

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 16, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Maria Valle, Co-chair; Scott Burns; Jorge Cruz, Sr.

OTHERS: Aidee Nieves, Council President; Ashley Aguilera, Director, Legislative Services; Chadwick Schroeder, Office of Sustainability; Joseph Katz, Central grants; Angelica Ojeda, Central grants; Jonathan Delgado, OPED; Hannah Reichle, MetroCOG; David Murphy, MetroCOG; Tammy Papa, Dept. of Health & Social Services; Yvonne Jackson, Dept. of Health & Social Services; Regina Vermont, Lighthouse; Mark Harp, Lighthouse.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Valle called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. There was a quorum present at the time of roll call.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

● **September 18, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING)**

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING).**

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

156-23 Grant Submission: re State of Connecticut Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives Program South Park Avenue Streetscapes Phase I and II (#23235 and #25235).

Co-chair Valle shared Mr. Katz asked if the time could be tabled.

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOTIONED TO TABLE ITEM 156-23.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

148-23 Proposed Resolution Adopting the 2024 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update with MetroCOG.

Ms. Reichle shared she completed the updated hazard mitigation plan for 2024, the new goals focus on reducing the mortality rate, personal injury, damages to infrastructure and property, and loss of resources. If the city adopts the plan, then they will have access to more grants by FEMA.

Mr. Schroeder added there has been community engagement in early fall of 2023 and a follow up meeting in June 2024, along with an online survey that received a lot of feedback. In the plan they highlighted shelters, community needs, and prioritizing natural solutions and resiliency.

Council member Cruz asked what is the concept of a natural based solution.

Mr. Schroeder replied instead of using a concrete divider or metal wall, they can use a flower bank to mitigate water.

Council member Burns asked how this plan correlated with the city master plan.

Mr. Murphy replied FEMA would look at both plans if they are consistent but the difference between the two is that this is project based and the master plan is policy based.

Council member Burns asked how they were positioned.

Mr. Murphy replied from the grant application they are well positioned as FEMA is looking to help urban areas.

Council member Burns asked what the grant process looks like.

Mr. Murphy replied grants are available every year in fall and some grants open up after a disaster happens.

Mr. Katz added that there are two grant programs opening up. BRICK and FEMA. They will be working with a consultant through FEMA to put a competitive application together.

Council member Cruz asked about the resiliency project in the south end.

Mr. Schroeder replied it is in the plans.

Mr. Delgado added he can connect him with his department regarding the project, they are waiting on funding.

Council President Nieves thanked the team for working on this and suggested they present this to the full council because they will not understand the book.

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED APPROVE ITEM 148-23.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

149-23 Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families – Youth Services Bureau Enhancement Grant (#25540).

MS. Ojeda shared this funding would provide community youth with enhancements; the city will continue to subcontract to Bridgeport Juvenile Review Board to continue services. The grant is for \$17,208 and will require no match from the city.

Council President Nieves asked how many organizations will they fund.

Ms. Vermont replied the money will go to the catalyst for case management.

Ms. Papa added the reason they subcontract the money is because the city doesn't have a department.

Ms. Vermont shared the intake happens in her department then they make the referral.

Council member Cruz asked why the organization doesn't connect the children once they enter the system.

Mr. Harp replied the organization could be making those touch points but outside of their collaboration.

Ms. Vermont added their partnership focus is preventative.

Council member Burns how much of the grant funds the organization.

Ms. Vermont replied the grant supports the services provided to each member. The money supports the program but they do receive other funding.

Ms. Papa replied it is about 10% from their budget.

Co-chair Valle asked if there was any way to receive more money from the grant.

Ms. Papa replied it is formula based

Council President Nieves added this is a great program for the youth but as the biggest city in the state, they should be able to receive more funding because they can only service 125 children at the moment.

Ms. Papa replied it has to do with the capacity of the organization, if they can get more funds than they will be able to hire more case managers.

****COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 149-23.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

150-23 Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families – Youth Services Bureau (#25532).

Ms. Ojeda shared the grant is similar to the last item but will be devoted to recreation and outreach to the youth. They will contract nonprofit organizations to fulfill the services. The grant will require a city match.

Ms. Vermont added the partners involved in the program would be Bridgeport Hospital Foundation, Bridgeport Public Education Fund, YMCA, Elevate, Hall Neighborhood House, Klein Memorial, Life Bridge Services, McGivney Center, Neighborhood Studios, and Wakemans Boys and Girls Club. They will be providing counseling, mentoring, and positive youth development services.

Co-Chair Valle asked if these organizations have to apply for the money or is it automatically granted.

Ms. Vermont replied they already applied and this is the second year of the state grant.

