

MINUTES
HAMILTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
And
HAMILTON COUNTY AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT COMMITTEE
MAY 19, 2022
Conference Room 1A
Hamilton County Government and Judicial Center
One Hamilton County Square
Noblesville, Indiana

President Dillinger called the Commissioner's meeting to order declaring a quorum present of Commissioner Christine Altman, Commissioner Steven C. Dillinger, with Commissioner Mark Heirbrandt attending virtually through Teams.

American Rescue Plan Act Committee members present were Councilor Sue Maki and Councilor Steve Nation. Councilor Brad Beaver was absent.

MINUTES

Approval of Minutes

Maki moved to approve the minutes of April 20, 2022. Altman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

APPLICATIONS

No new applications have been received.

TABLED ITEMS

Mills confirmed the remaining budget is \$892,633.85.

Tabled Items

- A. Project #113 Maintenance – 4H/Extension Drainage for \$400,000. Maki moved to untable. Nation seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. Project #161 Maintenance – 4H/Extension Drainage Horse Arena for \$250,000. Maki moved to untable. Nation seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Altman does not think they have enough information to address these requests at this time. We do not have a program set up yet, a master plan is being developed for this facility that will be done in phases and we need to make sure the drainage plan is what is required for the master plan. Maki's understanding is what they are working on is under the assumption we are moving ahead with the drainage, it if is not that is news to her. Heirbrandt stated we have been trying to figure out how much money should we invest right now into the fairgrounds' knowing drainage is an important piece of it, but we do not want to throw money into something that will be wasted and have to be redone. Dillinger does not know how fixing the drainage would interfere with what is going on. Altman replied they have to drain the site. Dillinger replied they are draining the horse arena which has to be done anyway. Altman asked if the

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horse arena will stay the horse arena and if there will be grading done that will affect the drainage, these are things she does not know. Altman does not mind allocating the money but holding it until we know exactly what is going to happen on that facility. Dillinger recommended a motion pending the drainage will not interfere with the master plan. Altman thinks it has to be coordinated noting the Commissioners are preparing to present to the Council the first couple of phases for funding and she wants to make sure it is all tied together and a good investment. Dillinger agreed but knows how bad the drainage is in the horse arena. We need to untable and act.

Altman moved to advance Projects #113 and #161 subject to Commissioners coordination with the master plan. Nation seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Project #61 Jackson Township – Payroll and Benefits for \$35,864.

Maki moved to untable. Heirbrandt seconded. Motion carried with Dillinger, Heirbrandt, Maki and Nation approving. Altman abstained.

Altman, in discussions with Mr. Booker, he thinks the supplies in the amount of \$5,000 to \$7,000 would be covered by FEMA but payroll costs would not be covered by FEMA. Heirbrandt moved to approve the Jackson Township request in the amount of \$35,684. Maki seconded. Ms. Robyn Cook reported she has spoken with Susan Nair, and they are correct that payroll costs would most likely not be covered by FEMA. The PPE and cleaning supplies is \$12,682. Nair is comfortable that the cleaning supplies is a worthy project but knows she will not receive \$23,182 from FEMA. Heirbrandt amended his motion to the amount of \$23,182. Maki amended her second. Altman reported they have received information on the township assistance budgets and it does not look like anyone had a huge windfall from the rental assistance program so those concerns in her mind are over. Motion carried with Dillinger, Heirbrandt, Maki, and Nation approving. Altman abstained.

D. Project #176 Westfield-Washington Township – Lindley Ditch Bank Stabilization for \$800,000. No motion made. Project remains tabled.

