

**CITY OF BUFFALO URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

March 25, 2021

REMOTE MEETING VIA WEBEX CONFERENCE CALL

<https://cityofbuffalourbanrenewalagency.my.webex.com/cityofbuffalourbanrenewalagency.my/j.php?MTID=madc4a042c36f8177858e53cda0df1842>

MEETING DATE: March 25, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brendan R. Mehaffy, BURA Vice Chairman
Council President Darius Pridgen
Commissioner Donna Estrich
Timothy Ball, Corporation Counsel
Council Member Joseph Golombek
Council Member Christopher Scanlon

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Mayor Byron Brown, BURA Chairman

SECRETARY: Scott C. Billman

OTHERS PRESENT: Yvonne McCray, BURA Director of Housing, Jenna Bichler, BURA Director of Operations, Tracy Cooley, BURA Deputy Director of FCA, Jessica Brown, Director of Administration & Finance, Anna Falicov, Dana Harris, Maria Melchiorre, Tony Chestnut, Leslie Vishwanath, Pam Walker-Jarmon, Evelyn Rodriguez, Alex Carducci, Anthony Sheppard, Crystal Middleton

1. Mr. Mehaffy called the meeting to order at 9:40 am.
2. Council President Darius Pridgen made the motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the February 25, 2021 meeting, seconded by Corporation Counsel Timothy Ball and carried unanimously.
3. **BURA FISCAL UPDATE REPORT (Information)**
 - 3a. Ms. Cooley, Director of FCA (Financial Control of Agencies) provided a Divisional report to the Board.

4. CITIES RISE (ACTION)

4a. APPROVAL FOR BURA TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH SYRACUSE HOME HEADQUARTERS TO ADMINISTER A REVOLVING LOAN FUND

BURA Board Members approved a request to enter into a contract with Syracuse HOME Headquarters to administer a Revolving Loan Fund in the amount of \$400,000. BURA will administer \$400,000 in grant funds to capitalize a revolving loan fund aimed at improving the health and safety of Buffalo's rental housing. The grant funds for this project come from the Cities RISE grant award, which are funds originating from the Attorney General's office and managed by Enterprise Community Partners. The purpose of the loan fund is to provide access to home repair dollars to homeowners and small investors that might not otherwise have access to traditional bank financing. BURA released a Request for Proposals on January 8, 2020. Responses were received from two entities: NeighborWorks Rochester's local office (formerly known as West Side Neighborhood Housing Services) and Syracuse HOME Headquarters (HOME HQ). A review committee comprised of BURA staff and other City staff involved in the Cities RISE initiative was formed. The review committee graded each respondent in accordance with a rubric that evaluated administrative capacity, experience and ability to leverage additional dollars into the loan fund. The review committee unanimously determined that HOME HQ was the more qualified applicant and arranged for an interview. A meeting took place on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 herein Kerry Quaglia, HOME HQ's CEO, answered committee members' concerns and

provided more details as to the loan product that would be made available with BURA funds as well as other funds. Significantly, HOME HQ has secured a commitment from M&T Bank and Key Bank to contribute \$1,000,000 each into the revolving loan fund. Those dollars, along with the \$400,000 grant from BURA, will allow HOME HQ to offer a 15%/85% combined grant and loan product with an effective interest rate of 2.1%. Loans will be made available to owner-occupied properties as well as rental properties owned by landlords owning up to 4 units. Each loan will be capped at \$20,000. HOME HQ, or a subcontractor of HOME HQ, will administer all aspects of the program, from application and inspections to construction and loan repayment. Risk of default rests with HOME HQ, which has allocated a portion of the BURA grant to capitalize a loan loss reserve fund. BURA will receive quarterly reports and participate in a loan review committee for applicants who are considered at higher risk for default. BURA will also work with HOME HQ to braid in other available state and federal funds to maximize impact. Demand for the product will be generated through coordinated marketing with HOME HQ, BURA, and community partners. In addition, demand for home repair dollars are anticipated to increase as the Department of Permits and Inspection Services launches its proactive rental inspection program in summer 2021. HOME HQ aims to have the loan available to residents beginning in May 2021.

Motion made by Council President Darius Pridgen to approve Item 4a, seconded by Council Member Scanlon and carried unanimously.