Co-Chair Valle asked if Churches could participate in the grants if they have youth focused services.

Ms. Papa replied they do reach out to those organizations and elevate is one of them.

Council President added they should request a performative report from each partner to understand what they are doing with the funds.

Ms. Papa replied last year was a transitional period for the lighthouse department so they couldn't manage the grants properly. She added the money they subcontract is a little portion that helps the organizations.

Council President Nieves said it goes back to what she was saying, as they subcontract the work, the organization should report their spendings and progress on the services. They need to create this tracking to be able to apply for more.

Mr. Harp added they always submit at the end of the year.

Council member Burns replied where the city match was coming from.

Ms. Papa replied from the lighthouse general fund under health and social services.

Council member Cruz added they should continue to reach out and engage the youth of Bridgeport.

****COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 150-23.
**COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

154-23 Grant Submission: re United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Community Project Funding (CPF) Downtown Sidewalks and Lighting (#25238).

Mr. Katz shared this funding was applied for through their federal legislation. The funding would be used to improve pedestrian safety in the downtown area. There is no required match from the grant requirements.

Council President Nieves asked if there was tear drop money for sidewalk and a large bond set for these same improvements years ago.

Council member Burns replied they bonded for downtown purposes and uses.

Mr. Delgado replied he knows about some of the bonding, their plan was to maximize the funding. They have been awarded \$1.6 million dollars with no city match required.

Council President asked if he could get information on the tear drop project and shared, she never heard about this during the budget season.

Mr. Delgado said they are not using city funds or looking to bond any new money for this. They are looking to leverage the money with other grants. He has met with DSSD, council representative, and public works to get suggestions.

Council President Nieves shared that Lafayette street by Housatonic is very dark.

Mr. Delgado shared there is a pilot program at the Margaret E Morton building on Broad street where they are testing the brighten of light on the post.

Council member Burns asked if the police department is involved.

Mr. Delgado replied he will make sure they are contacted.

Council member Burns asked what state representative submitted the application.

Mr. Katz replied it was Jim Himes.

Council member Burns asked what the grant funding process look like.

Mr. Katz replied they are awarded the funding then they must submit new applications with the new budget.

Mr. Delgado replied they should be awarded the funding within a year or less.

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 154-23.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

155-23 Grant Submission: re United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program (#25372).

Mr. Katz shared this is a 4 year grant to promote healthy homes and reduce lead exposure in properties in Bridgeport. They were approved for \$6 million dollars to inspect approximately 265 homes and provide hazard control services for 160 units.

Ms. Papa added they will be subcontracting the work to remediate homes from lead issues. These contractors must be certified in abatement. Funding will cover professional development, supplies, and machinery maintenance. With the budget they can also hire a second health code inspector.

Co-chair Valle asked if this is their first time receiving this funding.

Ms. Jackson replied this is her 3rd time receiving grant funds.

Co-chair Valle asked why there are houses still with lead if they have received the grant multiple times.

Ms. Jackson replied New England has a high population of older houses that used lead paint, they can only remediate 125 houses per year. They can only provide services by referral of a child being affected by high lead levels or a homeowner reaching out.

Ms. Papa added they are looking to do outreach with other programs.

Council member Cruz said it would be a great idea to engage with the community as many people are afraid to make reports as they will get retaliations from the owner.

Ms. Jackson replied if they get the referral by the doctor the remediation is not optional and must be done. To qualify the unit must be fair market rent, low income, and the children must be 6 years and under.

Council member Burns added they should connect with an organization from NYU to advocate and push the remediation further. He followed up with questions regarding the salary.

Ms. Katz added the city match is 12.6% which will pay for the inspector salary which will be hired as city employees.

Ms. Papa added the employee will also receive benefits. From the HUD funding they will hire a project manager, 3 health code enforcement inspectors, and an outreach manager.

Co-chair Valle asked about the line regarding office supplies and electronics.

Ms. Papa replied the technology is ancient but they are looking to purchase 3 new iPad devices for the new positions.

Council President Nieves asked if all code inspectors do lead.

Ms. Papa replied yes, that is why a portion of their salary can be funded by this grant. The grant would have 3 dedicated inspectors to lead.

Ms. Jackson added all inspectors trained in lead but they work more in blight, housing and environmental matters. Everyone is cross trained for when this program needs help.

Council President Nieves asked how many homes did they service last year.

Ms. Jackson replied they were obligated to do 125 homes and they serviced 133.

Council member Burns asked if they could get more information regarding match salary when it comes to grants.

Mr. Katz replied yes.

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 155-23.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOTIONED TO ADJOURN AT 7:25 PM.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vianca Rivera
Telesco Secretarial Service