



Lowell City Council

Non-Profit Organizations SC Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: December 15, 2025
Time: 6:00 PM
Location: City Council Chamber, Lowell City Hall, Lowell, Ma. / Zoom (Hybrid)

PRESENT:

Present on Roll Call were Chairman Gitschier, C. Nuon and C. Mercier, 1 absent (C. Robinson). Also present were Yovani Baez-Rose (DPD), Austin Ball (Asst. CFO), Conor Baldwin (CFO), Camilo Espitia (DPD) and Eliot Yaffa (DPD).

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Chairman Gitschier called the meeting to order noting attendance and agenda item regarding federal entitlement funding.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

Ms. Baez-Rose provided presentation regarding changes in funding from the federal government noting that the City is an entitlement community which automatically receives three different grants: 1) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); 2) Emergency Solution Grants (ESG); and 3) Home Grants. Ms. Baez-Rose defined each grant noting their importance and where they are applied. Ms. Baez-Rose noted CDBG funds are for poorer areas with some restrictions and administrative fees are included; ESG funds are smaller in amount and are for homeless initiatives including administrative fees; and Home funds include administrative fees and are used for home investments which include first time homebuyer programs. Ms. Baez-Rose noted the budgeting process of the



department regarding the grants and the timeline of the process for applying and administering the grants.

Ms. Baez-Rose noted changes from the federal government regarding qualifications for the grant. The language changes included no DEI, no abortion, no use of pronouns or gender, no climate control and no undocumented immigrants. Ms. Baez-Rose noted the City would assist the applications by providing education to ensure proper submittal. Ms. Baez-Rose noted that the process will begin with Request for Proposals (RFP) and that non-profits must certify compliance and that there are no guarantees for this funding beyond this year. Ms. Baez-Rose noted the following exceptions to the new regulations: shelter needs, street outreach and infrastructure/facility need. C. Mercier noted that new regulations would not apply to CDBG funding for the Senior Center.

C. Gitschier opened meeting to public:

Rebecca Wisiniewski (Open Pantry) commented on the pantry business and how it would be affected by these regulations and noted that funding reductions have already begun. C. Mercier noted City was prepared to help and that smaller grants can be combined so they would be less costly to administer.

Dan Rivera (Coalition for a Better Acre) noted the need for the non-profits and that the City staff has been most helpful regarding grant funding. Mr. Rivera noted that the organization gets assistance from state and federal government. C. Gitschier noted resources that the City provides for the non-profits to continue their mission.

Katharine Karr (via Zoom) (Open Pantry) supported prior testimony of Ms. Wisiniewski.

Jane Calvin (Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust) complimented the staff in the City and noted her challenge would be with climate language.

Deb Callery (Merrimack Valley Food Bank) outlined her funding for the organization and the partnerships they work with. Ms. Callery noted that state and federal funding are provided to them.



C. Nuon noted the presentation commenting that funding is no longer a guarantee and that new regulations need to be adhered to by creative means. C. Nuon noted that ESG grants are for services and may not be subject to restrictions. Ms. Baez-Rose noted some distinctions in the new regulations and how they may or may not affect programs. C. Mercier noted changes are shocking and that there are creative means to respond to them and the City will assist with that endeavor. C. Nuon noted work needs to be done to conform to the new regulations. Mr. Rivera noted that goal remains same to provide service to all in the Acre. C. Gitschier noted the number of non-profits in the City. Mr. Yaffa indicated that there were 18-24 currently housed here. C. Gitschier noted the need to get money to people in need and cut administrative costs. C. Gitschier noted complications coming with the end of ARPA funding and that Lowell was the only municipality that used this money for these services. C. Gitschier noted the substandard funds involved with ESG grants.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Mercier. So Voted.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk