

# REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Wednesday May 26, 2021 Meeting Minutes

## **ATTENDEES:**

Lacey: Carolyn Cox, Lenny Greenstein, Scott Spence, Rick Walk, Kelly Adams

Tumwater: Michael Althaus, Joan Cathey, John Doan, Brad Medrud

Olympia: Jim Cooper, Dani Madrone, Keith Stahley, Cary Retlin

Thurston County: Carolina Mejia, Ramiro Chavez, Tom Webster, Keylee Marineau, Jacinda Steltjes

South County: none

Public: None

Meeting began at 4:00 pm.

**Agenda Item 1:** Agenda approved

**Agenda Item 2:** Public Comment. None.

**Agenda Item 3:** Minutes from March: Motion and second, all approved.

**Agenda Item 4:** Request for Proposal Final Recommendations

Jim acknowledged the work done by the Funding Group. Tom gave an overview of the recommendations. In February the RHC heard recommendations of funding priorities from the HAT, The RHC set the priorities in consultation with the Funding group. RFP was issued in February, a bidder's conference was held in March, and applications were due in April. The County received 48 applications requesting about \$11M in funds. Some applications were reviewed by the Review Team, which is made up of staff members from jurisdictions, and some applications were reviewed by the elected officials on the Funding Workgroup. On May 10<sup>th</sup> the Funding Workgroup met to discuss the application, review team recommendations, and finalize their recommendations. The next steps after this meeting, the RHC recommendations will go to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. Some contracts begin July 1 and some September 1.

First group are the Basic Needs Human Services Funds. Received 7 applications. Applications that received a score of 80 or higher were funded, split proportionally between the awardees. Michael asked about Pac Mountain, did they not reach the 80 point scoring threshold. Yes.

Motion to approve the Basic Needs awards as presented, second. All approved.

Housing Basic Needs homeless prevention activities, to help keep people in housing. Received 8 applications. \$602K requested, \$200K to award. A score of 80 or higher received funding, split proportionally. Michael asks for details as to why CYS did not score higher, what are areas of their application. Dani responded that the proposal was not entirely responsive to application, all funded staff time rather than needs that would be supplied. Scope of work not entirely clear. Ramiro asks how the ROOF rental assistance related to CAC's rental assistance program? ROOF has operated this program for

many years, it is a one-time small amount rent assistance. The CAC program provides more funds over a longer time, and is more rigorous eligibility requirements, and is specific to Covid.

Motion to approve Housing Basic Needs as presented, second. All approved.

Housing and Homeless Services Funding awards, will discuss in a few different sections, by program type. Housing and Essential Needs is a specific grant from Commerce, one agency that operates this program. These applications were reviewed by the Review Team. The amount of award would be determined by Commerce grant amount. Set aside for Coordinated Entry, application from Family Support Center recommended for funding. Set Aside for Cold and Hazardous weather, these are the only applications that will be one year. Two contracts recommended for hazardous weather, 3 contracts for cold weather.

Service contract recommendations, there was \$2.6M to award. Program categories are permanent supportive housing (PSH), rapid rehousing (RRH), general services, and shelter. Recommendations include 2 for PSH, 4 in RRH, note that these awards are less than in previous years with hope that rapid rehousing clients will also be using rent assistance funds. Question about why SafePlace award is lower than others. Keylee responds that overall their score was low and their request was a substantial increase from previous awards. Ramiro asks about how they determined the amounts awarded? Keylee answers that they did not use a formula to allocate funds. They started the funding allocation with the shelter category as the highest priority sub-category, and looked at priorities and scores on the applications. They considered applications within sub-categories with general services seen as the lowest priority sub-category for funding. They also considered how to best continue services that are currently funded (Maintain existing funding commitments) and the need to need to balance the youth, family, and adult populations needs.

