

# City of Worcester, Massachusetts

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## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

02/08/2017

City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber

455 Main Street

Worcester, MA

6:00pm

### MEETING MINUTES

CDAC present: Edward Moynihan (Chair), Paula Stuart (Vice-Chair) Doug Arbetter, Martha Asseta, Nicola D'Andrea, Dana Strong.

CDAC absent: Daniel Whalen, Matthew Yalouris

City Staff: Greg Baker, Steve Hill, Anthony Miloski

#### 1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ed Moynihan at 6:06pm. The chairman reminded committee members they were required to complete a state mandated on-line, ethics educational course every two years and to provide a certificate of course completion to the City administration.

#### 2) Review and Approval of 2/1/17 Meeting Minutes

A motion was seconded and passed to vote approval of the 2/1/2017 minutes. The CDAC voted 6-0 for their approval.

#### 3) Review of CDAC's cumulative CDBG RFP evaluation scores for Year 43

The CDAC members reviewed a chart showing cumulative CDBG RFP evaluation scores for Year 43. The chart presented the scores of each of the seven members who recorded scores as reported to the CDAC Recorder (Doug Arbetter), the average score for all members, and the RFPs ranked by category based on the average scores. CDAC member Matthew Yalouris had not submitted scores to the CDAC Recorder by the deadline and thus no scores were entered for him.

#### **4) Discussion of key elements of CDAC draft letter to the City manager regarding Year 43 CDBG RFP Recommendations**

In response to a question from the CDAC chairman, the city staff responded that as in past years, the CDAC letter to the City Manager would be sent independently to the City Manager and not included with the final CDBG recommendations package developed and transmitted by the Office of Economic Development.

Most of the discussion of the key elements of the CDAC draft letter was focused on ways in which to encourage greater participation of new and first-time applicants to the process. CDAC members expressed concern that current process led to the continued funding of established agencies at the expense of new proposals. CDAC members discussed ways in which the process could be modified to encourage new proposals.

For instance, CDAC members discussed whether there should be a limit to the number of applications that a given agency could submit each year. Currently the only limit is a cap of three applications per agency under the public services category. Some CDAC members suggested that an overall cap regardless of CDBG category in the number of applications per agency would free up resources for other applicants. Other CDAC members contended that lack of a cap on the number of non-public services applications gave agencies greater flexibility in which to address emergent capital needs.

Some CDAC members suggested that a certain number of proposals or percentage of funds be dedicated to new or innovative proposals. There was some debate over whether to encourage the city manager to recommend new proposals that he deems are needed during the current funding recommendations cycle, or to have the committee and city administration work towards that end as a long-term future goal, or to recommend both options.

Similarly, some CDAC members felt that metrics being used during the last few years to score RFPs should be expanded to include more subjective input on the part of CDAC given that currently the metrics are used to evaluate only the technical aspects of the applications and favor those applicants with more institutionalized or prior CDBG program experience. It was suggested that incentives that promote new applicants be incorporated into the scoring metrics. The CDAC chairman stated that it was important to ensure that the integrity of the scoring process be preserved and cautioned that changes to include increased subjective rating criteria could dilute the overall process.

City staff also reminded CDAC members that all applications for funding are subject to HUD mandated reviews for cost reasonableness, as well as a risk analysis and assessment of the viability of both the program and the applicant entity. The basis for CDBG funding recommendations is also tied to the needs analysis that governed the preparation of the City's Five Year Consolidated Plan (2015-2020) and subsequent Annual Action Plan updates. Staff stated it's important that any attempts to modify the RFP scoring metrics should be done in a manner that is well thought out and takes into account what HUD and federal grants management guidance emphasizes.

In light of the above discussion, consensus among CDAC members was reached with respect to including the following elements in the draft letter to the City Manager that would be prepared by the chairman:

- It is the desire of the committee that the administration find a way to help fund at least one of the new public services programs this year.
- The committee encourages the use of some seed money within the public services category to encourage new and innovative programs that address demonstrated community needs.

The Committee also agreed to meet on Wednesday, April 26, 2017 in order to reevaluate the scoring metrics used to evaluate the RFP's and look to ways in which to promote increased participation by new applicants in the future.

Prior to adjournment, it was noted that while the committee was able to obtain a quorum at every meeting during the last year, this will become more difficult in the future given there are currently two vacancies, one member who has missed several of the last meetings and has been unresponsive to attempts to contact him, and four others whose membership terms will expire on June 30, 2017.

It is critical that the process of filing vacancies, renewal of memberships, and determination of intent for future active participation be expedited in order that the CDAC be restored to its full complement of ten active members as soon as possible.

## **5) Adjournment**

As there were no more items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:23pm.