

Grants Committee Meeting

January 12, 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 5:32 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. Sharkey and a second by Mr. Meile the minutes from the December 8, 2021 Grants Committee meeting were approved unanimously.

Upon a motion by Mr. Sharkey, and a second by Ms. Gruberman the letter from the Grants Committee Chairman to the County Board Chairman transmitting the payroll and expense claims for the month of December, 2021 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 December, 2021 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. Sharkey, and a second by Mr. Meile, 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. Director's Report

Rick Stubblefield informed members the Low Income Home Water Assistance Program, LIHWAP, is open. He noted it mirrors the LIHEAP program and as such is being administered under LIHEAP; Tracey Hall oversees the LIHWAP, LIHEAP, and Community Services Block Grant programs. Mr. Stubblefield stated LIHWAP, LIHEAP, and CSBG serve the same population; combining the three programs creates a one-stop for client assistance. He expressed the program is off to a good start.

Mr. Stubblefield stated IGD has started a second round of BRP, the Barrier Reduction Program. BRP can provide up to \$2,000 in rental assistance; clients must be receiving SNAP to be eligible. He noted the program requires less documents than a CSBG application and is an overall easier application process. Funding for this second round of assistance is approximately \$100,000; around 50 applications will be funded, 28 have been funded to date.

Mr. Stubblefield stated the second round of rental assistance through IHDA closed on January 9th. St. Clair County had a little over 2,600 applications submitted; the County was 4th in the state behind Cook, Will, and DuPage Counties in terms of applications submitted. He stated the applications total near \$10,000,000 in requested assistance. Applications are currently being reviewed, in the cures process, or have had payments disbursed. Mr. Stubblefield stated there will be a similar mortgage assistance program through IHDA this spring. He is unsure if the funds will be allocated on a state or county level. Mr. Stubblefield expressed he will heavily promote the mortgage assistance program when more information comes available.

Mr. Stubblefield informed members Weatherization Energy Auditor Josiah May has resigned to take a position out of state. He is looking to hire a replacement and may reach out to a few impressive candidates that applied the last time the job was posted. Mr. Stubblefield expressed he had been concerned the state would close training due to COVID; however he has been assured training will continue as scheduled; the state has offered additional training funds for a new Energy Auditor. He noted the additional training funds are helpful as Weatherization has a tight budget. Chairman Reeb asked why the budget is so tight. Mr. Stubblefield responded in part because CSBG has been moved from the Weatherization Program Coordinator and as a result Weatherization grants now pay his full salary rather than it being split between two grant programs. He also stated the budget is tight as a result of COVID in addition to having new energy auditors both of which have caused the program to fall behind on production. The program is just a few houses behind from where it should be. Mr. Stubblefield stressed the program is not underwater, the budget is just tight. He reiterated the additional training funds from the state for a replacement energy auditor will help.

Mr. Stubblefield stated the Point-In-Time Count is a requirement of HUD for IGD's homeless assistance grants. He explained HUD requires staff and volunteers go out at the end of every January to connect with the homeless population in an attempt to get a count of how many people are unsheltered on a given day. Mr. Stubblefield noted it is a big process and takes a tremendous amount of work with many agencies coming together for the event. Food and gift cards are offered to draw people to the church in East St. Louis that hosts the event. He stated those who show up are fed and made aware of programs and help available to them. The PIT Count was originally scheduled for January 27th. Due to COVID and the desire to be cautious, the Point-In-Time Count has been postponed. HUD has granted a waiver until the end of February.

Mr. Stubblefield stated there are two new apprenticeship grants available through Workforce Development. The applications have been submitted and are being finalized. He noted funding is beginning to be cutback including some of the apprenticeship navigator funding. He believes

work-based learning will continue utilizing regular formula funds when apprenticeship funds are exhausted. Mr. Stubblefield informed members Workforce Development Program Coordinator, Matt Jones, has resigned to take a position with a different workforce area. He expressed he knows the program well and will be able to assist Mr. Jones' replacement; there are a few internal candidates. Mr. Stubblefield will also reach out to the Illinois Workforce Partnership regarding the vacancy. Chairman Reeb asked if the position was going to be filled. Mr. Stubblefield responded yes, it is an important position; he expressed it is likely the most complex program IGD has. Mr. Stubblefield reiterated he knows the program well and will be able to provide guidance moving forward.

Mr. Stubblefield noted IGD is doing well in regard to COVID. A couple of outer county staff have been out. He believes only two are currently out; one is out because their child's daycare closed a room and they are without a babysitter. He stressed IGD has not had any outbreaks. Mr. Stubblefield expressed many staff request to work from home; he explained it is not a viable option for most services IGD provides; most staff cannot work from home. He explained that is not only a result of technology limitations but also the fact staff work with client documents and confidential information as well. Mr. Stubblefield also explained IGD programs work very similar to commission; if assistance is not being provided and funds are not being expended, funds cannot be drawn including funds that pay salaries.

Richie Melie asked if participants in apprenticeships are working along with training. Mr. Stubblefield responded yes; he explained the apprenticeship is a form of work-based learning meaning there is an on-the-job component in addition to an educational component. Every apprenticeship is Department of Labor approved. He stated, for example, participants may attend welding classes at SWIC in the morning and then work in the afternoon. Mr. Stubblefield stated in 2020 an 18-year-old participant in the apprenticeship program made approximately \$80,000 working at Terra Source. The participant went to SWIC from 8am until noon and then worked at Terra Source from 1pm until 9pm. The same year, a 19-year-old participant made approximately \$60,000 while in an apprenticeship program. Mr. Stubblefield noted apprenticeships are not only limited to trades but are also in agriculture, all areas of medical, in CDL, and scientific labs. He expressed St. Clair County is far better than anywhere else in the state when it comes to apprenticeships. Mr. Stubblefield stated 14 disabled veterans are currently participating in a program that caters to individuals with developmental and mental disabilities. Every apprenticeship has an educational component and every participant is getting paid to learn a trade and/or craft. Participants also receive a credential that can be used across the United States. Mr. Meile referenced the carpenter's apprenticeship in which if there was no work, you were out of luck but had to continue with the apprenticeship program. Mr. Stubblefield explained in the past, participants would receive classroom training and then hope an employer could be found for them; now, the employer interviews and hires people prior to starting the apprenticeship program, if hired, then the apprenticeship program will pay for the educational component and will also offset a portion of their hourly wage for the life of the apprenticeship. He reiterated participants are not put into an apprenticeship without a job.

Other Comments

None

Adjournment

Chairman Reeb entertained a motion to adjourn. On a motion by Mr. Greenwald, and a second by Mr. Sharkey, motion passed and Chairman Reeb adjourned the meeting at 5:51 p.m.