

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
November 20, 2012

City Commission Work Session

Mayor Winters presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: City Commissioners present: Michael J. Winters, Bill Bronson, Fred Burow, Mary Jolley, and Robert Jones.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager; Deputy City Manager; Interim City Attorney; Directors of Fiscal Services, Planning and Community Development, and Public Works; Deputy Planning Director; Human Resources Manager; Housing Authority Executive Director; Police Chief; and the City Clerk.

1. CDBG POTENTIAL PROGRAM CHANGES

Deputy Planning Director Wendy Thomas explained that it is difficult to anticipate what the federal funding will be for the CDBG and HOME programs due to difficulties going on at the federal level and talks about the federal “fiscal cliff.” For several years Congress has talked about decreasing the amount of funding for administration. Currently, that limit is set at 20%. In addition, HUD is increasing its monitoring due to pressure from Congress. This increases the amount of paperwork and follow-up in order for staff to administer the programs.

She explained that, year after year, the needs are increasing while the dollars are decreasing. CDBG funding has decreased 8% each year for the past few years. Last year there were a record number of applications and projects that were funded. Although the allocation from the federal government was reduced last year, the City was able to fund a lot of the applications due to an allocation of unprogrammed funds in the amount of \$254,156. She anticipates the federal funding will again decrease 5% to 10% this fiscal year.

She proposed that programmatic changes be made. With the anticipated decrease of federal monies she discussed ways of reducing costs, alternative funding sources, and the loan fund payback program. The process could be streamlined to better utilize the funding if they took in fewer applications, and informed applicants of the targeted funding areas based on goals outlined in the Consolidated Plan.

In summary, the recommendations were targeting the allocations under public service, some cuts in the admin budget, 65% be used for public facilities/City projects, \$50,000 for technical assistance program, and continue to maintain the revolving loan fund. She requested direction from the Commission for staff to share with applicants at the December 6th workshop.

In response to Sheila Rice, Executive Director of NeighborWorks Great Falls, Deputy Director Thomas confirmed that the proposed cuts were to the economic development and affordable housing pieces of the pie chart. She explained that CDBG funding is more flexible, and HOME funding is what HUD is looking to claw back. She anticipates an allocation of HOME monies to NeighborWorks, because they are usually the applicant for those funds.

The Commissioners indicated they would like more time to digest the recommendations.

City Manager Greg Doyon suggested that it be made clear to applicants at the December 6th workshop that funding may not be allocated in the same way.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Winters adjourned the informal work session of November 20, 2012, at 6:15 p.m.