

City of New Haven
Meeting Minutes (Short)
Joint Community
Development/Human Services
Committee

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Wednesday, April 29, 2009

5:30 PM

Aldermanic Chambers

ALDERMANIC NOTICE - NEW HAVEN

The Joint Community Development & Human Services Committee of the New Haven Board of Aldermen will hold a public hearing at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 29, in the Aldermanic Chamber of City Hall, 165 Church St., re:

ORDER APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE ANNUAL 2008-09 CONSOLIDATED ACTION PLAN FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACCEPTING AN ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT RECOVERY FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$990,070 FROM THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009.

ORDER APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE ANNUAL 2008-09 CONSOLIDATED ACTION PLAN, STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND USE OF FUNDS, BY ADDING \$1,525,272 IN HOMELESS PREVENTION AND RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAM FUNDS FROM THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009.

These items are on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the City Clerk, Room 202, 200 Orange Street, New Haven. Per order: Charles A. Blango and Michelle Edmonds-Sepulveda, Co-chairs; attest: Ronald Smith, City Clerk.

For a disability-related accommodation, please call 946-6483 (V) or 946-8582 (TTY) at least one business day prior to the meeting.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes

Joint Community Development-Human Services
CDBG-R and Homelessness Stimulus Funds

April 28, 2008

Co-Chair Edmonds-Sepulveda called the meeting to order at 5:44 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber of City Hall. Present were Aids. Jones, Brison, Lemar, Calder, Clark, Plattus, Morehead, Smart, and James.

(1) From the Mayor submitting an order approving an amendment to the Annual 2008-09 Consolidated Action Plan for the purpose of accepting an additional allocation of Community Development Block Grant Recovery funds in the amount of \$990,070 from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

Appearing on behalf was John Prokop, director of Public Works; Liz Smith from the Office of Management and Budget; Nicole Jefferson, executive director of the Commission on Equal Opportunities; and Mike Piscitelli, director of Traffic and Parking. Smith gave an overview, saying these stimulus funds were awarded for infrastructure improvements - as an amendment to the 2008-2009 Consolidated Plan. The city is planning to work on "shovel-ready" projects that can employ Section 3 residents alongside contractors. They hope to spend the money quickly so they can qualify for any additional money that becomes available. They do not have final regulations on this program from HUD yet, but she said HUD officials are excited that the city is moving so quickly. They hope this can be a model for other communities.

In response to the chair, Smith said the final regulations should be here in a matter of days.

Jefferson described her department's training programs for tradesmen, such as carpenters and plumbing. They do not have a concrete program, but the bricklayers' union will assist with the training of New Haven residents. Once the residents are trained, they will be able to be placed at other concrete-oriented job sites.

Ald. Lemar asked for a specific list of improvements. Prokop said that after the severe winter, everyone has ideas for streets to repair. Any leftover funds can go to sidewalks. He said, for perspective, that this new HUD funding only amounts to about an additional 1 percent of the capital budget for street and sidewalk improvements.

Aids. Lemar and Clark emphasized that these funds should be used to improve Section 3 and "tipping point" neighborhoods.

(2) From the Mayor submitting an order approving an amendment to the annual 2008-09 Consolidated Action Plan, Statement of Activities and Use of Funds, by adding \$1,525,272 in Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program funds

from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

Appearing on behalf were Elizabeth Smith from the Office of Management and Budget; Cathy Schroeter, Deputy Director of the Livable City Initiative; and David Mensah, a city consultant.

Smith said there is a 60-day turnaround requirement from HUD on this money. They had an application process for community agencies, and 11 applied. She distributed written documents. This money is earmarked to avoid homelessness, to help people in danger of losing their homes. There is approximately three percent for administrative costs, but none will go to the salaries of city employees. Schroeter said these funds will complement the Neighborhood Stabilization program that the Community Development Committee has been working on recently.

City consultant David Mensah showed a slide presentation that gave a summary of the program. The 11 organizations that applied were reviewed by a 6-member panel composed of community professionals and city officials with relevant expertise. A point-scoring system was used. The agencies chosen were: a collaboration of New Haven Home Recovery and Columbus House; Community Mediation; and Liberty Community Services. Money was also set aside for legal services. Also, \$125,000 is set aside for data collection and evaluation -monitoring.

In response to Ald. Clark, Mensah and Smith said the final award of the money is contingent upon HUD accepting the city's plan for spending the money. There was a discussion of computer software for the data collection and evaluation.

The program will serve both families and individuals, Mensah said. Individuals and families are eligible if they earn up to 50 percent of the median income for the area.

In response to Ald. James, Mensah said there is a line item for the chosen organizations to publicize the services to other agencies that deal with people at risk of homelessness, such as the state DCF. Ald. Clark recommended that the snow emergency "robocall" system be used to publicize the program. Ald. James suggested that the three agencies give presentations at various other agencies.

Public comment:

Edward Mattison, 15 Anderson St., Director of South Central Behavioral Network, and former Alderman. He said the funding is \$1.5 million for three years, so it is not a great deal of money. The problem will be turning people away, not publicizing the program. He said the amount of money is woefully inadequate. He commended the three agencies that were chosen to receive the money. He advocated careful controls to see that the money is spent the way it is supposed to and the records are carefully kept. Forms for the three agencies should be similar if not identical. There should be sworn statements, and a mechanism to ensure that payments are made to legitimate entities. The three agencies should be invited to work together to create a system for this. It could lead to more funds in the future.

In response to Ald. James, there was a discussion of various forms and methods that could be used to monitor the programs. Charles Pillsbury of Community Mediation came to the table and gave out a document. Elizabeth Smith was called back to the table in response to Ald. Lemar. She said there will be financial monitoring by the controller's office and an outside audit at the agency's site. There is also the online data collection system. Pillsbury discussed means off documenting the living situations of prospective clients.

Committee Action:

On a motion by Lemar, seconded by Jones the committee approved both items, UC requested, with a technical amendment changing the amount of the homelessness grant to \$1,514,570.

Staff was instructed to send an email to the full board alerting them that these items would be on UC on Monday night. Alderwoman James said the chosen homelessness agencies should be required to publicize the program to state agencies, such as probation, corrections and DCF, as well as to hospitals, the education department, and other non-profit agencies. Staff was asked to draft language to this effect.

The committee commended Alderwoman Plattus and the Office of Management and Budget for their efforts.

Adjourn: 7:15 p.m.

An audio recording of this meeting is on file in the Office of Legislative Services.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Mercier
Legislative Aide