

**Porter County American Rescue Plan
Sub Committee Behavioral Health and Social Services Subcommittee
Thursday, May 12, 2022, 5 p.m.
Commissioners' Meeting Room Chambers
Porter County Administration Center 155 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso IN 46383**

Voting Members Present:

Jim Biggs
Greg Simms
Robyn Lane
Mike Brickner
Mitch Peters

Citizen Members Present:

Jesse Harper
Brendan Clancy
George Topoll
Edward Morales

Presentations:

Jim Biggs announced another committee had Valparaiso Women's Association and had shuffled them out of consideration of receiving any funds. There are some mitigating circumstances. Several individuals have asked if this Board will listen to that application. Jesse Harper explained they did not get to make a presentation. They were rejected before that opportunity. The Women's Club provides housing for women that many not otherwise have a place to live. They provide the housing at a very reduced rate. Some can stay up to three years. Some of the women are transitioning out of mental abuse or rehab. The application was rejected from the nonprofit committee probably because it did not fit their category. They will reduce their original ask for funds.

Motion: Mitch Peters moved to listen to the presentation. Greg Simms seconded the motion.

Discussion: Jim Biggs stated he is chairman of the nonprofits also. They whittled down the number of applicants they had. He does not feel they should be so tight that an applicant that never got a chance to present does not get an opportunity. Jesse Harper suggested it would be best to hear it tonight. Mike Brickner stated it was a vote of 4 no and 1 yes to hear that presentation. There is a process and now are we going to review just this one or are we going to go back and listen to the other eight that were voted not to be allowed to present. Jim Biggs stated this is the only one that has asked to be heard by another committee. Greg Simms suggested voting and see where it ends up. Jim Biggs stated this Board was not put together by State law or by Ordinance. It is an idea thrown out by the Commissioners. Tonight is the end of our presentations. Those that were kicked out of the process probably had more to do with eliminating them because we had to cut down on applications. As chairman he does not feel

they erode any credibility by letting back in an organization that has been around for 100 years. He understands where Mike is coming from but this is a one-time committee.

Roll Call Vote

Jim Biggs – Yes

Greg Simms - Yes

Robyn Lane – Yes

Mike Brickner - No

Mitch Peters – Yes

Motion passes with a 4-1 vote.

Minutes:

Motion: Jim Biggs moved to approve minutes from the March 31, 2022, April 7, 2022 and April 28, 2022 meetings. Greg Simms seconded the motion and so approved.

Each presenter will be given 15 minutes for their presentation and 15 minutes for Q & A

PACT

Kristi Chervenak presented. PACT was established in 1971 and is a community based organization that involves citizens through a variety of programs dealing with substance abuse and domestic violence. In 2014 PACT decided to establish a recovery center. The physical location is at 505 Don Hovey Drive. The operating hours are from 12-8 M-F and NA groups on Sunday. Recovery Connection offers many levels of help and support. All services are at no cost to participants. They anticipate an additional need and support with the completion of the homeless shelter across the street. They are part of the Indiana Recovery Hub project. They were one of 16 hubs at that time to receive funding. That funding allowed them to hire three additional part time recovery coaches. Recovery Connection employs one full time coordinator, five part time recovery coaches and they host numerous graduates and under graduate interns throughout the year.

They have three office spaces. Their request is \$50,000. With these funds \$37,000 will be used to add four offices and remodel the kitchen. The remaining amount will be furnishings, technology and supplies.

Q – Have you received any other funds that will be used to supplement this project?

A – No. Any grants all go directly to providing services.

Q – Have you received any covid money to date.

A – No.

Q – Have you applied anywhere else?

A – No

Q – Will this be able to be contracted out and finished within the deadlines?

A - Yes. The contractor can start in June.

Q – How hard are these figures. It seems there is a lot of work for only \$50,000.

A – Last week the contractor said he is confident with the numbers.

Q – The remodeling is \$37,000 and the request is \$50,000

A – The remaining is for furnishings, technology and supplies.

Q – You will be able to provide receipts?

A – Yes.

C – Vicki Urbanik stated they are still working out the details of the procedure to follow.

Q – Have you whittled this down as far as possible?

A – Yes.

Q – And all will go toward expanding your services?

A – Yes.

Q - Where do you get the majority of your operating funds?

A – Indiana Recovery Network grants and donations.

Caring Place

Denise Koebcke and two staff members presented. They are a nonprofit. They are the only 24-hour shelter in Porter County and have served the area for 44 years. They have a new shelter with 12 bedrooms. Coming to the facility is free for as long as needed. They provide prevention and awareness programming. They have the Amanda Forum which is their youth dating violence prevention task force. They also have SAMHSA which is a recognized Best Practice in suicide prevention, substance use prevention and violence prevention. Domestic violence deaths in Indiana rose 181% in one year. Indiana ranks number three on the list of highest rates of teen dating violence. Throughout November and December, 2021 they housed 97 people in the shelter, 53 of those were children. They are seeking funding for Emergency Shelter and Upstream Prevention Outreach. Both have been drastically impacted by covid. These funds would help them rebuild their staff and programming, mitigate wear and tear, and added expense from the much higher census in the shelter and expand their mental health programming throughout the County. During 2021 they have worked toward building a new administrative team and their direct service staff in order to safely start serving more clients. They had addressed the issue of mental health, not just for clients but staff as well. They have many partners.

Q – Would you accept less if offered?

A – Yes. It would limit how much they can do.

Q – Have you received any covid funds?

