



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

January 2, 2024

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Joe Stockburger, Kathleen Candelaria, Erica Doornek, James Allen

Board Members Excused: None

Board Members Absent: Jenna Martin

City Council Representative: None

Staff Present: Brenda Beckett, Carly Collins, Dina Harmon, Tam Rodier, Wyeth Friday

Guests: Patti Webster (HomeFront), Kari Boiter (CoC), Amanda Stonerock (consultant), VISTA Inanna Hencke

Welcome / Introductions: The Community Development (CD) Board met in the 6th Floor Conference Room of the Miller Building. Board Chair Rebecca Noell called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Board members and guests were invited to introduce themselves.

Announcements: Brenda Beckett said there would be a news segment about the Comanche Park Sensory Pathway tonight on KTVQ.

Public Comment: Kari Boiter said she was here in support of the CoC HOME-ARP application.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Kathleen Candelaria made a motion to approve the December 5, 2023, minutes as written and distributed. Board member Joe Stockburger seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Staff Reports:

- **First Time Home Buyer Program (FTHB):** Dina reported she found a Buy-Sell Agreement in her inbox today when she returned from vacation.
- **Affordable Housing Development (AHD):** Brenda said staff is working on the Development Agreement for the Mitchell Court Project. Once the draft is completed, it will be sent to the City's legal staff for review. The City Council must ultimately approve the project.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam Rodier shared the following:

Steffanich Property

- A contractor has been engaged to install the xeriscaping, which will include the two required street trees required.
- Appraisal will be scheduled soon. Sales price will be the lesser of the appraised value or the acquisition and development costs.
- Marketing flyer is complete and ready to be distributed to approved FTHB applicants.

1709 St. Johns Avenue

- Asbestos abatement work will start tomorrow and should be complete by the end of the week.

- A contractor has been engaged to complete tree removals, trimming, etc. Work will likely begin within the next couple of weeks.
- The next step is to finalize the Final Work List and advertise for quotes.
- Staff is exploring the possibility of bringing in an AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) team to implement xeriscaping on the property this spring or summer.
- **CDBG / CDBG-CV Projects:** Tam also gave the following project updates:

Comanche Park

- The project is complete and everything looks fantastic. She encouraged Board members to go out and see it for themselves.

North Park

- The pre-fabricated restroom is in place and being finished. It will be opened to the public in the spring.
- The contractor is in the process of installing the adult exercise equipment and new shelter.

Parks Accessibility Projects:

- The contractor is currently installing the accessibility improvements at the Pioneer Park restroom, North Park Center, and the Zimmerman Center. Work should be completed within the next couple of weeks.

Washington Elementary School HVAC

- The project is complete; awaiting final quarterly performance report and reimbursement request so the project can be closed out.

Head Start

- In July, staff approved Head Start's request to extend the time period of their Fast-Track CDBG-CV grant until December 31, 2023. Awaiting their final quarterly performance report and reimbursement request so the project can be closed out.

- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly Collins reported the following:

- A Host Site RFP is open through January 12, 2024. She already has two new host sites for July / August.
- Three new VISTAs are so far scheduled to start service terms in January or February 2024. The deadline to engage VISTAs for the February start date is January 19, so she is hoping for more.
- There will be two on-site orientation and training sessions. An abbreviated one in January and a more robust one in February.
- Plans are being developed for the MLK Day of Service event at Family Service on January 12.
- Close of Service event planning for VISTA members completing their service in January / February 2024 is underway.
- Planning is progressing for the annual ServeMontana Symposium in March. All BMVP VISTAs will attend the symposium in Helena.
- She is currently working to develop the AmeriCorps VISTA application for next year.

HOME-ARP Site Visit Reports, Discussion, Funding Recommendation: Carly Collins stated they continue to work with City finance staff to get clarifications on required financial processes. Staff is working through all Request for Qualifications (RFQ) responses and is realizing additional questions must be asked and answered. Written standards must also be developed.

Staff clarified that a grant agreement will be required for each service, so one organization may be required to sign multiple agreements (or an agreement with multiple addendums). The requirements for each service are somewhat different. Staff is developing beneficiary and other tracking forms for each service.

Brenda mentioned just a couple specific examples of the HOME-ARP challenges staff is working through:

- If staff salaries are to be funded, job descriptions, resumes, etc. are required. In addition, if new staff is hired, the organization must follow equal employment opportunities (EEO). There are also job posting / advertising requirements (targeting low-income, etc.). All staff time must also be directly linked to beneficiaries / services. Salaries must also be reasonable / customary in Billings. Copies of pay stubs, etc. will be needed with reimbursement requests.
- HUD's reporting system, the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS), requires beneficiary (individual) data for each CDBG and/or HOME project; however, HOME-ARP reporting requires household data. Staff is trying to reconcile this in tracking forms being developed for each project.

