



## General Government & Social Services Committee

October 13, 2020

### Summary and Motions

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Council Member and chair, Susan Lamb, called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Committee members Vice Mayor Steve Kay and Council Members Richard Moloney, Chuck Ellinger, James Brown, Bill Farmer, Lisa Higgins-Hord, Fred Brown, Jennifer Reynolds were present. Council Member Kathy Plomin was absent.

Lamb 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. Approval of September 15, 2020 Committee Summary**

Motion by Ellinger to approve the September 15, 2020, General Government & Social Services Committee summary; seconded by Kay. The motion passed without dissent.

Discussion on the motion included the following. Farmer and Lamb discussed that the majority of the changes to the council rules arrange the order of motions, correct the verbiage, and clarify votes (i.e. majority or two-thirds). It cleans up the motions. Lamb will make sure everyone has a copy of the motions cheat sheet going forward.

#### **II. Identification, Process, and Tracking Change Orders**

Motion by Farmer to postpone this item until the committee meeting on November 10<sup>th</sup>; seconded by Reynolds. The motion passed without dissent.

#### **III. Review of the Division of Youth Services**

J. Brown explained this item was based on the increase of criminal activity with our young people and to understand what initiatives, resources, and services the city has for youth and their families. Stephanie Hong, Director of Youth Services, highlighted the makeup of the division’s employees, who racially mirror the population they serve. She reviewed a list of stakeholders they work with regularly, including judges, schools, state departments, etc. She provided an overview of the juvenile justice system that serves ages 12-18, who has committed a status or public offense. Hong described status, public, and youthful offenses, which are directed by KRS. Of the 13 kids in the Fayette Regional Juvenile Detention Center, six of them are charged as youthful offenders. Hong explained the background setting that led to Senate Bill 200, in 2015, which attempted to reduce the number of youth in detention and decrease the duration of their probation time. It increased the number of youth with minor offenses that are diverted but at the same time hindered accountability with kids who commit a serious crime. Hong talked about the purpose to reduce the racial disparity of youth in detention and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). She mentioned the detention facilities and the shift to the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice.

The Division of Youth Services provides four programs; Hong reviewed data for each program. Juvenile probation and court services are directed by KRS 605.050 and include an array of services for youth in

the system. The Audrey Grevious Center, which served 97 youth in 2019-2020, is a community-based treatment program (one of 26 day treatment centers in the state) focused on increasing academic achievement and addressing underlying emotional and behavioral issues. The parent and guardian empowerment (PAGE) program helps families with teens to voluntarily receive early intervention services, such as enhanced case management and parenting classes. The last of the four programs is CASA of Lexington. In FY2020, they supported 184 volunteers who provide advocacy for 557 children who have suffered from child abuse and or neglect. Hong finished the presentation talking about the city's local intervention as a specialized layer of services to prevent youth from going further into the criminal justice system. Hong emphasized the community impact, for example, serving 240 pre adjudicated youth last year and providing timely assistance to resolve family crises.

J. Brown talked about the diversity of the staff in Youth Services and the intentionality to hire folks that represent the communities they serve. He summarized the limitations with Senate Bill 200, which decreased the number of youth in the system but didn't necessarily decrease the number of crimes committed. Hong pointed out the money the state saved by closing detention centers but funding for additional community programming did not increase, except for \$1M around 2017. The kids who aren't in detention need additional support. J. Brown concluded the fiscal savings should have been redirected to provide prevention and intervention initiatives in the community. In the discussion of PAGE, it was confirmed that employees spread the word about the program and their partners in the juvenile justice systems refer families to this resource. They established that the current staff of social workers can manage their caseload; the average caseload is 12-15 cases, which aligns with the national standard. Chris Ford, Commissioner of Social Services, explained the rebranding of PAGE, which also managed the Summer Youth Job Training Program until that was shifted to Partners for Youth, allowing PAGE to refocus on serving parents.

Reynolds mentioned accountability for minors and asked what Hong recommends, to work on this. Hong said she believes we need more constructive opportunities, more positive outlets, for example, the neighborhood youth council. She talked about youth making mistakes and having easy access to firearms. She said it takes everyone to work on this, more than just social workers and schools.

Moloney talked about the state disbursing the responsibility to local governments and coordinating with them to provide more support. He emphasized 48% of day treatment participants who made academic progress but expressed concern about the impact of the pandemic and increased criminal activity committed by youth under the age of 18. Ford explained they have strong partnerships with DJJ but said Lexington is an urban area and what works in one area may not work in another, concluding the city and the state share these responsibilities. He said Youth Services provides an advantage for Lexington to tailor programs uniquely for us. Moloney offered to help work with the state if it is needed.

