

MINUTES

CDBG Advisory Board

January 29, 2014

6:00 pm

Board Members Present: Bianka LeGrand, Jane Helmstetter , Jim Holway, Jim Langan, Jen Powell, Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur, Karen Freudenberger, Lisa Falcone, Lisa Lillibridge, Russ Elek

Also Present: Mayor Miro Weinberger, Michael McNamara, Marcy Krumbine, Denise Girard

The meeting opened at 5:55 p.m. with a welcome from Mayor Miro Weinberger. Mayor Weinberger indicated that it was clear following last year's CDBG process that changes were necessary. With these revisions to the process, the Board now has the opportunity to make larger, strategic, and longer-term allocations. The Mayor also mentioned that the City has moved toward a greater collaboration with the United Way in this process. He then thanked the Board members for their efforts, noting that resources are more precious than ever making their job even more important.

Karen asked if the Mayor's Office has an opinion on how the Board should spread the money. The Mayor asked the Board to consider a good value for the dollar, moving to larger and fewer grants, and not to fund "just because we always have."

Michael McNamara, Field Office Director for HUD in Vermont, also welcomed the Board. On HUD's behalf, he thanked the Mayor for keeping this process going, for the first-rate staff he has assembled at CEDO, and for the PIAP (Public Investment Action Plan) process created for Moran and Waterfront development. Michael mentioned that this year is the 40th Anniversary of the CDBG Program, started by President Nixon in 1974. He noted that the City of Burlington's citizen participation process for allocation of CDBG dollars is unique and has been named a Best Practice by HUD over the years. Lastly, he indicated that this year's CDBG allocation is expected to be level or just below last year's funding.

Board member introductions followed.

Marcy outlined the changes to the process indicating that the City worked with some past and present CDBG Advisory Board members as well as several subgrantees to streamline the process. Major changes include a funding rotation based on themes for 2-year applications as well as one agency – one application. Last year there were 21 Public Service applications, and this year there are only 9!

Marcy noted that we currently have no Board representatives from Wards 2 or 3 and asked members to let her know of anyone who may be interested.

The Board members reviewed and approved the following ground rules:

1. Be on time - start and end on time
2. Everyone participates – and encourage everyone to speak - but pass if you wish

3. Share the air; be brief and don't speak twice until all have had a chance to speak
4. Move on when opinions are established
5. Tell or ask about assumptions and conclusions
6. Respect opinions - disagree respectfully
7. Facilitator will acknowledge speakers. One speaker at a time - don't interrupt - let each speaker finish
8. Pose, accept and explore difficult questions
9. Operate by consensus; vote when needed
10. For Board members...what is said here stays here (except for the content of minutes) – don't have outside discussions about Board work

Marcy added that Board members should not discuss applications with the applicants during this process.

Next, Marcy explained that she sent out an RFP for a Facilitator, but received no responses. Reasons may include that we were only seeking facilitation for the two allocation meetings, and that our previous facilitator has taken on new work. Marcy indicated that she would be happy to facilitate, or the Board members could rotate these duties. The Board agreed that Marcy should facilitate, and that they should develop and follow a very clear funding process.

Marcy Krumbine next reviewed the binder materials, noting that Lisa Falcone of the United Way will not be a voting member but will attend the allocation meetings to share her knowledge. In collaboration with the United Way, Marcy explained that many of the questions in the CDBG Application are now the same as in the United Way application, making it easier for applicants.

As HUD will celebrate the 40th year of CDBG during the week of April 21-26, 2014, Marcy asked Board members to share their thoughts/ideas for this occasion (i.e., agencies or projects to highlight). She noted that Burlington has been a CDBG recipient for 30 years.

Affordable housing has always been Burlington's first priority, followed by economic development/job creation, and suitable living environment/quality of life. Of the three National Objectives, Marcy pointed out that the City has historically only funded projects in the low/mod income category.

With regard to the process changes, Marcy noted that she and the Mayor went before the Board of Finance to discuss and get buy-in. She added that historically the CDBG Advisory Board's recommendations have always been accepted and approved by the Mayor and City Council.

