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## Municipality of Anchorage Anchorage Women's Commission



### **AWC Meeting 12/10/2020 5:30 – 7:00 pm Microsoft Teams online meeting**

**Present: Cambria Patz (AHD host), Jackie Cason, Margaret Duggan, Valerie Chadwick, Kimberly Martus (public), Monica Elkinton (Co-chair), Joan Ryan (Chair), Kami Hutchins (AHD Liaison), Kameron Perez-Verdia (Assembly Member)**

#### **I. Call to Order**

- Quorum established and Call to Order at 5:32pm

#### **II. Introductions**

#### **III. Approval of Agenda**

- Motion to approve agenda (Commissioner Cason)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> to approve agenda (Commissioner Duggan)

#### **IV. Approval of Minutes**

- Motion to approve (Chair Joan Ryan)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> to approve (Commissioner Cason)

#### **V. Old Business**

- Letter to the Governor/Legislators through the Mayor's office (Commissioner Cason)
  - I sent the letter to Jason, Chief of Staff at Mayor's Office, and he said they are aware of the issue.

#### **VI. Public Comments**

- No public comments

#### **VII. New Business**

- Q&A with Assembly member Perez-Verdia
  - Co-chair Monica Elkinton: Can you tell us about current state and federal money? Is there money coming through to Anchorage? What's the status of funding from state and federal sources?
    - Kameron: When we realized we were getting 156 million dollars of funding, the assembly came together for two full days to develop a plan/framework for how to distribute those funds. There are key areas they wanted to make sure to hit. They developed a set of guiding principles by engaging many different experts. As of Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>, they've had thousands of voucher cards, processed 7,502 so far. 11,090 housing payments have been sent to renters. Hospitality

businesses with liquor licenses, without licenses, art, small businesses, child care relief grants: funded 173 agencies total of 7.4 mill, approved 15 mill to go to small business hospitality business. Truth is, it's not enough. Thinking about other ways they can provide funding and continue to support the community. Distributed about 106 million so far, and will likely spend all of it in the next month or two.

- Joan: who can apply for child care aid?
  - Kameron: we reached out to child care agencies that were licensed to tell them that we have these funds. If an agency hasn't received funds, there's a section on muni.org for CARES Act funding. Hoping for more federal funds to come in the new year.
- Monica: what are other ways we can help?
  - Kameron: discounting fees, development services has 25% permit fee discount, fire inspections have been discounted, Merrell Field is doing 1 month free, public transit fees are waived from March 15- April 8.
- Monica: are there other funding sources other than the CARES Act?
  - Kameron: yes, FEMA reimbursement funds and discounting municipal fees.
- Joan: will there be a deadline extension for org's to utilize their grants?
  - Kameron: that's a good question, but I don't know the answer. The treasury department encouraged the Muni to use CARES Act money to pay for first responders salaries in order to free up money which gives us more time to spend that money. We are going to close on the Golden Lion, will become a treatment center. Alaska's Club will no longer be considered. America's Best will be a transitional housing area, but the remodel is more than they expected so they are working through that. Third property will be a resource center hub, and shelter. Will be purchasing Beans Café (day shelter) and Alleva properties downtown.
- Monica: America's Best and Golden Lion, will the Muni own them and hire a private company to run the facilities?
  - Kameron: yes, we will create the scope and regulation, but a third party will be running the programs.
- Joan: when do you think the Golden Lion will open for services?
  - Kameron: don't know, at the very earliest middle of next year.
- Monica: what is the role of the Assembly in regards to Covid?
  - Kameron: the Assembly gives the Mayor emergency powers, every Assembly meeting we have to choose to continue the emergency powers of the Mayor or not, it's not just giving the Mayor the ability, it sets up all the systems and procedures and infrastructure in place in order to manage the crisis (EOC). In terms of the emergency orders, those come from the Mayor and the Assembly is not involved in making those at all. The Assembly only meets every two weeks so they give the Mayor the power because they have the

- ability to be more responsive. Assembly can allocate funds, which is what we've been doing.
- Monica: we are very worried about the impact of Covid on minority groups, health and economic.
    - Kameron: it is definitely disproportionately effecting minority groups. We are trying to track and analyze data, and we're trying to be proactive about making people aware of the aid that's available to them. We're hiring a Chief Equity Officer for the city. It's more than just thinking about our functions and how they affect people, but it's also about the systems that are honestly inherently bias and this needs to be unearthed and talked about.
  - Monica: what can we do to help you support women and children, whether it's legislation, code changes, funding?
    - Kameron: we need more & more advocacy around this. The alcohol tax is trying to do this. We are focusing on early childhood education, and some of the alcohol tax is going towards that. Continue using your voice as the commission, and please keep inviting us to these meetings.
  - Jackie: I heard that the vaccines will roll out to those who need it most first, will the assembly have a part in that?
    - Kameron: I'm not sure, I'm assuming it's a state decision but I think we should definitely have a voice in terms of how the vaccine is distributed.
  - Kameron: in regards to public safety, a colleague asked me if we're in favor of defunding the police. I asked him what he thinks that means, he said well that means to take away their money and to not have police. I said no, it's an effort to realize the amount of mental health issues that are not necessarily relevant to police work and have a great impact on their jobs. The alcohol tax will bring an expansion of the "core team" who will go and address mental health issues, and there's a whole system that will be built around that. The policemen that I've talked to about this are very relieved that this will happen because previously they did not really have a way of helping these people.
  - Kimberly Martus (public): I feel like the city overlooks incarceration. I wish there were more resources available to do more testing in the jails and prisons here. I would like to see more focus on early diversion and incarceration, especially on incarcerated women. My feeling is that there are plenty who could be released right now who aren't being released.
    - Kameron: there's an initiative called "Step Up." It's a national initiative that is looking at the number of people with mental health concerns in our system, and it looks at the problems along each step of the way. It identifies the fact that this is a huge issue in terms of taking care of people, but it's also incredibly costly because we're spending time putting people in jail that shouldn't be in jail. This is important to me as well. There's been a lot of discussion about how the city can look at our systems to identify

people who shouldn't be incarcerated and should be in treatment instead.

- Update from Acting Mayor Quinn-Davidson (Monica)
  - Austin said she is a former member of this commission, and she said that we should be telling the Assembly members what should be done rather than asking the Assembly members what they think should be done. I really appreciated that she said that. Maybe going into 2021 we can have another strategic meeting where we can brainstorm things we'd like to bring to the Assembly.
- Upcoming events (All Commissioners)
  - Kami: MOA Health Department will be meeting with the state on Dec 16 on vaccine distribution.
  - Joan: Latino Hispanic community is doing some commercials on Covid info that will air on Telemundo.

**VIII. Adjournment, 7 pm**

Jackie, Valerie second

**IX. Next Meeting – January 14, 2020 5:30 to 7:00 pm**