened the floor for public comment. No public comment was received.

D. REVIEW 2020-21 CDBG AND 2019-20 CDBG-CV BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Ashley explained that the purpose of this section of the meeting was to amend the 2020-21 Action Plan and discuss CDHS priorities for CDBG-CV funding. HUD announced an additional allocation for the funding, so Gresham has been allocated just over \$1.3 million in CDBG-CV funds which must be used to prepare for, prevent, or respond to the Coronavirus pandemic. Ashley noted that the CDHS would not be selecting a budget for the CDBG-CV funds yet because there would be a City Council policy development session to get Council's priorities for the funding first, then a separate public hearing will be planned for the CDHS to finalize the budget.

Ashley reviewed the 2020-21 Action Plan Amendment first. The purpose of this amendment is to reallocate funding originally allocated to the Eastside Timbers afterschool soccer program. Eastside Timbers notified the City that they could not carry out the activity due to the pandemic. This project is a public service, so funding can be allocated to other public services projects. Ashley reminded the attendees that DIY Weatherization Workshops was included in the original CDBG-CV budget to provide additional workshops to help COVID impacted households weatherize their homes and save money on their utility bills and suggested funding them with some of the Eastside Timbers funding instead. She also noted that El Programa Hispano Catolico and AARP Experience Corps Mentoring were both funded at less than their original ask, so they could accept additional funding this year. Ashley provided an update on AARP Experience Corps Mentoring, which usually trains senior mentors to assist children with reading in K-3rd classrooms at Hall Elementary. Due to the pandemic, their program could not operate normally, so they altered the program to provide remote mentoring at Davis Elementary School instead.

Ashley asked the attendees for their thoughts and input for how the funds should be reallocated. Travis expressed support for providing additional funding to El Programa Hispano Catolico because they provide economic stabilization, which is a high need now. Uriah seconded Travis' support and asked to clarify how El Programa Hispano Catolico's program is impacted when they get significantly less funding than they originally requested. Ashley replied that they confirmed with us that their program was scalable, so they can still operate the

program on a smaller scale. Ashley noted they also leverage other funding sources for the program. Attendees had no additional input and the draft budget reallocated \$6,000 in funding to DIY Weatherization Workshops and \$10,000 to El Programa Hispano Catolico.

The City was allocated about \$1.3 million in CDBG-CV funding for projects that prepare for, prevent or respond to the Coronavirus pandemic. This funding can be spent over multiple years, but we also need to be mindful of duplications or benefits with this funding. Ashley shared a list of general projects that would be eligible to fund in Gresham: microenterprise assistance (grants for businesses with 5 or fewer employees), other business assistance (job creation or retention), low income meal assistance, childcare assistance, mortgage assistance, rent assistance, youth services, solid waste and recycling bill assistance, and utility assistance (water).

Heather noted that the utility assistance seems very important because households owing large past due amounts will likely have trouble repaying them if they have lost their source of income. Aaron asked if the bills continue to accumulate if they cannot pay and Ashley confirmed and clarified that we can pay arrearages for these costs with CDBG-CV. Jessica asked if there was other funding available for garbage and water and Ashley noted it appears to be an area where there is a lack of funding and most utility assistance is specifically for energy assistance only. Travis noted that water and trash assistance have more of an impact on our community. The City provides water and businesses in Gresham provide trash pick up, so paying for assistance in those areas can help keep funds and jobs in Gresham while helping Gresham families at the same time. Warren agreed with Travis and asked about mortgage assistance because while there is a lot of funding for rent assistance, there seems to be a lack of programs for mortgage assistance. Ryan echoed other members' support for utility assistance. Jessica agreed with the need for mortgage assistance because it could keep people from losing their homes and having to move. Uriah noted there are other programs through financial institutions to assist people with mortgages, but renters do not have that option, so rent assistance may be a higher need. Travis agreed with Uriah and clarified that mortgage assistance could also be very complex to administer. Many banks won't accept partial payments and the program could be challenging to set up and run. Providing assistance with utilities and garbage could also alleviate financial burden so that households can afford to pay their mortgages and those programs will be easier to implement. Councilor Gladfelter clarified that most financial institutions do have deferment programs, so homeowners have options to prevent foreclosure.

Uriah asked if funds could potentially be used for homeownership projects instead of mortgage assistance and Ashley clarified that all funds must be tied back to COVID response, which may be difficult with homeownership programs. She also noted that if we put additional funding into rent assistance, it could free up future HOME funding for homeownership programs.

Ashley summarized the priorities the subcommittee had agreed on: Utility Assistance, Garbage Assistance and Rent Assistance. Jessica state childcare could also be a high priority with children out of school creating an increased childcare burden for parents. Uriah and Travis both agreed and noted that for parents who work outside the home and single parents childcare can be a large financial burden.

Travis expressed support for any uses that may fit within the regulations while eliminating strain on the City's general fund and assisting families, so that the funding has multiple beneficial

outcomes. Ashley clarified that some admin funding may also be used to pay for City staff administering these programs, which could help the general fund.

Councilor Gladfelter inquired about homeless services to see if funding could be used for the increased services being provided in that area. Ashley explained that funds may be used, but we would need to be careful about documenting that the funds are spent for COVID response, which can be difficult for homeless assistance if the individual was homeless before the pandemic.

Heather noted that business grants could be a good priority because they inject funding straight back into the community and keep businesses afloat. She cited the City's business grants programs as an example. Ashley clarified that the initial City grants were relatively low-barrier grants funded with a community service fee fund and that some of that funding may be reimbursed to the City with CARES Act funds from Portland and that there may be another round of business grants with funding from the State of Oregon.

Ashley asked the group if they had any additional ideas to share and invited attendees to email if they have additional ideas later.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ryan opened the floor for public comment. No public comment was received.

F. APPROVE 2020-21 CDBG AND 2019-20 BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Travis moved approve the 2020-21 Action Plan Amendment. Warren seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

G. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Ryan asked if anyone had anything for the good of the order.

Uriah noted the meeting may be Travis' last meeting as a member and thanked him for serving.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:30 P.M.