Marcy then discussed the information in the NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability), which includes specific instructions for applying for CDBG funds in Burlington. This document was given to all CDBG applicants.

Although we don't know what this year's CDBG allocation will be, Marcy explained that we are estimating approximately \$108,000 for Public Service projects (capped at 15% of the total allocation), and about \$293,000 for Development projects.

Next, Marcy shared a PowerPoint explaining the key points of the application. She noted that Karen's feedback and assistance helped to make the process as simple as possible this year.

Following the presentation, the Board took a 10-minute break.

After the break, Marcy explained that one organization (CVOEO) submitted two applications: one for the Food Shelf and one for VITA. She distributed information to the Board outlining the rules as sent to the potential applicants in a memo as well as in the NOFA. She then asked the Board to decide whether or not to accept both applications or only allow one.

Discussion followed:

- Food Shelf is under the same 501(c)(3) as CVOEO.
- Don't feel we should allow both applications.
- What is the definition of an agency?
- Based on the NOFA, they should have asked for clarification before submitting two applications.
- CVOEO covers four counties; multiple, distinct programs under one umbrella; different directors.
- Slippery slope.
- Distinct programs with different directors and staff.
- Don't want to discourage efficiencies gained by running under one umbrella.
- Perhaps we could come up with different language next year to clarify.
- Encourage you not to be so quick to look at changing the rules until we see how this plays out.
- This is an efficiency, but the rules are clear for this year. Need to have more conversation for next year.
- The agency budgets are the same on both applications.

By consensus, the Board agreed to allow only one application from CVOEO. Per previous discussions by Marcy with CVOEO, the Food Shelf's Community Kitchen Academy application was removed from this year's process.

Marcy noted that Denise will send the electronic Rating & Budget Spreadsheet to members via email tomorrow. She then reviewed the Public Service categories, individual rating sheets and associated applications (8), followed by a review of the Development categories and associated applications (7).

Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur requested a spreadsheet showing last year's performance, similar to the one distributed during last year's process. Marcy will prepare and send via email.

Next, Marcy discussed the work schedule noting that if any members have questions that will affect whether or not they will fund an application (pass/fail), they should email to us ASAP so that we can get responses prior to the allocation meeting.

Marcy requested that the Public Service Rating & Budget spreadsheet be completed, including preliminary funding amounts, and returned via email to Denise (cedofd@burlingtonvt.gov) by February 14, 2014, in preparation for the February 19 allocation meeting.

Discussion followed regarding conflicts of interest. Marcy asked members not to rate or fund any projects with which they have a known conflict of interest and, if necessary, to send an email request for clarification.

Jen Powell asked if the Board’s goal is to fully fund only a few of these projects. Marcy noted that we will begin our next meeting with this discussion.

Marcy reviewed the Rating & Budget Spreadsheet instructions, noting that the individual score sheets are only a tool. Members will transfer information from the individual sheets to their large spreadsheet. She added that once members complete several individual sheets, they may find that they can add scores directly to the spreadsheet. Marcy noted that a higher score should typically equate to more funding and a lower score to less funding.

To recap, the assignments for the next meeting include:

- Read, rate and give preliminary funding to all Public Service Applications
- Send any Pass/Fail Questions to cedofd@burlingtonvt.gov ASAP
- Return completed Public Service Rating/Budget Spreadsheet to cedofd@burlingtonvt.gov by *Friday, February 14, 2014 at 4:00 pm*

Board members reviewed this meeting to see what worked well and what could be improved.

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Good facilitation	Local food
Good food	PowerPoint examples too small/crowded
Keeping to time	Different nights of week problematic*
Binder organization	
Appreciate changes in process, more objective	
Preparation	
HUD	
Mayor	
Discourse	
Good examples, PowerPoint	
Process over summer to discuss changes	

*Marcy noted that the meetings are scheduled for different nights of the week to avoid conflicts with all 5 NPA meetings as well as meeting room scheduling.

There were no public comments. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m.