Lamb asked if the same police officers work with the probation officers, mentioning the opportunity to build relationships with the youth and their families. Hong explained police officers from the CLEAR unit work in sync with Youth Services, particularly with certain probation officers who communicate daily. They confirmed PAGE often serves youth ages 12, up to 18 but they can help families with younger kids too. Lamb talked about promoting the program and there likely being a greater need for these services down the road.

J. Brown confirmed DJJ is responsible for JDAI and that a few Youth Services employees serve on JDAI's various subcommittees. He concluded this group may be making recommendations for improvements so it's good we have representation there. He emphasized Moloney talking with folks about potential

funding going forward. J. Brown asked about the juvenile probation officers that work under Youth Services and how they work with DJJ officers. Hong explained how Youth Services offered probation services before the state created DJJ staff, it was ultimately worked out that Youth Services handles most of the kids on the front end of the system and DJJ serves those on the backend (more extreme cases). J. Brown concluded there still seems to be a need for both agencies, addressing two levels of needs. He commended the division's coordination with their partners in this work.

Motion by J. Brown to remove the review of Division of Youth Services from committee; seconded by Ellinger. The motion passed without dissent.

#### **IV. Complete Assessment of the ESR Program and Recommendations for the Future**

Ford explained the Extended Social Resources program has historically partnered and relied on community organizations and non-profits by providing partners agencies funding. He talked about the program shifting and improving over the last 10 years, including the opening of funding to a wider array of non-profits. He reviewed four priority areas, each with a targeted percentage of the total funds of the program to reach areas of the community with the most need. The priority areas for FY2021 included community wellness and safety, childhood and youth development, food insecurity and nutritional access (a newer priority area created after they recognized this area wasn't always provided sufficient funding), and overnight emergency shelter. The emergency shelter priority has 25 percent of ESR funds dedicated to it and it's managed through the Office of Homelessness, Prevention, and Intervention.

Ford described how the program criteria helped make the program fair and objective, which he reviewed. An RFP is issued for each priority but the review criteria for the emergency shelter priority is scored and reviewed differently than the other priorities. Ford talked about the informational workshops they provide and the RFP evaluation process, which was modified due to COVID-19 and involved an internal review of applications. Since 2014, the program and any revisions to the program, each funding cycle, was brought to the council. They are beginning to distribute FY2021 ESR grant funds (50 percent now and two additional disbursements of 25 percent, each, later in the year). He talked about the opportunity and diversity that comes from funding 66 agencies since FY2014, awarding almost \$22.8M at a funding rate of 60 percent. He emphasized these funds are not guaranteed. Lastly, he talked about the need to narrow our focus on funding emerging priority areas for basic human services and leveraging local funding with broader philanthropic and grant-making processes.

Kay and Ford discussed how the drop in funding from FY2020 to FY2021 reflects the amount historically provided to the Hope Center, noting how ESR has remained around \$3M each year. The city's resources for the men's shelter on West Loudon Ave, a shelter the city owns but the Hope Center operates, were recently renegotiated. Kay concluded these funds are now budgeted directly for the Hope Center. Ford added that they have agreed not to pursue ESR funding. Kay recalled the council stating their intention in 2015 for ESR funds to be 1 percent of the budget and talked about the program's budget remaining static. He believes one percent should be a minimum and said these organizations function primarily with their own funds.

Reynolds and Ford discussed the umbrella of youth services, confirming that there are agencies that apply for ESR who provide violence prevention services, such as mentoring, which fall under childhood and youth development. A list of FY2021 ESR funded agencies is in the packet. Reynolds said youth violence is an area we need to focus on. She talked about the community's advocacy for this grant

program, the responsibility of the city to make this community better, and using the city's resources to help improve organizations who do work the city can't do.

Higgins-Hord asked who determines what the emerging priority needs are, specifically about basic human services. Ford said this is an opportunity we have, the process hasn't started yet but he also emphasized the city's dire budgetary needs. He said the level of impact of these funds warrants a conversation, questioning if the funds are spread too thin, and the impact we should/could have by narrowing the focus. Lamb said the ESR program has historically been vetted in this committee.

