

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 5:40 P.M. on the eighteenth day of November 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

CDHS COMMITTEE PRESENT: Ryan Johnson, Jessica Brzuskiwicz, Aaron Montgomery, Ana Linden, Bobbie Meza, Christine Bierman

CDHS COMMITTEE NOT PRESENT: Uriah Edmunds, Heather Ricks

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilor Janine Gladfelter, Councilor Vincent Jones-Dixon

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

B. SUBCOMMITTEE INTRODUCTIONS

The subcommittee members, City Councilors and City staff present provided brief introductions as this meeting was the first CDHS meeting for several new members.

C. 2020-21 CDBG BUDGET AMENDMENT & 2019-20 CDBG-CV BUDGET AMENDMENT PRESENTATIONS

Ryan explained that the public comment portion of the meeting would be moved to after the presentations and introduced Ashley Miller to provide the 2020-21 CDBG and 2019-20 CDBG-CV budget amendment presentations.

Ashley greeted the group and thanked them for their attendance, then began with the CDBG-CV presentation. She explained that the City of Gresham received an addition funding allocation through HUD from the CARES act. The City's CDBG entitlement provides funding for programs that support the community's most vulnerable populations, stabilize neighborhoods, encourage economic development and provide basic infrastructure and public services to low-mod communities. Gresham received two additional allocations of CDBG-CV funding totaling just over 1.3 million dollars. This funding is separate for the regular fiscal year allocation and can be expended over 4 years. All projects must adhere to CDBG regulations and must respond to or alleviate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some waivers have been issued by HUD to help ease the constraints of these funds for COVID response projects. Income payments can be made for up to 6-months and there is no public services cap on these additional funds, but we also need to be mindful of Duplication of Benefits, which occurs when two funding sources pay for the same cost.

Ashley went over potential eligible projects including microenterprise assistance, other business assistance, rent assistance, food assistance, childcare assistance, job training, mortgage assistance and technical assistance with forbearance, upgrades to facilities, youth services, garbage assistance, water assistance, energy assistance and other public services.

Ashley also addressed a couple of potential project ideas emailed in by Ana Linden before the meeting. Ana had inquired about using the funds for homeless assistance or to help expand the capacity at the hospital. Ashley noted that while homeless services are an eligible activity with CDBG-CV, they present a duplication of benefits concern because the CARES Act also included a large allocation of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding, which is specifically for houseless individuals and those at risk of becoming houseless. ESG funding is being administered for the entire county by the City of Portland. Gresham also offers its own internal homeless services and staff in that department confirmed they have adequate funding in place for shelters and warming stations this winter. The hospital would be difficult to qualify for HUD funding because of the nature of the project. It could be qualified as an urgent need activity, but these projects are capped by HUD and the funding is required to be used for Gresham residents, but the hospital serves more than just Gresham.

Ashley recapped the CDHS priorities from their September meeting, which included utility assistance, garbage assistance, programs that could assist residents while alleviating strain on the general fund, microenterprise assistance, childcare assistance and rent assistance, and the Gresham City Council priorities expressed in their policy development session, including assistance that covers households basic needs such as rent, food, utilities and childcare and mental health assistance. City Council also requested that staff reach out to local service providers to get input on community needs. Staff created an online survey and asked providers about COVID-response needs at the annual Community Needs Hearing on November 17th, 2020. Nine providers responded to the survey and prioritized rent assistance, food assistance and youth services as needs. They expressed a need for services that will keep residents housed and meet their basic needs, culturally specific services and assistance for youth struggling with distance learning. At the needs hearing participants prioritized rent and childcare assistance and had a three-way tie between household bills, business assistance and food assistance as a third priority.

Ashley shared a sample budget for CDBG-CV funds as a starting place and noted that the funds for Human Solutions' TBRA program were necessary costs for administering the additional HOME funds for rent assistance that the CDHS allocated to then on their 2020-21 contract. Ashley also noted that with the rent assistance included in this sample budget and the extra HOME funds allocated to rent assistance, rent assistance programs would receive a total of \$544,000 in CDBG, CDBG-CV and HOME funds. The sample budget included meal assistance, childcare assistance, income payments, water assistance, garbage assistance, rent assistance, and youth services. The budget also includes administration costs, which Ashley explained are for costs associated with internally run programs and any administration costs charged to the City by subrecipients administering programs on our behalf.

