

**CITY OF BUFFALO URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
May 26, 2022**

**VIA WEBEX VIDEO**

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**MEETING DATE:** May 26, 2022

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Brendan R. Mehaffy  
Council President Pridgen  
Commissioner Donna Estrich  
Cavette Chambers, Corporation Counsel  
Council Member Golombek  
Council Member Nowakowski

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Mayor Byron Brown

**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, Christine Marino, Tony Chestnut, Pam Walker-Jarmon, Evelyn Rodriguez, Delano Dowell

- 1.0. Mr. Mehaffy called the meeting to order at 9:35 am.
- 2.0 Council Member Nowakowski made the motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the March 24, 2022 meeting, seconded by Corporation Council Cavette Chambers and carried unanimously.

**3.0 FINANCIAL CONTROL OF AGENCIES (Information)**

- 3.1. Ms. Cooley, Director of FCA (Financial Control of Agencies) did not present a report due to illness.

**OPERATIONS UPDATE (Information)**

- 3.2 Ms. Bichler, Director of Operations, provided an update to the Board.

**4.0 New Business**

**4.1 Youth Hostel Buffalo Niagara/Designated Developer Approval Extension (Action)**

Agency members approved a request for a final extension of the Designated Developer status of Hostel Buffalo Niagara (HBN), located at 667 Main St, and 664 Washington St. through October 1, 2022. During the extension period, BURA expects HBN to meet the following conditions/milestones - Firm commitments for project financing to cover all construction costs and acquisition costs no later than June 1, 2022 and Negotiated contract of sale completed no later than July 1, 2022, which will allow closing and transfer no later than September 1, 2022. At disposition of the Property, BURA is

required to obtain fair market value. BURA has obtained an appraisal of the real property for \$758,000 based upon an "as is" current condition.

**Motion made by Council President Pridgen to approve the allocation of funds for item 4.1 seconded by Councilmember Golombek and carried unanimously.**

**4.2 Center for Community Progress/In Kind Donation for Technical Assistance (Action)**

Agency members approved a request to accept in-kind technical assistance from the Center for Community Progress, funded by General Motors Corporate Giving. The services will be provided in-kind, with no out-of-pocket cost to BURA, and is valued at \$20,000. These services will result in a one day, in person summit which will expand upon the vacant, abandoned and distressed (VAD) property work already being done with the USC grant. Key deliverables of the USC grant include: (1) collecting and monitoring city wide vacancy data, to gain a better understanding of where vacancy and blight currently exist, and where vacancy and blight are likely to occur. (2) Focus on resolution and acquisition and disposition (as applicable) for 10 target properties. (3) Creating an internal focus (via a task force and/or focus groups) to find remediation of VAD properties. The summit will provide a forum for BURA and the City to review existing programs and approaches and to build a stronger, coordinated, cross departmental approach to vacant, abandoned and distressed properties and equitable community development. This work is particularly timely in the context of recovering from the pandemic-which triggered significant public health, housing, and economic crises. The deliverable for this project is to design and facilitate an in person, day long Summit (working title: "From Data to Action") to take place in June (date TBD). Summit participants will include key City and BURA personnel, with the goal of refocusing the conversation of vacant, abandoned and dilapidated housing in the City of Buffalo, and creating a space for new ideas and innovation. Christine Marino (BURA) and Oswaldo Mestre (City of Buffalo) will serve as project leads, working with the Center for Community Progress, Tolemi and relevant City departments to create an engaging, action-oriented agenda.

**Motion made by Council Member Nowakowski to approve the allocation of funds for item 4.2 seconded by Corporation Council Chambers and carried unanimously.**

**4.3 Community Partnerships Initiative/Budget Modification & Time Extension #4 (Action)**

Agency members approved a request for the contract budget modification and time extension 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. The original contract dates of November 1, 2020, through April 30, 2022, have been revised to include a two-month contract time extension. The revised contract dates will be November 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022. The revised CBO contract budgets were determined by reviewing current program activities and existing contract balances. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding amount, previously set at \$602,000.01, will be amended to \$636,100.01 with the increase of funds in the amount of \$34,100. There will be no change in the budget amount of the Community Development Block Grant CARES (CDBG-CV) and New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA - ERAP) funds.

**Motion made by Council Member Nowakowski to approve the allocation of funds for item 4.3 seconded by Council President Pridgen and carried unanimously.**

**4.4 CDBG-CV Program Redesign Update (Information)**

Ms. Lumadue Sr. HR Planner Contract Administration Unit provided a report to the Board.

