



General Government & Social Services Committee

January 12, 2021

Summary and Motions

Vice Mayor Steve Kay called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. The following members of the committee were present: Council Members Richard Moloney, James Brown, Hannah LeGris, Susan Lamb, Liz Sheehan, Fred Brown, Whitney Baxter, Jennifer Reynolds, and Kathy Plomin. Council Members Josh McCurn, David Kloiber, and Amanda Bledsoe attended as non-voting members.

Kay read the following statement: "Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and State of Emergency, this meeting is being held via live video teleconference pursuant to 2020 Senate Bill 150, and in accordance with KRS 61.826, because it is not feasible to offer a primary physical location for the meeting."

I. Election of Committee Chair / Selection of Vice Chair

Motion by Plomin to nominate Lamb as the chair of the committee; seconded by J. Brown. The motion passed without dissent.

Lamb selected Plomin to be the vice-chair of the committee and Plomin agreed to serve in that role.

II. Approval of November 10, 2020 Committee Summary

Motion by Plomin to approve the November 10, 2020, General Government & Social Services Committee summary; seconded by F. Brown. The motion passed without dissent.

III. Complete Assessment of the ESR Program and Recommendations for the Future

Chris Ford, Commissioner of Social Services, provided a presentation that reviewed the last six years (FY16-FY21) of the extended social resource program. FY21 awarded \$2.1M to 35 grantees in four priority areas – community wellness and safety, childhood and youth development, food insecurity and nutritional access, and overnight emergency shelter. The FY18-19 program began the use of an RFP (requests for proposals) process to award grants for each priority area. These same program guidelines were applied in FY20 and FY21. The program funded 58 agencies over the last six-year, an average of 34 agencies each year with an average grant amount of \$83,365. Since FY16, the program has awarded about \$14.1M, making the funding rate 39 percent of the total requests. Ford outlined similar information for the Affordable Housing Fund and the Office of Homelessness, Prevention, and Intervention. Each year since FY16, 25 percent of ESR funds have been set aside for the overnight emergency shelter priority area. Ford explained the funding history of the Hope Center, which began receiving a direct allocation of funds in FY19 (separate from the ESR grant process). He confirmed the goal of 1 percent of general fund revenue to support the ESR program. Ford concluded his presentation with a six-year funding summary of general fund allocations and percent of revenue for the ESR program, as well as Hope Center, homelessness, and affordable housing.

Plomin and Ford discussed how the Department of Social Services determines the funding target percentages. The last time the council approved the targets was through resolution 598-2016. Staff directs the targets with their understanding of the community's needs, taking into consideration response from proposals. The targets are outlined in the RFP to give applicants a sense of funding level

before they submit proposals. Bledsoe talked about the council setting the priority areas when the program was redeveloped and as the needs of the community change the council would change the direction provided to the administration, ultimately questioning if this should be reviewed more routinely.

Bledsoe compared the annual average of 1.78 percent of general fund revenue going towards ESR, Hope Center, Office of Homelessness, and Affordable Housing to about half that amount that was budgeted for quality of life and economic development programs (i.e. Lex Arts, PDR, the small business stimulus program). It was clarified that funding reported in the presentation for Hope Center does not include CDBG funds used to repair their roof a few years ago.

F. Brown and Ford discussed how ESR, Hope Center, homelessness, and affordable housing funds are intertwined but how they are budgeted for separately. Ford mentioned the opportunity to revisit the ESR priority areas, looking at program alignment to work towards the same direction. In regards to coronavirus relief funds, it was confirmed other funds provided support for additional [partner] services in FY21.

Moloney talked about the “rainy day” fund used to fund the ESR program in the FY21 budget and recalled the requirement to have a men's shelter many years ago, which is tied to the Hope Center providing their shelter in the LFUCG-owned facility. Hope Center was separated from ESR because of the significant portion they received from the program. The city owns the building and Moloney eluded to how costly it would be for the city to run the shelter.

Reynolds suggested the government agency funding shown on the last slide for homelessness and affordable housing should be separated from ESR and partner agency funding because it could be misleading if lumped together. Ford explained it was included to provide a context of other programs. Kay agreed with Reynolds, describing affordable housing and homelessness as government services, which partner with groups to provide those services. He recalled the continual question in the past of why the Hope Center received a perceived disproportionate amount of ESR funds in a competitive structure. Kay described the goal of 1 percent of revenue for ESR as aspirational, which would equal \$3.7M today, and spoke about the total funds needed from savings to balance the overall FY21 budget versus specific programs. He concluded the work Hope Center does is work the city would have to if they weren't there, which would have worse consequences.

Lamb and Ford talked about encouraging collaboration between agencies in the past, which factored into program awards in FY14 and FY15. Collaboration, specifically, was not awarded bonus points in the RFP process in FY18 and going forward. Ford explained the work of the already connected network of social services agencies is collaborative by nature and the previously used bonus points provided some limitations. Lamb would like more details on how the affordable housing allocation (\$10M) has been spent, which she said could be a separate committee item. Ford described the funding totals on the last slide as programmatic outlays that go to third-party partners to help us achieve our objectives and missions of social services support.

J. Brown explained funding for affordable housing and homelessness are relevant to the discussion of drafting an ordinance that would help govern the ESR program. He said homelessness and Hope Center are different than the other priority areas and the separation of Hope Center from ESR, opened the door for other agencies who provide shelters. He questioned how the community will rebound during and

after the pandemic and the importance of understanding the funding for these programs that tie into the general fund; a lot of money that he said our community needs.

Plomin talked about the work that these agencies do, which they could not do without LFUCG's support' describing this as work that the city could not do if it tried to take this on itself. She is aware of many agencies working together on projects. She stressed the importance of seeing the big picture in regards to funding and how the city addresses health and human service needs as a whole. Moloney emphasized the use of the "rainy day" fund for ESR and other programs in the FY21 budget and Ford pointed out how the FY21 budget was proposed to the council with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Motion by J. Brown to form a subcommittee to evaluate priorities for the ESR program, review the draft ordinance (or resolution) that would mandate 1 percent of general funds to the program, and make recommendations to the Social Services Department and the administration on how to move forward with the program; seconded by Plomin. The motion passed without dissent. (F. Brown was absent for the vote.)

IV. Items Referred to Committee

a. Annual Status Review of Committee Referrals

Lamb reviewed each committee item. J. Brown confirmed he will take over the Public Art Master Plan referral and Kay agreed to take over the implicit bias training proposal referral.

Motion by Plomin to adjourn (at 2:09 p.m.); seconded by Kay. The motion passed without dissent.

Meeting materials: <https://lexington.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=818846&GUID=915E2FCE-0480-48F2-A331-6DF7416C3D77&Options=info|&Search>

Recording of the meeting: http://lfucg.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=5268

HBA 2/1/21