Next Ashley reviewed the 2020 CDBG budget amendment, which is the second amendment to the 2020 Annual Action Plan. Ashley explained that this budget needs to be amended because HUD had an error in calculating entitlement amounts, so our CDBG entitlement is slightly lower than anticipated. The City had additional carryover from 2019, so there is enough funding to adjust the budget without making cuts to any existing 2020 contracts. Staff also recommended reducing the amount allocated to the slum and blight clean up projects and moving these

funding to a future park project. Ashley mentioned that the City would be forming a parks advisory group sometime in the upcoming year and they may be able to help identify a site that would be eligible for CDBG funding. Unspent funds carry over, so this funding could be rolled into next year if a park could not be identified this fiscal year. The budget also includes a prepayment for the Children's Fountain in downtown Gresham. Ashley explained that the City funded this project with a Section 108 loan, which is being paid annually with CDBG funds. Historically the City has made a prepayment to reduce the amount of interest paid on the loan and pay the loan off more quickly. Council had expressed a desire to potentially redistribute these funds to COVID-relief projects, however CDBG-CV funds allocated to the City have doubled since then.

Councilor Gladfelter asked if this would be the final prepayment for the fountain. Ashley noted if this prepayment was made, the fountain could be paid off by 2021-22 if one more prepayment of \$80,000 was allocated.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ryan opened the floor for public comment.

Rosa Quinones, a local organizer and volunteer with Gresham Stand Up, provided testimony representing Play, Grow, Learn, Beyond Black and Gresham's BIPOC community. Rosa explained that these groups had been participating in the USDA food assistance program, distributing food boxes to low income families in Gresham. They described the lack of adequate food provided in these boxes and service gaps for residents with food restrictions or lack of access to a kitchen to prepare meals. Additionally, families need hygiene items such as diapers and wipes. Rosa requested that the CDHS include a budget for food programs and requested an immediate release of funds to continue to supplement the USDA program with unmet needs. Ana, Christine and Aaron followed up with questions regarding the amount of funding needed and the current program that Rosa was helping administer. Rosa clarified that they were assisting 150 families per week at about \$150 per family and families complete an intake form for the program to ensure they don't receive duplicative assistance.

Carol Rulla commented on the 2020 Action Plan Amendment regarding the parks project and the prepayment and advocated for reallocating the prepayment to the parks project. Carol noted that the interest savings from making a prepayment would likely be minimal because most interest is paid at the beginning of the loan and the amount allocated for the park project was not enough.

Lee Dayfield commented to support Carol's testimony and request that the prepayment be reallocated to a future park for hardscape improvements. Lee noted that parks are a much needed community space for residents to get out in nature. Lee also encouraged City staff to try harder to seek public participation on future plans and amendments.

E. 2020-21 BUDGET AMENDMENT DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION

The CDHS began discussing the amendments and general questions regarding CDBG regulations, eligible activities and the CDHS approval process. Christine inquired about the formation of a parks district with CDBG funds and Ashley noted it likely would not be an eligible activity because CDBG funds must primarily assist low and moderate income households, so any planning activities would need to come from administration. Ana clarified to ask what planning

activities would likely come out of administration. Ana clarified if the CDHS was being asked to vote on and whether the budgets presented were already set and inquired about the certification process for clients, what information would be reported to HUD and if these requirements might discourage undocumented residents from applying for assistance. Ashley noted that the budgets presented could be altered at the CDHS's discretion and that the funds need to primarily assist low- and moderate-income households, so for most projects intake forms would be required to certify household income and collect other required data for HUD. Names are not reported to HUD, only summary data of all clients assisted is reported.

Ana also asked about the slum and blight clean up projects, whether that funding was going to the police and if the RVs or camps removed were lived in. Ashley explained that the CDBG funding was being used to pay for towing, disposal and clean up directly to the towing companies and the biohazard cleaning and disposal company. RVs towed are in the public right of way and contain some kind of hazard that is a potential threat to public health and safety such as full blackwater containers. Code Enforcement tags the RVs at least a day before they're towed, so typically if the RV is lived in the occupant will move it before it's towed. Most RVs towed under this program are empty. Counselor Gladfelter also noted that the City's homeless services department also works diligently to connect houseless individuals with services and housing to prevent illegal camping. Ashley offered to send out information regarding that department to the group following the meeting.

