

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

FEBRUARY 25, 2021

REMOTE MEETING VIA WEBEX CONFERENCE CALL

<https://cityofbuffalourbanrenewalagency.my.webex.com/cityofbuffalourbanrenewalagency.my/j.php?MTID=m25ee909d306b4078f756414999c760ee>

MEETING DATE: February 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, Dana Harris, Maria Melchiorre, Tony Chestnut, Leslie Vishwanath, Pam Walker-Jarmon, Evelyn Rodriguez

1. Mr. Mehaffy called the meeting to order at 9:40 am.
2. Mr. Ball made the motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the December 17, 2020 meeting, seconded by Council Member Scanlon and carried unanimously.
3. **BURA FISCAL UPDATE REPORT (Information)**
Ms. Cooley Director of FCA (Financial Control of Agencies) provided a Divisional report to the Board.
4. **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE (CPI) FOR THE CITY OF BUFFALO (ACTION)**
 - 4a. **BUDGET MODIFICATION FOR THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE (CPI)**
Agency Members approved for the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency and the Community Partnerships Initiative (CPI) to enter into a budget modification contract for the four Community Based Organizations (CBO) currently administering the programs and services associated with the Community Partnerships Initiative (CPI) contract. The four agencies are Heart of City Neighborhoods, Inc., Polish Community Center (Lt. Col. Matt Urban Center), Old First Ward Community Association, Inc. and University District Community Development Association, Inc. Each CBO is paid according to an approved fee schedule for the performance and tasks listed in the contract scope of services. Minimum program outputs were determined by reviewing the needs-based funding allocations prepared by the Division of Planning. The total funding amount, previously set at \$258,000.01 for the six-month budgets, will be amended to \$527,500 for the twelve-month budgets. The CPI contracts are for a one-year period and they commenced on November 1, 2020 and will continue through October 31, 2021.

Motion made by Council President Pridgen to approve Item 4a, seconded by Corporation Counsel Timothy Ball and carried unanimously.

5. CDBG-CV (ACTION)**5a. BURA TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH ALLCO FOR CDBG-CV RENT ASSISTANCE/ EVICTION PREVENTION PROGRAM**

Agency Members approved a contract between the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency and AllCo/Well Connected that will allow the Eviction Prevention Program to utilize their proprietary software license and platform to allow case management agencies to follow-up, track and assist clients with uploading the needed documentations. For the CDBG-CV program All Co has adopted the Well Connected platform and designed a system for the Eviction Prevention Program (EPP) which will allow for a centralized intake and application processes. This application was developed during the Live Well initiative for rental assistance programs and programs like it. The system allows for 211 to enter clients into the platform and rank clients based on the vulnerability assessment and refer to partner agencies based on the partner agency's volume and capacity, which will be tracked in the system. The platform has the ability to notify BURA and City of Buffalo program managers for the EPP to approve and deny submitted request for assistance and to download documents needed to encumber funds. The platform will be able to track demographic data for future outreach and reporting proposes. Documents and files will be accessible for seven (7) years in compliance with HUD's documentation requirements. Funding for this platform will come out of CDBG-CV Program Delivery at a cost of \$15,435. The total cost includes the creation of 300 household profiles, if more households are created in the system, the cost would increase \$1 per additional household entered.

Motion made by Corporation Counsel Timothy Ball to approve Item 5a, seconded by Council President Pridgen and carried unanimously.

6. HOME (ACTION)**6a. FEE FOR SERVICE CONSULTANT AGREEMENT WITH MULLIN & LONERGAN ASSOCIATES FOR HOME TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING CURRICULUM**

Agency Members approved a request for the City of Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency to enter into a fee for service consultant agreement with Mullin & Lonergan Associates for HOME Technical Assistance and Training Curriculum. In December 2020, BURA released a Request for Qualifications for HOME underwriting technical assistance and training curriculum development. BURA received 5 responses and the RFQ review committee selected Mullin & Lonergan Associates. Mullin & Lonergan is a housing and community development consulting firm and their clients include local units of government (boroughs, townships, cities, counties, states), HUD CDBG entitlements, HOME PJs, Continuums of Care, public housing authorities, nonprofit organizations, planning agencies, state housing finance agencies, and economic development organizations. The firm's experts will provide technical assistance and staff training on HUD's HOME Investment Partnerships programs. Under this fee for service contract, Mullin & Lonergan will provide HUD HOME Program technical assistance and develop a training curriculum for BURA staff that work on the affordable housing program funded by HUD HOME Investment Partnerships Initiative. Mullin & Lonergan will assist BURA with ensuring compliance with current HUD and BURA HOME Underwriting requirements for both sale and rental projects.

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

LATE FILE**BUFFALO URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF BUFFALO TO MANAGE THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE, ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF BUFFALO**

Motion made by Corporation Counsel Timothy Ball to accept late file, seconded by Council Member Golombek and carried unanimously.

Agency Members approved for BURA to enter into an agreement with the City of Buffalo to administer the U.S. Department of the Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance. The City of Buffalo received \$7,572,095.50, which

will be used to supplement the existing Stand Up Buffalo Eviction Prevention Rental Assistance Program. Approximately ninety percent of the funds will be used for direct rental assistance and a maximum of ten percent of the funds will be used for administrative and program partner contracts, including the existing 211 Central Intake System. This funding must assist COVID-19 impacted income eligible tenants and will provide essential and desperately needed housing protections for renters who would otherwise be at risk of losing their homes as a result of the pandemic. The City's partnership with BURA and the partners is key to providing housing aid and support to Buffalo's residents in need. BURA and the local community partners are experienced with administering programs that support low-income communities and this additional funding will use the established program infrastructure and partner capacity. This funding will create rental market security and support Buffalo's vulnerable residents and neighborhoods in need.

Motion made by Council Member Scanlon approve this Late File Item, seconded by Council Member Golombek and carried unanimously

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

7. OPERATIONS UPDATE (Information)

7a. New Hire Introduction

Jenna Bichler, Director of Operations provided an introduction of the new employees.

7b. BURA Staff Recognition

Jenna Bichler, Director of Operations recognized one of our staff members for their assistance with evictions.

8. CARES ACT FUNDING (Information)

8a. CARES Act Program Updates

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

9. MULTI FAMILY PROJECT UPDATE (Information)

9a. PROJECT UPDATE

Yvonne McCray, Director of Housing provided an update to the Board.

10. AGENCY UPDATES (Information)

10a. Communications Update

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

- 11.** There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Estrich made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Ball and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 am.

Scott C. Billman

Scott C. Billman, BURA Secretary

Reported By: Risë Geller