

Grants Committee Meeting

February 9, 2022

MINUTES

Members Present:

Stephen Reeb, Chairman
Susan Gruberman, Asst. Chairman
Richie Meile
Scott Greenwald
Ken Sharkey

Members Excused:

Willie Dancy
Roy Mosley, Jr.

Staff Present:

Rick Stubblefield, Executive Director
Jennifer Little, Executive Assistant/Special Projects Specialist

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Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic the Grants Committee Meeting was held via conference call. Chairman Stephen Reeb called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and took roll call.

Chairman Reeb asked if there were comments from the public on the agenda. There were no comments.

Upon a motion by Mr. Meile and a second by Mr. Greenwald the minutes from the January 12, 2022 Grants Committee meeting were approved unanimously.

Upon a motion by Ms. Gruberman, and a second by Mr. Sharkey the letter from the Grants Committee Chairman to the County Board Chairman transmitting the payroll and expense claims for the month of January, 2022 was approved unanimously.

Upon a motion by Mr. Meile, and a second by Mr. Sharkey, the Check Register Summaries for the pay periods in the month of January, 2022 were approved unanimously and placed on file.

There were no questions concerning the Community Services Group and the reports were placed on file.

There were no questions concerning the Community Development Group and the report was placed on file.

There were no questions concerning the Workforce Development Group and the report was placed on file.

Upon a motion by Mr. Greenwald, and a second by Ms. Gruberman, the Community Services, Community Development, and Workforce Development Group reports were approved unanimously and placed on file.

Resolutions

None

Old Business

None

New Business

- A. Rick Stubblefield introduced a letter recognizing Illinois South Tourism as one of the Certified Tourism Bureaus within the State of Illinois. Mr. Stubblefield stated each year the Grants Committee submits a letter to the Chairman for approval to indicate the St. Clair County Board will continue to recognize Illinois South Tourism as one of the certified tourism bureaus within the State of Illinois. He noted the bureau does a great job promoting the county and the region and encouraged members to visit their Facebook page. Chairman Reeb complimented the tourism book they publish and distribute. Mr. Sharkey offered a motion to approve and Mr. Greenwald seconded the motion.

Chairman Reeb called for a vote to approve; the motion was approved unanimously.

B. Director's Report

Rick Stubblefield stated both the LIHEAP and LIHWAP programs are running well. The programs are slightly short-staffed as there are a few employees out on medical leave. He complimented the program's Coordinator Tracey Hall and her staff for the work they are doing.

Mr. Stubblefield stated the second round of BRP rental assistance is open. Program eligibility requires applicants receive SNAP benefits. Participants can receive a maximum of \$2,000 in rental assistance per family. Mr. Stubblefield anticipates assisting 50 households as the program budget is \$100,000; applications will be taken until funding is exhausted.

Mr. Stubblefield informed members the County remains 4th in the state in terms of applications for the second round of the IHDA Rental Payment Program. He noted IHDA has been slow to get funds out this second round; to date, \$12 million in assistance has been requested; \$35,000 has been approved and paid out to St. Clair County landlords. Mr. Stubblefield stated the amount paid out is 4th in the state as well. He expressed he is unsure of the holdup and acknowledged the frustration of landlords. He is pushing IHDA for answers and to get funds out more quickly.

Mr. Stubblefield reminded members Weatherization Energy Auditor Josiah May resigned to take a position out of state. He reached out to two good candidates who had applied for the previous Energy Auditor vacancy that was filled by Michael Shoemaker; both reapplied. One candidate, Brandon Lybarger, who is a certified Illinois Housing Inspector, was selected to fill Community Development's Housing Inspector vacancy that opened abruptly as a result of Reggie Beard's retirement. The other candidate, Kyle Kukorola, was selected for the Weatherization Energy Auditor position. Mr. Stubblefield stated both were onboarded quickly as the next round of Energy Auditor classes began on Monday. Mr. Lybarger will be cross trained for both positions. Mr. Stubblefield stated an energy provider that is working with Ameren and ComEd has reached out and offered a person currently in training to be assigned to St. Clair County to assist IGD with keeping up with the demand for housing assessments. Details are still being worked out.

Mr. Stubblefield stated Matt Jones has resigned as Workforce Development Program Coordinator to take a position at another workforce program in central Illinois. Seven candidates applied to the job posting; three were internal. He noted it was a tough decision as there were many good candidates. Lee Reese has been selected to fill the Program Coordinator position. He stated Mr. Reese has been the Workforce Development Apprenticeship Navigator for the region the past few years. Mr. Stubblefield expressed his confidence in Mr. Reese learning the programmatic side of Workforce Development and conveyed he has the abilities to move the program forward with work-based learning such as apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and incumbent worker programs. Mr. Stubblefield acknowledged there will be a learning curve and some transitional hurdles however Mr. Reese will get past those rapidly and will produce great things.

Mr. Stubblefield stated CSBG continues to take applications. He noted it is getting harder to qualify based solely on COVID. It is a significant problem getting applicants to submit all required documentation. Many applicants submit unsigned paperwork and are missing required documents; many do not respond despite being contacted. Mr. Stubblefield expressed the program continues to expend funds but stressed it is getting harder to qualify applicants. He reminded members the CSBG program requires the ability to move forward. Applicants who state they are not working, do not have employment, or those who do not want to return to work, will not be eligible as they do not meet the self-sufficiency program requirement.

Mr. Stubblefield stated he, Chairman Kern, and Christina Anderson had a meeting today with the new HUD Regional Director to discuss a new initiative "House America" which is aimed at housing the homeless. Many opportunities were discussed including the hiring of a Housing Navigator. Mr. Stubblefield explained the position would work with housing providers/landlords and tenants to make sure tenants understand what is expected of them and to ensure they abide by the rules. The Housing Navigator would also assist tenants with other opportunities such as fiscal and workforce training. He expressed there is not a shortage of housing stock rather landlords are leery to participate in subsidized housing. He noted the Housing Navigator would serve as an intermediary that could provide education and assist both sides. Mr. Stubblefield stated the EVP program has 25-30 vouchers remaining that Ms. Anderson is working on with Larry McLean, St. Clair County Housing Authority. Applicants are approved however the challenge is finding housing for them to move in to. He believed HUD was impressed with what was proposed during the meeting as well as with the structure of the Grants Department as many services are offered under one roof creating a one-stop for assistance.

Richie Meile asked if the eviction moratorium was still in effect. Mr. Stubblefield responded no; he noted IHDA rental assistance is available to those who go to court for eviction. The program appears to pay out quickly. He noted the goal is to prevent people from being evicted; when evicted they end up calling the Housing Resource Center for assistance with deposit and first month's rent.

Other Comments

None

Adjournment

Chairman Reeb entertained a motion to adjourn. On a motion by Mr. Meile, and a second by Ms. Gruberman, motion passed and Chairman Reeb adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.