Christine stressed the need for childcare and noted that as a middle school teacher she and her colleagues have noticed students as young as 6th grade being the caretakers for their younger siblings since schools are remote due to the pandemic.

Bobbie inquired about how residents could apply for funding and what kind of community partners are working with us. Many residents may be concerned about applying for assistance directly to the City and may be more likely to apply through a trusted community partner. Ashley mentioned that for most assistance we will contract with local service providers to administer the funds, but certain programs make more sense to administer internally, like the water assistance program. Rachel Nehse mentioned that service providers also stressed the need for culturally relevant services for this reason and the City had discussed needs with IRCO and El Programa Hispano Catolico, who serve the Latinx and immigrant communities in Gresham.

Aaron highlighted Rosa's comments and request for an immediate allocation of funding and asked how that would fit into the budgets being discussed. Ashley noted that HUD funding is highly regulated and the City has an annual plan that we are bound to. To access additional funding we must submit these amendments and we do not currently have access to any funds to immediately allocate. CDBG-CV funds should be available sometime in January to begin funding projects. Councilor Gladfelter requested that City staff reach out to Rosa to determine the eligibility of the potential projects brought up during public comment. Rachel explained that a survey was sent out to service providers including Play, Grow, Learn and Beyond Black asking about community needs and asking if the organizations were interested in administering funding and offered to send this survey along with eligibility information to Rosa following the meeting.

Ana commented that there is still a problem with homelessness in Gresham, regardless of the services the City already offers, and that taking away homes through the RV towing program seems counterintuitive.

Bobbie asked about the prepayment and the time limit on spending funds if the prepayment was reallocated to a park project. Ashley replied that while HUD doesn't like us having a development fund, there is a 4-year timeline on funding. She also noted that the parks advisory group would not be formed and ready to make decisions by the end of the year, so it's unlikely we would begin a parks project this year. Rachel also mentioned that the environmental review requirements will also delay any potential parks projects, so even if there was an eligible site identified now, it likely would not break ground this year.

Ryan asked if there was more discussion on the motion.

Christine moved to pass the 2020 CDBG Budget Amendment, Jessica Brzuskiwicz seconded the motion.

Ryan called for a vote. Aye: Ryan Johnson, Jessica Brzuskiwicz, Aaron Montgomery, Bobbie Meza, Christine Bierman Nay: Ana Linden

The motion carried.

F. 2019 CDBG BUDGET AMENDMENT DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION FOR CDBG-CV FUNDS

Ryan asked for discussion on the 2019 CDBG Budget Amendment for CDBG-CV funds.

Ana asked if there was a way residents could apply for funds anonymously. Rachel and Ashley noted that while there isn't a way to keep it completely anonymous, we can add language to materials that state immigration status will not be checked or reported to HUD. Christine also noted that allowing for anonymous applications for funding could present a duplication of benefits risk.

Bobbie inquired about the reporting process and if the CDHS will hear back regarding the use of these funds. Rachel and Ashley noted that HUD uses a year-end report for the regular funds called the CAPER that is presented to the CDHS and that HUD will require a to-be-announced reporting requirement for the CDBG-CV funds as well.

Christine asked about the increase in litter and illegal dumping in the City and whether that could be an eligible project. Ashley noted that with CDBG-CV it would be hard to tie to COVID and that clean up projects must present a health risk to public health and safety to qualify for CDBG funds.

Bobbie expressed support for the budget, noting that through her work contact tracing, many clients echo the need for basic services addressed in the budget. She advocated for partnership with culturally specific organizations and asked about equitable vaccine roll out with this funding. Ashley noted that we have spoken with culturally specific providers, but just public outreach for vaccines would not be an eligible activity alone.

Ashley asked the CDHS if there were changes they'd like to propose to the recommended budget.

Christine asked for clarification on the food box program and if it could fit into the recommended budget. Ashley noted that it may fit under the food assistance project and we would work with interested applicants for that funding.

Bobbie inquired about the microenterprise grants and the admin funding in the budget. Ashley explained that the microenterprise grants would likely be funded through a subrecipient and could only benefit businesses with 5 or fewer employees, including the owner. The administrative budget would cover the City's costs and any subrecipient costs that were not directly related to activity delivery, such as overhead costs.

Ana motioned to approved the 2020 CDBG Budget Amendment for CDBG-CV funds, Jessica 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. No items were brought for discussion.

H. ADJORN

Meeting Adjourned at 7:33 P.M.