**4.5 Stand Up (#2) Buffalo - Rental Assistance Program**

Agency members approved a request to enter into a one year contract with three organizations, Heart of the City Neighborhoods, Inc., Old First Ward Community Association, Inc., and University District Community Development Association. These partners will assist with the administration of the Stand Up (#2) Buffalo Rental Assistance Program. The goal of this program is to assist challenged clients maintain housing stability and avoid eviction from their home. Community Development Block Grant CV funds (CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Funds) in the amount of \$23,800 have been identified to fund the contracts. Each agency will be eligible to receive a fee per service for their role as an intake specialist and/or as an application processor. The award of slots was determined by the individual CBOs after taking into consideration their staff capacity and other contractual responsibilities.

**Motion made by Council President Pridgen to approve the allocation of funds for item 4.5 seconded by Council Member Nowakowski and carried unanimously.**

**4.6. Housing Rehab Program/Program Delivery and Administration**

Agency members approved a request for funding in the amount of \$596,555.00 for a one-year and six-month contract to award to Belmont Housing Resources for Western New York Inc for the administration of the Housing Assistance Rehabilitation Program. These funds will support the administration of approximately 117 loans to be generated from the Housing Assistance Rehabilitation Programs. Belmont Housing Resources for WNY was selected through an RFP released in December 2021 and has performed this work successfully on behalf of BURA for several years. The contract language will allow for the option to extend or renew the agreement for a period of two additional one (1) year terms. This contract start date would be April 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023. Work done under this contract includes but is not limited to: Household income eligibility certification, Loan Closing, Construction work specification preparation, Construction compliance and completion monitoring, Contractor engagement, recruitment and retention activities.

**Motion made by Corporation Council Chambers to approve the allocation of funds for item 4.6 seconded by Council Member Nowakowski and carried unanimously.**

**4.7 HOME Technical Assistance - Mullin & Lonergan Associates**

- \$28,000 - four (4) multi-family projects (\$7,000 fee per rental project)
- \$5,000 - one (1) sale project "103 Sweet" (\$5,000 fee per sale project)
- \$3,500 - Technical assistance budgeted amount
- \$36,500 Total

Agency members approved a request to have Mullin & Lonergan Associates as HOME Technical Assistance advisers. 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 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 for sale and rental projects.

**Motion made by Council President Pridgen to approve the allocation of funds for item 4.7 seconded by Council Member Golombek and carried unanimously.**

#### **4.8 Approval of the Budget and Four Year Plan**

Projected BURA 2022-2023 CDBG Budget: \$7,902,300  
Projected SURA HOME 2022-2023 Budget: 3,550,000  
Projected SURA 2022-2023 CDBG CV (Coronavirus) Budget: \$8,000,000  
Projected SURA 2022-2023 Lead Hazard Grant Budget: \$700,000  
Projected SURA 2022-2023 ERAP Grant Budget: \$1,200,000  
Projected SURA 2022-2023 Non-Federal Budget: \$971,660  
Projected SURA 2022-2023 HOME and City ARP Budget: \$6,700,000

Agency members approved the Budget and Four Year Plan. BURA is budgeted at a staffing level of 41. There are seven (7) vacant positions projected in this budget. Total Projected costs of salaries and fringe in FY 2022-2023 is \$3,777,357. Fringe rates are assumed at a rate of 57 - 61 % of salaries over the course of the four (4) year plan based on average historical rates of health care costs, employer pension contributions and other miscellaneous employee benefit costs. Professional Services and Supplies have been projected to be \$1,376,906 which covers the operational costs of SURA including insurances, supplies, maintenance of SURA owned properties, legal costs, consulting contracts and other miscellaneous items. In addition, the 4 year plan assumes the following - 2% Entitlement increases for non-exempt staff respectively in years 2022-2023 through 2024-2025. The fourth year of the plan assumes the same revenues and expenditures for the purpose of the four (4) year projections. Bonuses also included in the four year plan which are currently based on years of service. Exempt staff do not receive annual Cost of Living Adjustment's but rather will be given annual increases based on performance.

**Motion made by Council Member Nowakowski to approve the allocation of funds for item 4.8 seconded by Council President Pridgen and carried unanimously.**

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, Council Member Nowakowski made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council President Pridgen and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 am.

*Scott C. Billman*

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Scott C. Billman, BURA Secretary

Reported by: Risë Geller