On the general services applications, the Review Team only recommended funding the FSC project. The RHC Funding Workgroup added funding to award funds to the Build A Bus and Senior Services projects. Keylee added that there were \$8M in requests and only \$2.6 to award. Every project is crucial. So hard choices were made. Review Team focused on priorities and maintaining the system.

There was a senior housing set-aside, with specific requirements for senior project stated in RFP. Senior Services project did not clearly meet the criteria in the RFP to serve those with incomes under 30% of area median income. The Interfaith Works shelter does serve a high percentage of elderly and was seen as better serving homeless seniors.

Tom points out the RHC funding group is requesting an additional \$100K from the 2163 fund balance to fund the recommended projects. Michael asks if they have to vote again if the HEN award from Commerce is higher. No HEN funding will be whatever the award is from the State.

Michael added that he is fine approving as presented, including the additional \$100K. Carolyn agrees. Carolina adds as a member for the RHC funding workgroup that it was frustrating, hard decisions.

Motion to approve Housing Services including the HEN funding at Commerce funded level, second. Ramiro added that racial equity activities were included in the scoring, did this make any difference in the scores? Keylee indicated yes, and Ramiro adds that this would be good to include in the Press Release. Dani adds that some applicants did not answer that question well and brought their score down.

Clarify motion: Approve as presented, housing services for \$4,901,500. All approved.

Housing Capital Funds were considered. There is approximately \$1.6M to award. The two projects that were originally in the Pipeline for funding this year were unable to move forward, which created two open spots for this year. 6 applications were received. Tom gave a brief summary of each project. Cary added that some of the projects were also funded by City of Olympia.

Motion to approve 2021 Housing Capital awards, second. All approved.

RFI Pipeline projects, the Request for Information for projects for 2024. Recommendation is to place one project on the pipeline. Leave one place open on the 2024 pipeline, the agencies can apply again for this spot in the future. Cary adds that agencies can apply for capital funding without being on the pipeline. The Habitat project is very strong and competitive. Ready to apply for additional funds.

Motion to add Habitat for Humanity project to 2024 pipeline, second. All approved.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Workgroup update: Funding a Major Regional Housing Project**

Last month the RHC established a group to discuss how to use the new American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and other funds to make an impact in affordable housing, The team developed a framework to focus their work going forward, and to make sure this does not duplicate the work of the Affordable Housing Team and the jurisdictions working on their housing needs. The narrow focus is to plan to develop 150 – 200 units of PSH by 2024. The framework includes a role for the Affordable Housing team to serve as an advisory committee for this group. Goal is to present a development plan to RHC in September. Looking for feedback from the RHC on this framework. Michael adds that they need to be aware of scale, how big 150-200 units is, and how much they will get from ARPA. Jurisdictions do not know exactly how much funds they will be getting to contribute to this. Scott added that they want to capture the various ways they could get to the 150-200 units, including options of acquisition, leveraging, construction, multiple small projects etc. Lenny adds that their ARPA allotment was decreased by about 45%, similar to other jurisdictions. Olympia has set aside \$2M for a regional project. The RHC approved for the Technical Team to proceed to implement the proposed framework.

#### **Agenda Item 6: Technical Team working group updates**

Scattered Site RFP, Tom gave an update. The County issued an RFP for case management and site governance and received one proposal. Staff will go to the BoCC on June 8<sup>th</sup> for approval.

#### **Agenda Item 7: Good of the Order**

Conversation in Olympia is getting to the question on when will we start working on the prevention part of homelessness. At some point we need to look at both interventions and prevention, need to get to a bigger planning process. Idea of a retreat for big discussion.

Schelli gave an update related to COVID-19 activities. Hard to predict what changes will happen after June 30<sup>th</sup>, the County met to discuss upcoming masking guidance, County can provide technical assistance.

Carolina asks if there are any updates on hotels. Both Tom and Keith state they will have more info in the future.

**Agenda Item 8: Upcoming Meetings**

Meeting Adjourned: 5:30 pm

Next Meeting: June 23rd, 2021, 4:00 pm