A - Yes. Their budget is 8% United Way. 31% subgrantee from Indiana Criminal Justice. 61% self-generated. The City of Valparaiso awarded \$50,000. ICJI offered ARPA funds to all domestic violence agencies. Those funds are almost up.

Project Neighbors

Paul Schreiner presented. He was joined by Bob DeRuntz and Jeff Lewis. Neighbors Place II is what he is talking about tonight. Project Neighbors has been around for 52 years. It was started by Lois Reiner. They limit their work to Valparaiso. They have built and remodeled

many residences. They partner with NEO in Portage. Neighbors Place is on the corner of College and Union. It houses 18 single, low income women. They had focused on single family units. They started getting calls from older individuals that needed a place to stay. The people had issues and could not afford rent in Valparaiso. Low wage workers are lucky to be making \$20,000 per year. HUD says that allows you to spend \$500 per month on rent. The Neighbors Place is \$500 per month and includes everything. They do the building by using volunteers. Some of the work is hired out.

Jeff Lewis showed what they are proposing. It is an 18 unit building. Materials would be sustainable. It would have ample parking. There would be a community room. There is a small kitchenette and single use bathroom. They are looking at a couple of pieces of land with an estimated cost of between \$100,000 and \$200,000. The building will cost \$850,000. They will put solar on it. The total cost is just over \$1 Million Dollars. Market rate would be about \$1.5 Million Dollars. They save about 40% using their system which they have done for years. They are asking for one-half of that. They will come up with the rest of the money. They have been able to finance all of their projects because the bank realizes they will have a great deal of equity when the project is finished. This project will pay for itself. With 18 units they will bring in \$9,000 per month and it will cost them \$7,000 a month in expenses.

Q – Have you received any other covid funds?

A – Project Neighbors received \$6,000 in PPP loans. They have four employees.

Q – Did you make application with the City of Valparaiso?

A – We did not.

Q – If you were to receive less would this project get off the ground and meet the deadlines required?

A – The project will happen. With help it will happen next year.

Q – So you are confident you can have this under contract by 2024 and completed by 2026?

A – My architect says he will have the drawings to me in three days.

Q – Why should your request be scored higher than other applications received? One of the criteria is how many people this will help. This is just for Valparaiso.

A – We do not apply for Federal grants. We rarely apply for money from anywhere. Everything they do involves a network of people who show up week after week and contribute their own labor. They take ownership of it. They come back two years later and make a contribution. They are not a landlord. They own the property and rent the property. He tells the tenants they are partners in an effort to provide them a rare commodity. He has never evicted a person for non-payment.

Q – If we were to allocate \$600,000 would you be able to get this built within the time frame?

A – Yes.

Q – You have collaborated with other organizations in Porter County not just Valparaiso?

A – Yes.

Q – Housing Opportunities and Gabriel's Horn came to us with a request. The only difference is you are not shelter but affordable housing?

A – We cannot say it is just for men but that is where we are going to focus. It is open to all Porter County residents. We are located in Valparaiso because we “think globally and work locally”. Our volunteer base is built here.

Women’s Association of Valparaiso

They are very new at this type of thing and thanked the Board for hearing them. The Organization was started in 1895. In 1925 they bought the house on the corner of Washington and Jefferson. They provide housing for women who do not have the means to go anywhere else. There are nine rooms. One is for a care taker. The rooms are intended to be a transition for women who need the help. They have their bedroom space. They share bathrooms, kitchen and household duties. They have to show they have coping and living skills. There are also women who are elderly and their husband passed away and they have no idea how to go out in the world and survive. They originally were asking for \$490,000. It is one of the few remaining Charles Lembke structures. They are taking their request down to \$80,000. This will allow them to renovate three bathrooms. Currently they have one bathroom with a shower for all nine ladies. This is not a shelter but a home. It is self-funded. Members pay \$50 per year. The rooms are \$350 a month which includes all utilities. During covid most were not able to pay their rent. They lost \$63,000 in rent.

Q – What happens if they are only awarded \$20,000?

A – Then they will just do one bathroom.

Q – Can you meet the timeline?

A – Yes.

Q – Is this a historical building?

A – Yes. It is on the Historical Register.

Q – Do you get any funding through that?

A – No.

Q – Have you received any covid funds?

A – They applied through the City and were denied or unacknowledged.

Q – What does that mean?

A – We submitted our application through the portal and never got a reply.

Q – Will the historic designation affect what you can or cannot do on the building?

A – Currently they are on the historic register of places but not a historically recognized building. What they do on the inside is up to them.

Jim Biggs stated the Board will meet one more time to score the presentations. The results will then go to the Steering Committee.

Mitch Peters discussed the ranking. This does not work for him to assign numbers and rank them because in each instance he made adjustments. The Board should make some indication of the amount they feel each presentation should be awarded. He feels the Steering Committee wants to know what this Board feels is a recommended amount if different from the request.

Brandon Clancy added that what is going to be done with the money adds a lot of value to the scoring also.

Vicki Urbanik stated the other committees have looked at each project and the amount they are requesting. One of the other committees actually reduced the amount and recommended another amount.

Robyn Lane stated the other committee discussed each project and came up with a number.

Jim Biggs stated they will go through each application and state a number to be recommended. Then the Steering Committee will make their own decision.

Public Comment

Robert Cotton asked if the committee expects that since there are four committees will the money available will be split in four pots and one will go to each committee. Jim Biggs stated that is not the Board's expectation.

There being no more business the meeting adjourned.