

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**April 13, 2020**  
**Online Broadcast Meeting**

**Present:** Councilmembers Bullock, Litten, & Neff

**Also Present:** Councilmembers Kepple, Rader, & Shachner, Mayor George, Acting Finance Director Rancatore, Law Director Corrigan, City Planner Katelyn Milius, Development Officer Dan Wyman, Program Manager Mary Leigh, Rick Sicha & Marsha Mall (consultants for the city in its consolidated plan to HUD), a couple members of the public, Clerk Bach, & Deputy Clerk Lascu taking minutes

**Call to Order:** 7:00 p.m.

**AGENDA**

**Communication from Mayor George and Councilman Bullock regarding evaluating additional economic assistance to relieve the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.**

Mayor George provided an overview of city actions taken during the coronavirus pandemic to provide economic assistance to the community. She highlighted the implementation of the small business relief program, which provides funds quickly to small business owners to help them pay their business' rent. The first round of checks was cut last Thursday. Future rounds are anticipated. The program was funded using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars and allotments from the city's economic development fund. The economic development fund will not be tapped in future rounds, as the fund balance currently hovers around \$200,000. Future funding will be provided through additional CDBG monies made available through the CARES Act. The city of Lakewood should be receiving another \$1.2 million as a result of that federal legislation. The intent for Phase 2 of funding is to be more inclusive to small business owners who may not have a storefront that he or she occupies. A small business taskforce has been created to get an understanding of what businesses need at this time. Councilmember Bullock serves as the council representative on the taskforce.

Councilmember Litten stated his understanding was that the rent relief program funds were being paid equally between the Planning Department and CDBG. He added he also understood that out of the applications received by the city, half would fall into one of the two funding streams. Mayor George stated that those understandings were correct, and that's how the program was planned, however most of the applications received did not qualify for CDBG funding, so the amount coming out of the economic development fund was increased in order to get checks out to owners in a speedy fashion.

Councilmember Litten also asked if there was any funding available for residential landlords, as he has received inquiries from his constituents regarding the matter. Mayor George noted that her administration is evaluating providing relief to renters who may be hurting financially during the crisis.

Chairman Bullock requested same day notification from the administration when it decides to spend a significant amount of dollars on programs such as those aforementioned. Mayor George noted that she is happy to communicate as needed, but noted that Council approval was not needed for the rent relief program.

Councilmember Shachner expressed a desire to hear from Planning Department and Lakewood Alive staff in a future Housing, Planning, & Development Committee in regard to what can be done to assist renters during these hard financial times.

### **Approval of the minutes of the March 9, 2020 Finance Committee.**

Chairman Bullock made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Litten to approve the minutes from the March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Finance Committee meeting.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Yeas – Bullock, Litten, Neff

Nays – None

The motion passed. The minutes from the March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Finance Committee meeting were approved.

**RESOLUTION 2020-18 – A RESOLUTION to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law, authorizing and directing the Mayor to submit Lakewood’s FY20-FY24 Five Year Consolidated Plan, as approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which includes dollar allocations and activities to be funded with federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) resources during the abovementioned five-year period and incorporates the City’s FY20 Annual Action Plan which serves as the City’s application to HUD for FY 2020 CDBG, ESG, and HOME funds. (Referred to Finance Committee 3/2/20)**

Chairman Bullock noted that Resolution 2020-18 essentially serves as the analytical report, required every five years, that supports a series of one-year action plans that guide federal dollars that the city receives through HUD. Chairman Bullock requested that Clerk Bach put Resolution 2020-18 on Council’s April 20<sup>th</sup> docket. The plan requires Council approval and could be potentially used to assist renters during the COVID-19 crisis.

Dan Wyman, the city’s Development Officer, Katelyn Milius and Mary Leigh, Planning Department staff, and Rick Sicha and Marsha Moll of Placemark Collaborative were all in attendance to assist in explanation of the plan. Placemark Collaborative is a consulting firm which has assisted the City of Lakewood and other members of the Cuyahoga Housing Consortium, in developing their 5 plan submissions to HUD.

Mr. Sicha indicated that the draft 5-year plan has been on public comment since March 12. The document spends a great deal of time indicating the needs of low to moderate-income families, and those of vulnerable populations (homeless individuals, developmentally disabled individuals, individuals suffering from substance abuse, etc.) Much of the data in this plan comes from 2011-2015. The reason for the lag is due to a significant amount of data that needs to be exchanged between HUD and the Census Bureau regarding 1200 different jurisdictions throughout the United States.

Mr. Sicha noted that the goals of Lakewood's plan centered around improving and expanding affordable housing, revitalizing residential neighborhoods, increasing economic opportunities, providing needed public services to the elderly and the disabled, and reducing homelessness/at-risk homelessness.

Chairman Bullock inquired as to whether the goals of the plan are continuous from what was done in the past and if the goals leave any large policy items out. Mr. Wyman indicated that many of the goals have been continuous since at least the year 2000 because they have been consistent needs of the city over time. These needs are consistent among inner ring suburbs throughout the county. Mr. Wyman also added that if anything was left out, it was due to the policy item not fitting into HUD statutory regulations.

Councilmember Rader asked how the city's 8 step affordable housing strategy guides how the federal dollars would be implemented. Ms. Leigh indicated that the majority of programming in the city's strategy directly correlates to the use of federal funding laid out in the city's HUD plan.

Mr. Wyman outlined some of the overarching funding appropriations included in the FY2020 Lakewood plan, which he attempted to email to Councilmembers during the virtual meeting.

Chairman Bullock asked if the city anticipates any regional or economic trends that influence the 5-year HUD plan. Mr. Sicha and Ms. Moll indicated that the data is just starting to pick up on the housing market recovery that has been occurring in Lakewood in recent years. Low to moderate-income families will continue to exist and present needs, despite the rise in single-family home sale prices. The group collectively expressed the need for extrapolation of data due to its age and the current circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis. Chairman Bullock expressed a desire to pursue a definition of low-moderate income family that is more tailored to the Lakewood housing market. The Planning Department reached out to the regional HUD office regarding the definition of an affordable rent. Research indicated that Lakewood's rents fell in the middle of the definition of a fair market rent.

Mr. Wyman's email regarding the FY 2020 Lakewood HUD plan eventually was delivered to Chairman Bullock who forwarded it the members of the committee. Discussion of the document will occur next Finance Committee meeting.

Chairman Bullock adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.