CD Board Member Site Visit Reports:

RiverStone Health – Rebecca said she was pretty impressed with the campus and all the services they offer to the community. She asked them about their many locations and noted that HOME-ARP cannot serve residents outside the Billings City limits. They understood this and they are capable of tracking location of service. Rebecca noted they propose a longer timeline (72 months). They are willing to answer questions, adjust as necessary, and they appear to be ready to move forward.

HRDC – Rebecca said they are asking for funding for rental assistance; existing programs. At risk of homelessness specifically. While she was on-site, she observed clients come through the door, be greeted warmly, and guided to specific offices for services. She found staff to be efficient, capable, and able to do required reporting.

Native American Development Corporation – Erica and Joe both reported they found the old Shrine building to be impressive. They are in the process of converting it to a wellness center; they have signed on a dentist and physician to see clients on-site. They also own the 5-acre parcel it sits on. They have the cultural competency to help native people with issues unique to them. However, they are open to the public, so they do not just serve Native Americans. They have a partnership with First Church as well, which basically expands their campus. Some of the other services they provide include caseworkers (one is a graduate of their programs), youth sports, transportation, podcast studio, etc. They appear to be capable and willing to answer questions, adapt, and are ready to move forward.

Alternatives, Inc. – Joe said it is a large organization; 170 staff members on the front lines working to assist formerly incarcerated individuals with re-entry into the community. They have wrap-around services to set people up for success. They are asking for \$25K. He observed a well-run organization trying their best to streamline and improve the process.

Family Promise – James said Lisa (Executive Director) is energetic and passionate. They have a \$400K operational budget and a 12-person board. They basically help families at risk of, or homeless, by providing wrap-around services. They track provided services on their website. They offer extensive services; fundamental life skills. They do a lot! He learned they have a 94% success rate after one year and a 86% success rate in 6 years. They work with the HER Campaign. They do site visits and help with daily needs. No drugs; no tobacco. Have had a 10% increase in services over the last year. James said they know they need to make a correction to their RFQ response regarding the budget.

HomeFront – Kathleen said she was out of town for the holidays so she participated in a conference call with Amanda Stonerock and Patti Webster. She learned they do a lot more than just housing services. They serve the community in many different ways and have extensive community connections.

United Way Continuum of Care – Rebecca said she received an email from Jim Corson regarding his site visit. He supports Tess, but noted they do not directly serve clients. A job description was not included with their RFQ response. Questions include how funding \$300K for staffing and \$100K for services would fit HOME-ARP requirements.

Brenda asked CD Board Members for their thoughts about how to proceed.

- The Board consensus was to develop a list of additional questions to be asked of each RFQ responder. Some possible questions:
 - Are your doors open to the public every day?
 - Are you able to facilitate getting client data from each beneficiary and/or household?
 - Is there any criteria that would prohibit service delivery?
 - How will clients be empowered to meet their needs?
 - How do you gauge success? Metrics?
 - Are you able to make adjustments to your funding request / services to meet HOME-ARP requirements?
- Grant Agreements will be drafted for each organization (perhaps with no specific dollar amount).
- Reimbursement basis (client data forms for each beneficiary, time sheets, etc.). Reimbursements first in; first paid.

Brenda agreed to draft the list of questions and send them to Board Members to review and edit along with the HOME-ARP requirements. After Board approval, the questions will be sent to RFQ respondents, at which time they will be asked if they want to revise their services list based on the reporting requirements.

Tentative 2024 Schedule: Tam apologized for forgetting to bring copies to the meeting. She asked that this item be moved forward for discussion at the February 6th meeting.

Officer Elections:

- Rebecca requested nominations for **Board Chair** for 2024.
Board Member Joe Stockburger nominated Rebecca Noell. Rebecca accepted the nomination. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken and Rebecca was unanimously elected Board Chair.
- Rebecca requested nominations for Board **Vice Chair** for 2024.
Board Member James Allen nominated Joe Stockburger. Joe accepted the nomination. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken and Joe was unanimously elected Board Vice Chair.
- Rebecca requested volunteers to serve as **HomeFront Liaisons** (2 positions) for 2024. Patti Webster said the HomeFront Development Committee meets from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at HomeFront. Meetings are open to anyone interested.
Board Member Erica Doornek volunteered to serve as a HomeFront Liaison on a quarterly basis.
Board Member James Allen volunteered to serve as a HomeFront Liaison on an as-able basis.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings:

Wyeth said the Pioneer Park Restroom and a building at Stewart Park were tagged with graffiti over the weekend. Parks staff was able to power wash off the graffiti on the Pioneer Park restroom because of the graffiti-proof coating we facilitated this summer.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:55 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on February 6, 2024.