E. Project #184 Delaware Township – Community Center Shut Down - \$94,941.

Maki moved to untable. Nation seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Maki moved to approve. Nation seconded. Mr. Todd Clevenger cautioned them about paying for the ice machines; ice machines are not an environment that the virus can live, it is not PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) or a necessary item. Clevenger noted there is no restriction on the ice machines so we have to be careful, they could

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have sanitized the inside of the machines. Maki asked if are the ice machines definitely not eligible? Clevenger read a conversation between the Treasury and doctors – "ice machines are definitely an environment where the virus cannot grow, the virus requires a living cell in order to reproduce." Ms. Debbie Driskell stated the replacement was based on an early recommendation by their local health department and the CDC website; their ice machines required people to reach in with their hands to retrieve the ice. Driskell understands if this is not eligible, this was early in the pandemic and they were purchased under an abundance of caution. Nation stated keep the ice machines in the reimbursement, we can deal with it if it comes back as a non-reimbursable item. Motion carried with Dillinger, Heirbrandt, Maki, and Nation approving. Altman abstained.

F. Project #213 Assessor – Office configuration for \$292,545.27.

Maki moved to untable. Nation seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mills confirmed there is about \$124,000 left, not enough for this project. Maki asked if the office was visited by the Commissioners, is there anything that can partially be done? Mr. Dan Stevens reported Steve Wood would have to provide what could be done with the available funding. Altman asked when will the second round of funding arrive? Mills replied we are waiting upon a signature by Commissioner Dillinger. Funds should arrive in June. Altman recommended using the remaining funds from this draw and the balance upon the receipt of funds. Altman moved to approve Project #213 utilizing the balance of Phase 1 funds and releasing the balance upon receipt of Phase 2 funds. Heirbrandt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

ATTAINABLE HOUSING

Ms. Andrea Davis reported they are staffing the Housing Collaborative. Davis requested confirmation the role the Housing Collaborative will play in the RFP (Request for Proposal) and going forward. Altman noted we want to have an extremely loose RFP because we can always reallocate the funds if we do not find a project we like. We are looking for a concept that is repeatable and can be used in any community in Hamilton County. The idea is to figure out if we can do something on repeat projects in this county with governments relaxing standards, developers coming in with a developer mind and then if we can marry other funds that would be great. The problem is everyone is chasing federal dollars which delays the project and reduces the scope and spends a lot more money. The idea is to come up with a solution that utilizes our local resources to get this built. It is not just 60% of the average of median income, it is a whole realm of housing that we need. Altman does not like scoring criteria because it is impossible to get a matrix. The scoring committee does not need to be the collaborative, but

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they can help sort them out with county people sitting on the committee and confirming if this is really what we want to put \$5 million in to. Altman stated this will be concept based to see if this will move the dime. Davis asked if they would like them to help prepare the RFP and get it into the market? Altman replied yes but they would go through Commissioners to review. Davis asked about the timeline, we originally had discussed timing it so the decision would line up with the tax credit applications but that is not feasible at this point. Altman confirmed with Clevenger that monies have to be obligated to by end of 2024 with construction by the end of 2026 with reporting period the first quarter of 2027. Davis confirmed they can discuss the Collaborative's role after the RFP has been completed. Davis asked if this whole committee would do the scoring or a sub-committee. The Committee agreed they should do the scoring. Nation noted there are a lot of people talking with Andrea, he would like to see the questions she receives as this would help as we try to figure out a comprehensive plan for the county. Altman asked how long would it take the Collaborative to come up with the RFP? Davis believes they can have it for the next committee meeting. Altman thinks this topic and Bakers Corner should be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Altman asked Sullivan for an update on the Bakers Corner project. Sullivan replied, the public hearing to present the scoring committee recommendation for a developer is scheduled for Monday, May 23rd. This public hearing is for the developer only. The scoping period will go until August with the Commissioners, engineer, and developer agreeing on a maximum guaranteed price. Altman noted the financing will be critical, if we put ARPA dollars into this project we cannot recoup those funds through developer or availability fees. It will be a blend of financing mechanisms. Our idea is to get it up and running to have something to sell in the future.

Next Meeting – June 23, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

Dillinger adjourned the ARPA Committee meeting. Commissioners stayed in session.

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Sullivan reported following the last Commissioner's meeting they are proceeding with requesting a \$3 million loan to assist with the cash flow for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) from county general; this also requires extending the payback date on the drainage board loan.

