

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item I-2
Commission Chambers
December 8, 2020
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Economic Development Director, Julian Perez
Assistant City Attorney, Naomi Levi Garcia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item I-2 [3:45 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission retroactively approving the Small Business Recovery Grant Program (SBRG) and Technical Workshop program, approved by the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners for a subaward of Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act, Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) federal funds in the amount of \$850,000.00.

City Manager Iglesias: I think we are on I-2.

City Attorney Ramos: I-2 is A Resolution of the City Commission retroactively approving the Small Business Recovery Grant Program (SBRG) and Technical Workshop program, approved by the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners for a subaward of Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act funding. Naomi.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I understand that we have complied with, we were the first city to comply with everything the county requested. Naomi, I see you now, can you explain it?

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Ms. Levi Garcia: Yes. Good afternoon Mayor and Commissioners again. So, this resolution is retroactively approving the two grant programs that we submitted for CARES Act funding, the Technical Workshop program and the Small Business Recovery Grant program. They have been earmarked for a total of \$850,000 in funding, a \$100,000 for the Technical Workshop program and \$750,000 for the Small Business Grant program. Both programs have already been rolled out and there is significant interest and engagement from the business community. I know these have been Julian's baby, so I would like to turn it over to Julian Perez to talk about the specifics of the programs, and of course I'm available to answer any questions should you have them.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Julian.

Economic Development Director Perez: Yes. Good afternoon members, Mayor, members of the Council. Julian Perez, Economic Development Director for the City. As indicated by Naomi, there are two programs. The first program is the Technical Workshop grant and that's for \$100,000 and we are going to be putting the request into the GMS portal system by the end of the week so that we can begin to get the funding for that program and begin the workshops that we have scheduled. Attached to the staff report, there is a copy of the proposal and the details associated with this proposal. The second grant is the Business Recovery grant and that's something that we have been working for a number of months now and finally it got approved. We went ahead and we put together the program in house and we have received close to 120 applications, of which about 50 of them are going to be funded at \$15,000. When we first started with this program, we were looking at a technical program, but then we went ahead, and we revised the application to include a program that several areas of qualifications. We started out with rent relief, technology, and then supplies and obviously, PPP. Once we started, we noticed that there was a tremendous amount of interest and most of the interest was on the rent assistance. And as a result of that, we went ahead and instead of doing a \$50,000 grant, that was only going to get us just about only 15 applications. We decided to reduce it to \$15,000 in order to cover more applications. As a result of that, at \$15,000 applications, we were now able to reach out to 50 applicants or 42 percent of the total number of applications that had been submitted as of today. We are now...to begin to put the 50 applications in the portal and hopefully receive conditional approval from the county. Once we get the conditional approval, then we can move forward and begin the process of cutting the checks and getting that information to the county, getting the county's approval, and then at that time then we'll sign the agreement with the grantees and we'll issue the checks to them.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Julian, Julian, let me interrupt. Can you say that again? There was an article in the Miami Herald this morning about Miami-Dade still has millions in CARES Act funds to spend. Can you tell us where we are and what we can expect from the county?

Economic Development Director Perez: Yes sir. That is part of the allocation, yes, correct. That was part of the allocation and those are the funds that they have to spend by December 30th. We received \$850,000 of that. At this time, we are moving very, very quickly to be able to secure the \$750,000, those are the recovery grants, those are the ones we are putting in the portal. You have to put it in the portal in order for them to review it and approve it, and once they approve it, then they'll be allowed to release the funds. So that's what we are working on. Today is what, the 8th,

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and we are putting in today and tomorrow, so we are working with a very good time schedule here. They have promised us that they will look at it and that they will give us answers as quickly as possible. The rest of the funds that they are talking about, Mayor, is funds that they have allocated to other programs in the county. For example, they have allocated funds to the hospitality industry grant, that's one of those. They have also put money aside for small business assistance forgivable loan program. There is also the layoff aversion fund too. And there was also a fund that they also had available for hospitality where there was a joint, kind of a joint cooperation with the Southeast Wine and Food Festival and FIU. Unfortunately, FIU was not able to give out the money and that money was then relocated to other sources. I think that it went to Florida Memorial College. And then there is a number of other grants that they have. Obviously, they have the operational, those are the reimbursables, those are the ones that we are also participating in, and that's the one that I think they allocated \$75 million dollars to that one and \$25 million to the grant program that we are in, that we had to wait for the County Commission to approve.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Are you confident that the county will do things on time?

Economic Development Director Perez: Yes sir. I think that right now, at this time, is for us to make sure that we submit all of the applications that are completed as quickly as possible and that's what we are doing right now.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: As opposed to our FEMA money from Irma that we are still waiting for.

Economic Development Director Perez: That's different sir. What we are dealing with right now is Department of Treasury funds, that's the reason why we went ahead and we put the program together and it really has been a major, major undertaking, the last two weeks, because there is a lot of information that is very, very important that we have on file, because its not only about issuing this grant, its making sure that we have all our files in place and that we have covered all the details in case when they come back and audit us and the business community or the grantees, that we have all the information on file.

Ms. Levi Garcia: Mayor, if I may chime in. There is a hard spending deadline on these CARES Act funds of December 30th, so the county needs to spend, they need to cut those checks and we need to cut those checks. So that's the deadline that we're working towards. We've set up a system where once we submit the full application to the county, they provide us with conditional approval, so we don't issue any checks to the businesses until we receive that conditional approval from the county, which gives us a level of security and confidence that we know the county is going to reimburse us. So, we are limiting our exposure as much as possible.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Economic Development Director Perez: They have to sign off on an affidavit, which is required, plus there is an agreement that they have to sign off with us before we give out the money.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. So, you are confident that things are on track.

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Economic Development Director Perez: Yes sir. As of today, yes sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Thank you very much for the report.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, we are doing as much as we can...

Ms. Levi Garcia: We do need a resolution approving those, we do need a resolution approving the programs.

City Manager Iglesias: We are doing as much as we can to ensure, since we have to upfront the money, we are doing as much as we can to make sure that we have full reimbursement of the \$750,000K that we are providing as grant funding.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, you need a resolution.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do I hear a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes. So moved.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Second?

Commissioner Keon: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please?

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)