J. Brown talked about the Department of Social Services changing the parameters of the program based on the pandemic and still being able to issue the funds speaks to the efficiency of the program. He and Ford discussed the benefits of the program's funding cycle being two-year and one-year commitments; Ford said it may be best to stick with a one-year commitment for now due to current budgetary concerns and the pandemic. J. Brown mentioned how the city maintains flexibility with one-year commitments. They discussed how the grant funds are dedicated to and based on the merits of programs (programs are run by people which incur personnel cost), not agencies. Ford said the program has seen a shift in attitude in response to the program and an increased level of competitiveness. J. Brown said we need to look at the resolution outlining 1 percent for the ESR program, expressing the importance to be consistent and the wrong message it sends by not adhering to it. He said he would like to see the big picture of how much money goes to non-profit community partners, including, for example, CDBG funds. He talked about changes with COVID-19 and the ability to use community block grants for programming versus capital projects, stating it has had a real impact. Ford said the city disburses about \$7.2M annually in the global outlay for human services (pre-COVID), some of which are federal dollars; adding that there is always going to be a need that exceeds our resources.

Ellinger confirmed 35 programs under 29 agencies were funded in FY2021; overall 57 agencies applied, submitting 69 programs. Ford said the \$7.2M estimate includes \$3M for ESR, \$2M for affordable housing, \$1M for the home partnership (Grants and Special Programs), \$750,000 for the homelessness fund, \$180,000 for CDBG, \$180,000 for emergency solutions, and \$100,000 for Partners for Youth; all of which are local, state, and federal dollars disbursed to agencies. It has not been decided if the FY2022 program will be a one or two-year funding cycle. Ellinger pointed out the time the agencies who aren't funded have to wait with a two-year cycle and that all non-profits are looking for private funding. Ford believes the program guidelines were adopted by resolution, not ordinance. Ellinger estimated \$2.6M would be allotted to ESR if 1 percent of the revenues were used.

Farmer talked about the work of the program, showing up positively, and the importance of having a goal (e.g. 1 percent) to know where we are going. He mentioned the compassion the council maintained for the community to replace funds in the FY2021 budget, which allowed agencies to do the work they needed to right then. In consideration of a two-year funding cycle, he said we have to be nimble for the time being.

Moloney talked about focusing on surviving the next six months and few years. He recalled the historical use of CDBG funds for sidewalk projects; suggesting, maybe current CDBG funded sidewalk projects should be halted so the funds can be used for other programs, which could be pick up again after "we get through this storm". Moloney talked about Ford working with Grants and Special Programs on this. He talked about other policies that direct funding to be budgeted for a specific purpose, pointing out the city doesn't adhere to them. Ford said the city is seeking additional federal CDBG funds, which are being advertised now. He talked about the state and federal governments divesting in local human and social

services and said it's worth the city's time to explore ways to restore these resources. The Department of Social Services has 128 employees (just over an \$11M budget). Ford said they can't do this work alone, they count on their network of non-profits; they want to support the programs but not sustain them.

Lamb confirmed agencies can receive constructive feedback for applications that do not get funded, which many agencies take advantage of. There weren't many agencies that changed their application in response to COVID-19 but Ford provided one example, God's Pantry adjusted its request from \$310,000 to \$67,000 because of other resources they received at the time. They established the city's long history of funding partner agencies. Lamb mentioned discussions with the Kentucky Non-profit and eluded to a committee presentation looking at how non-profits impact our economy, after the first of the year.

Kay recalled the Council having a lengthy discussion on the two-year ESR commitment, which became the default and has always been based on the premise that funds are budgeted. Kay spoke about the benefits of a two-year cycle, adding that a one-year cycle was the right choice this year, and likely will be until we have a sense of stability. Kay talked about this item coming before the committee at the next meeting and that the 1 percent commitment was of the general fund budget, explaining the Hope Center and ESR allocations should equal 1 percent. He spoke about the need, sense of urgency, and that this is an investment in our future. Kay wants to see what the resolution says and if the council has recommendations going forward.

J. Brown said CDBG funds have a lot of strengths they can be used for and a lot of times it's for capital projects. He continued, saying CDBG projects in his district underway include infrastructure, water quality, stormwater control, etc. and have been anticipated for a long time. He would like this item to remain in committee. Ellinger corrected his estimate of 1 percent of revenue as \$3.6M, concluding FY2021 was about \$600,000 short of the 1 percent goal, which he believes should be the minimum.

## **V. Items Referred to Committee**

No action was taken on this item.

A motion was made by Reynolds to adjourn (at 2:55 p.m.); seconded by Ellinger. The motion passed without dissent.

Link to video of the meeting: [http://fucg.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=4&clip\\_id=5230](http://fucg.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=5230)  
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