5. GENERAL FUND (ACTION)

5a. AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO A CONSULTANT AGREEMENT WITH YOUNG & WRIGHT ARCHITECTURAL FOR A STRUCTURAL ENGINEER REGARDING PROPERTY LOCATED AT 667 MAIN STREET/664 WASHINGTON STREET

Agency Members approved a request to allocate \$35,000 in general funds to contract Young + Wright Architectural for the design and construction administration for 667 Main St (664 Washington St) roof replacement and structural stabilization. BURA solicited proposals from three A/E firms, in which Young + Wright Architectural came in with the lowest base fee of the three. The base proposal fee may increase if unforeseen conditions on site arise. 667 Main St (664 Washington St) is home to Hostel Buffalo Niagara (HBN). Hostel Buffalo Niagara is a tenant of the Main St side of the building and the rear portion has been abandoned and remains in critical condition. May of 2016, the City of Buffalo conducted \$280,000 worth of stabilization work on the rear portion of the building. This stabilization work was meant to be a bridging solution until more funds were available, the building's condition is progressively deteriorating and all previous stabilization work that was completed is in need of additional support and this will allow BURA to prepare for the roof replacement and a long-term plan for a sustainable solution for the building's future.

Motion made by Commissioner Estrich to approve Item 5a, seconded by Corporation Counsel Timothy Ball and carried unanimously.

6. JUNETEENTH 2021 (ACTION)

6a. ADOPT JUNETEENTH AS A PAID HOLIDAY FOR BURA EMPLOYEES

Agency Members approved a request to recognize Juneteenth as a commemorative holiday. June 2020, Mayor Byron W. Brown announced that the City of Buffalo will observe the Juneteenth holiday as a paid holiday for all city government employees beginning in 2021. The proclamation was confirmed as part of the Mayor's State of the City Address held on March 5, 2021. Juneteenth commemorates the anniversary of the emancipation of the last enslaved people in the Confederacy in 1865, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln. On June 19, 1865, Union Army Major General Gordon Granger initiated the final execution of the Emancipation Proclamation in Galveston, Texas. The City of Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency will be observing the Juneteenth holiday as a paid holiday for its employees and closing its offices for the day.

Motion made by Council President Pridgen to approve Item 6a, seconded by Corporation Counsel Timothy Ball and carried unanimously.

Let the record reflect that Commissioner Donna Estrich joined the meeting at 10:00 am.

7. CDBG (ACTION)

7a. AUTHORITY TO AMEND THE 2020-2024 BURA FOUR YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN THAT HAS BEEN AMENDED TO INCLUDE THE CDBG-CV FUNDS

Agency Members approved a request to amend the 2020-2024 BURA Four Year Financial Plan, to include the CDBG-CV funds. March 27, 2020, in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (the "CARES Act") (Public Law 116-136), was signed into law by the United States Congress, making available five (5) billion dollars in supplemental funding for grants to prevent, prepare for and respond to the coronavirus pandemic ("CDBG-CV"). The City of Buffalo was awarded \$11,441,246 in CDBG-CV funding that has been allocated to several relief activities for eligible residents and businesses residing in the City of Buffalo. On December 8, 2020, the City of Buffalo Common Council approved the Substantial Amendment to the 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan and authorized the City to fund certain eligible Subrecipients listed in the Substantial Amendment to the 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan with CDBG-CV Program Funds. The City of Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency ("BURA") was named Subrecipient to the CDBG-CV funds.

Motion made by Commissioner Estrich to approve Item 7a, seconded by Council Member Golombek and carried unanimously.

8. CARES ACT FUNDING (INFORMATION)

8a. Cares Act Program Updates

Leslie Vishwanath, Director of Program Management, provided an update to the Board.

9. AGENCY UPDATES (INFORMATION)

9a. Communications Update

Dana Harris, Communications Manager, provided an update to the Board.

10. INCREMENTAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE UPDATE (INFORMATION)

10a. Development Update

Crystal Middleton, BURA General Planner, provided an update to the Board.

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Estrich made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council Member Scanlon and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 am.

Scott C. Billman

Scott C. Billman, BURA Secretary

Reported By: Risë Geller