Altman noted we have heard complaints that this program is enabling people, people are not going back to work, etc. Dillinger reported he has spoken with a township trustee who has told him the ERAP is not

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working and should be shut down. Driskell replied the Trustees are discussing pursuing a system for people to apply for assistance from the Trustee and then the Trustee would make a referral to apply for ERAP, it would not be an open portal. This would require the Trustees to screen and assess. Dillinger asked if they are seeing abuse? Driskell would not make a blanket statement, there is some of that going on, but they are seeing people that have a legitimate need.

Ms. Nancy Ramsey reported they have been approached to offer their *Pathways to Employment* online course to anyone with an affidavit that shows zero income. This course offers resume writing, online job seeking, and interviewing.

Dillinger stated people are begging for employees and he does not understand why people are not working if they are physically able. Altman is concerned about the people with long COVID. We need to figure out how to distinguish between the long COVID people and those that just want to stay home. Ramsey noted it is a mismatch between the employees that are available verses the jobs that are opened. This group that is not working sometimes are not prepared to submit a resume, they have always walked in and filled out a paper application and now we have gone to all digital. Their classes help teach them how to do this. Altman asked if the cost of this class can be paid out of the ERAP funds? Ramsey replied yes and they are being reimbursed for the administration of the classes they offer. Altman likes the proposal to vet the applicants at the Trustee level.

Heirbrandt commented one thing the Trustees have always been good on is their appeal process, they always have all the information to present to the Commissioners to decide. This is a little different in that there are federal funds involved and he wants to make sure we are following the guidelines. Tenants find ways to get around things and the Trustees know that. Heirbrandt wants to be diligent and to make sure we have good documentation if it is appealed.

Dillinger reported he has received two calls in the last day from residents that have their rent raised to a rate they cannot afford or are being displaced due to rental companies coming in and raising the rates. He does not know what to tell people. Ramsey knows the Commissioners are opposed to supplementing rent, but they are thinking about paying down their rent, \$200 up front per month for one year to the landlord for the 12-month timeframe of the lease. The landlord takes the \$2,400 upfront and allows the rent to be \$200. Altman asked if these funds qualify for that, that is the question. Ramsey stated this is a program they are thinking of because we are dealing with working people who honestly cannot afford the \$1,300 for a two-bedroom apartment. it is similar to the housing voucher program but what goes

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along with this is ongoing monthly case management coaching program to review budgeting, visits to the home so the landlord knows we are also their eyes and ears.

Altman stated we need to figure out what we can do with the housing assistance funds. Ramsey replied that is all part of housing insecurity. We have qualification based on use of those funds, does this meet those qualification bases that we can use those monies in the coffers? Altman noted the rental assistance money is first with the other pot of money being HUD funds that may or may not qualify. It is a nice program, but we have to figure out who is going to pay. Altman stated in her opinion the best place is the ERAP funds because we have lots of those and it is one way to widdle back and make sure those funds are used for the people that truly need the funds. If we can put criteria in place, but she is concerned there all kinds of bells and whistles and hoops to use the ERAP funds. Altman noted she is not involved in those determinations with Westfield Washington, she has separate counsel for the program, but she does not know who makes that determination.

Clevenger stated he would have to look into it but the foundation of ERAP funds is a negative COVID impact. If they are working he is not sure that a negative covid impact can be tied to it. We can make our program as restrictive or flexible as we want. If we decide that from this day forward it is long haul COVID we have to figure out how to prove that. Altman stated all this started because of COVID so are these rental increases an indirect result of COVID, and it is something we could what we call in tax matters a revenue ruling, some type of ruling from whomever that this is an appropriate use to try to broaden the scope. Clevenger replied he can not see how COVID makes rent go up but if we can get a ruling that would help. Altman noted there has to be a nexus because all of this started when everything shut down. It is an indirect effect as is the supply chain.

