



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES

October 21, 2024

12:00 p.m.

Hybrid – Santiam Room

Approved: November 18, 2024

Call to Order

Chair Courtney Stubbs called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Jim Cole, Larry Timm, Bessie Johnson, Ron Green, Courtney Stubbs, Robyn Davis, Alex Johnson II (left meeting at 1:00 p.m.), Skylar Bailey, Emma Deane (left meeting at 12:02 p.m.), John Robledo (arrived at 12:01 p.m.)

Members absent: None.

Approval of Minutes

12:01 p.m.

Motion: Commissioner Johnson II moved to approve the September 16, 2024, minutes as presented. Commissioner Bailey seconded the motion, which passed 9-0.

Commissioner Deane left meeting at 12:02 p.m. and rejoined meetings at 12:07 p.m. as an agency consultant.

Scheduled Business:

12:02 p.m.

- Agency Consultations

Beth Frelander began the consultations noting that agencies have been asked to speak on the services they provide and gaps or challenges they see in serving the homeless community.

Albany Helping Hands Executive Director Jessica Becker provided an overview of their services which include emergency shelter, meals, essential supportive services, clothing, hygiene supplies, mental health and recovery services and case management in finding employment and housing. She said the most urgent need is supportive housing for those who require ongoing mental health support, transitional housing and single bedroom units for those ready to live independently but who are unable to afford market rental rates or have bad credit history or criminal records.

Commissioners had questions regarding how many people they serve, average length of stay, number of beds available and goal setting for residents. Becker provided some specific numbers but noted that demographics have changed over time and there has been an increased population of seniors and disabled that aren't able to work and need extended shelter.

Next Frelander introduced Brandy Plagman, with Greater Albany Public Schools – FACT Program. She described their program as working with students experiencing housing instability. They assist students with accessing basic needs, school supplies, medical care and transportation to school. They see the biggest needs are safe transitional and supportive housing for families, public transportation, family shelters, childcare, and reasonable rental rates helping families get re-established with employment and housing.

Commissioner Green asked about whether students and families have access to cell phones or internet connectivity. She answered that not many have phones which makes it difficult to make appointments and access services.

Program Director Carol Davies, for COAT (Community Outreach Assistance Team) described the Team as a street outreach program. They hand out food and supplies and help inform people about available resources but underlying those activities they seek to build connections with people which put them in a better position to provide assistance. They offer case management in finding housing and continued support to help clients stay housed and living independently. She recognized a recurring theme among the agencies is accessing supportive housing for clients with mental health challenges and medical needs.

Commissioner Davis asked about city camping and the effect of the closure of Marvin's Garden camping area. Davies said COAT program was very busy for a while trying to help those displaced and now it is difficult to find people to provide services.

Commissioner Timm asked about the numbers. They served 850 people last year and this year 1350 so far with the majority being Albany residents.

Commissioner Davis asked about the cleanup of garbage created and what agency oversees the cleanup. Davies replied the main issue was lack of funding and determining what jurisdiction is responsible.

Executive Director of C.H.A.N.C.E. Emma Deane, testified about their experiences in helping the homeless. They have seen increases in substance abuse and mental health issues and many are getting stuck in the shelter system. They see 60 -90 people a day which increases to 80-90 in the winter providing 3 meals a day Monday through Friday. They have a dental care clinic for emergency care and are working with Samaritan to provide some medical care and detox support. Warming/cooling shelters are a huge need. The biggest challenge they see is having affordable and appropriate housing with support. And CNA support in shelters for medically fragile. They would like funding to expand shelter capacity and staff, expand crisis outreach and move the family shelter offsite.

Commissioner Stubbs asked if they work cooperatively with other municipalities to get people sheltered. Dean affirmed that they do cooperate with other municipalities, but transitioning between areas is a complicated process to ensure that space is available.

Commissioner Johnson II left the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Lauren Winchester, Grants Manager with Jackson Street Youth Services shared that they have a full continuum of care. They do outreach with youth 10-24 years old and emergency shelter for 10-17 years old. Next Steps is their program for 18 to 24 years old focusing on transitional living, employment and financial skills. They are planning on a new larger building closer to downtown that would include showers and laundry specifically for youth. Biggest challenges for Next Steps are finding housing. Funding would facilitate more housing choices in Linn County and provide some infrastructure support for the organization to keep up with the need.

- 2023 CDBG Application Priorities

1:06 p.m.

Frelander transitioned to discussion of the priorities for the CDBG awards in the consolidated five-year plan. Asking whether commissioners were in favor of equally prioritizing activities or prioritizing specific goals.

Commissioner Timm suggested keeping them equal as the applications will differ. Commissioner Cole suggested prioritizing funding to address some of the major themes and trends, like senior populations.

Catlin clarified that there may be activities that they would like to specifically address, but all applications received would be considered for public service dollars. Priority ranking would be a way to weigh the competition between applications. Frelander added that if priorities were promoted then applicants may decide to apply for programs that address those specific needs, but those activities would not be requirement to apply.

Commissioner Davis sees the advantage of an even slate, but consideration of award should include what serves the biggest need.

Commissioner Bailey offered that affordable housing options should be weighed less due to the limited pool of CDBG funds and should be allocated to help the most people.

Commissioner Timm restated the greatest need is reducing homelessness.

Commissioner Cole suggested it is the job of the agencies to meet and address what they see as the most pressing needs so the commission should delegate that analysis to those agencies.

Commissioner Green brought up the importance of prioritizing where the most pain was in the community supporting services that provide some immediate relief for people suffering.

Commissioner Deane reiterated that shelter is a precursor to housing and should be prioritized.

Motion: Commissioner Bailey motioned to approve giving equal weight to priorities. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, which passed 8-0. (Deane not voting representing C.H.A.N.C.E.)

- Housing Implementation Plan Update

Frelander reported that they finished their main public engagement efforts in September and took the input to city council to get direction on code amendments and addressing any concerns. They will return to the council to bring updated policy proposals. They will bring those to the Commission for comment in November and anticipate returning to Council with finalized policies for public hearings and potential adoption in December.

Business from the Public

None.

Business from the Commission

Commissioner Davis suggested that another way the commission can address these issues aside from the grants is to make resolutions before the council. Example, the dispersed camping situation, which is a constant concern to the public, a significant issue. She proposed drafting a resolution to the council to take up providing space to safely provide basic services. Catlin recommended that on that particular concern perhaps just asking the council to appoint a homelessness task force to address those issues. Create a plan for reducing the dispersed homeless camping. Commissioner Stubbs agreed that more discussions with the council on issues would be beneficial.

Motion: Commissioner Green moved to have Commissioner Davis to draft a letter to present at the next meeting. Commissioner Stubbs seconded the motion, which passed 8-0. (Deane not voting representing C.H.A.N.C.E.)

Next Meeting Date

November 18, 2024, 12:00 p.m. in the Santiam Room.

Adjournment

Chair Stubbs adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Susan Muniz
Recorder

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Beth Frelander
Planner II

*Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. The documents are available by emailing cdaa@albanyoregon.gov.