Dillinger stated the calls he received are not poor people, these people make good money, she has three kids and they raised her rent \$500, and she can't pay that so she is moving. She probably could apply for rental assistance. He does not know what to tell her. Altman stated this is why we set aside \$5 million towards attainable housing, this is endemic, housing to buy is next to impossible because we do not have the stock and once you have reduced availability it drives up the price. We are trying to figure out how to increase the housing stock that is constructed in a more attainable manner. Ramsey addressed Dillinger, this person he is speaking about will not necessarily fit into the housing that is being constructed, where will she move to, that is the point. She has a good job with Altman noting we do not have transit. Dillinger replied yes, she does have a good job but she can't afford the extra \$500 rent especially with gas prices going up. He did not know where to send her. Driskell stated they tell people they need to relocate to something they can afford. This also displaces them out of their school district

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which is an upheaval for the whole family. Part of her job is helping people understand they simply cannot afford to live where they are living in the community where they landed.

Dillinger asked what is going to happen with the costs, we have 800 plus apartments being constructed within a six-block area of where we are sitting right now. Altman noted those are all high end, the change has to be at the planning and zoning level at the city councils. Zoning has to be changed to construct apartments. We have to convince these people that they are important to our community, and we need to find a place for them. What we do is increase density and welcome in people who do not have the highest LIT return on investment.

Driskell noted the experience in their area is there are apartments being built that are affordable and they have been leased by people from outside the community that come for the affordable apartment. The apartments are full, but they are not being vetted to see if it is affordable. What they face all the time from people that move in is that one month later they are in their office saying they can't afford the rent. Even in the subsidized apartments they had four households come to us in the last month that had never paid a dime. They were given an apartment, came from other communities and they can't afford the subsidized housing. Altman asked what is the regulation on leasing subsidized housing? Driskell thinks it is apparently loose-goosy. It used to be property owners vetted applicants, no longer does that take place. The leasing agents push back stating there are all these laws about anti-discrimination, and they do not want to be in a position that their standard is 30% of their income or something similar. Their first priority is to fill the units, if they have money to get in and sometimes there is a special and they do not have to have money to get in, you get an apartment. Altman does not know why we have specials in this county, from a landlord perspective that makes no sense to her because you get someone in that trashes your unit in one month, they have no money and now the landlord has to fix the unit. Driskell thinks it maybe they are seeing an anomaly in the Fishers area, but their struggle is real.

Ramsey stated Family Promise deals with housing insecurity, not just homelessness. They have lists of assistance and they work with people that are not just homeless or being evicted. They work with people that are seeking housing because they can't find anything they can afford. Dillinger thinks this is just the tip of the iceberg and he does not know how to make it any better or where to send them. Ramsey replied they can send them to us, and we can try to help them.

Altman stated the answer is not going to be Family Promise, the answer is more housing stock and that is where we can be influential to pull together the mayors and council presidents asking them to listen to the numbers, it is a critical problem and we are about to go backwards.

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Driskell noted Trustees do a lot of what Dillinger is describing and he can send them to the Trustees. Cook stated it is the bigger companies buying the rentals and if we provide a subsidy and pay that extra money it incentivizes them to charge more.

Altman asked how soon will they have their recommendation on the rental assistance process? Driskell will speak with Danielle (Carey Tolan). Altman noted she will have to do it immediately because she is about ready to go on sabbatical.

Altman moved to adjourn. Dillinger seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Present

Christine Altman, Commissioner
Steven C. Dillinger, Commissioner
Mark Heirbrandt, Commissioner (virtually via Teams)
Sue Maki, County Councilor
Steve Nation, County Councilor
Robin M. Mills, Auditor
Connor Sullivan, Assistant County Attorney
Dan Stevens, Director of Administration
Kim Rauch, Administrative Assistant to Auditor
Todd Clevenger, Auditor's Grant Administrator
Jennifer Chavez, Auditor's Deputy Grant Administrator
Lauren Powell, Accounts Payable
Debbie Driskell, Delaware Township Trustee
Robyn Cook, Jackson Township Trustee
Nicole Duncan
Andrea Davis, HAND Executive Director
Kelley Romweber, HAND
Nancy Ramsey, Family Promise of Hamilton County Executive Director
Tammy Sander, Social Media Coordinator (virtually via Teams)

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APPROVED
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Steven C. Dillinger
Mark Heirbrandt

ATTEST

Robin M. Mills, Auditor

Date Approved: 6/13/22