



Economic Stabilization Task Force

Appointed by the City & Borough of Juneau's Mayor
Adopted Meeting Minutes for Thursday, April 09, 2020

Call to Order

The Economic Stabilization Task Force meeting held telephonically was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Co-Chair Mr. Max Mertz.

Roll Call

Task Force Members Present: Max Mertz (Co-Chair, chaired meeting), Bruce Botelho, Eric Forst, Ken Koelsch, Laura Martinson, Lauren MacVay, Linda Thomas (Co-Chair), Terra Peters, Theresa Belton.

Task Force Members Absent: None

Assembly Members Present: Beth Weldon, Mayor; Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, Loren Jones, Maria Gladziszewski, Michelle Bonnet-Hale, Greg Smith.

Staff Present: Scott Ciambor, Chief Housing Officer; Same Muse, CBJ Controller; Rorie Watt, CBJ City Manager; Rob Palmer, CBJ City Attorney; Jill Maclean, CDD Director; Di Cathcart, Deputy Municipal Clerk; Beth McEwen, City Clerk; Adrien Speegle, Budget Analyst; Jeff Rogers, Finance Director; Erica Roguska, Administrative Assistant.

Introductions

Bruce Botelho, Former CBJ Mayor; Ken Koelsch, Former CBJ Mayor; Linda Thomas, CEO of Alaskan Brewery; Laura MacVay, CEO of TNFCU; Theresa Belton CFO of CCTHITA, Eric Forst co-owner of The Red Dog Saloon; Terra Peters (Hoff), owner of The Flying Squirrel espresso and Willoughby's Popcorn; Laura Martinson, new owner of Caribou Crossings; Jeff Rogers, CBJ Finance Director; Jill McLane, CDD Director; Scott Ciambor, CBJ Chief Housing Officer.

CBJ Financial Status Overview by Jeff Rogers

Jeff Rogers, CBJ Finance Director presented FY21 budget overview. The budget assumes no cruise ship season in 2020 which will cause a significant reduction in revenue via passenger fees and sales taxes. Reflected is a proposed 1 mill property tax increase. The included graphs show the peak of unrestricted fund balance and restricted budget reserve at the end of FY19 and the rapid expenditure of the fund balances in the absence of an increase to the property tax rate, and how CBJ could rebuild these funds via the proposed property tax increase.

Another option to be presented to the Assembly in order to preserve funds would be to reduce CIP spending in the coming years.

Mayor Beth Weldon introduced herself and the purpose of this group and their directives.

Mr. Rogers responded to committee questions.

Resolution 2889

Overview

Scott Ciambor, CBJ Chief Housing Officer, presented an overview of CBJ Resolution 2889, an Emergency Appropriation Resolution Appropriating \$200,000 to the Manager for an Emergency Rental Assistance Program; Funding Provided by the Affordable Housing Fund.

Mr. Ciambor responded to Committee questions.

Discussion of Task Force Recommendation

Chair Mertz asked the Task Force for their input on the proposed rental assistance program.

Mr. Botelho recommended a subcommittee to discuss this issue specifically and recommended requesting a two-week grace period from the Assembly in order to organize the information so the Task Force can make an informed recommendation at that time.

Ms. Martinson asked if the rental assistance will be extended to homeowners and commercial properties. Ms. MacVay responded with information that falls under the Federal CARES Act and SB241.

MOTION: by Mr. Botelho that this committee recommends to the Assembly that they reschedule its hearing for action on Resolution 2889 for a two-week period in order to allow the Task Force an opportunity to more closely study options and report back. Mr. Forst seconded the motion.

AMENDMENT #1: Chair Mertz stated that he is concerned with the two-week timeframe under the current circumstances. He suggested a one-week period instead of two-weeks. Mr. Botelho agreed, provided the workgroup is able to gather the necessary information in that time.

Mayor Weldon responded to state that meetings are every Monday, at which time they vote on if a meeting will take place on Thursdays.

Chair Mertz recommended appointing a subcommittee to gather information regarding rental assistance, consisting of Mr. Botelho, Ms. MacVay, and Ms. Thomas, who agree. Ms. MacVay agreed to chair this subcommittee.

Discussion of Interaction with other State and Federal Recovery Efforts

Task Force Purpose #1

Examine federal and state government financial assistance programs and identify and prioritize any "gaps" that exist.

Mayor Weldon requested that the Task Force consider Federal and State funding sources prior to recommending the use of CBJ funds.

Task Force Purpose #3

Act as Liaison with the Governor's Alaska Economic Stabilization Team.

Ms. Thomas discussed the Governor's Alaska Economic Stabilization Team and requested two Task Force Members serve as liaisons.

Discussion of Local Business Recovery Strategies

Task Force Purpose #2

To Identify and promote strategies that enable businesses to continue operations safely such as curbside pick-up, take-away, delivery, and other innovative services. Additionally, explore strategies that enable businesses and Juneau's economy to recover in the long term.

Mr. Forst discussed Item 20 of the Mandate from the Governor via DHSS Commissioner Crum. He states that this section is broad and could potentially allow some smaller businesses to reopen if they are meeting distancing requirements or only involve one person.

Ms. Peters discussed concerns surrounding the current lack of available childcare. A significant reduction of workforce is caused by childcare facilities being closed either due to mandate or an abundance of caution. Many employees are unable to telework or bring children to work, though they are otherwise willing and able to work. At this time many Juneau residents are not able to work solely due to lack of childcare.

Mr. Forst discussed how some businesses are remaining open and limiting patrons by available square footage. Businesses could potentially legally open if they are able to maintain social distancing.

Chair Mertz requested a subcommittee to gather additional information and explore strategies for continuing business operations. Chair Mertz will join Ms. Peters and Mr. Forst in this group.

Mr. Botelho wondered if there is a way to connect newer small businesses with established businesses in order to offer mentoring to help newer businesses find assistance navigate available resources.

Committee discussed.

Ms. MacVay recommended creating a platform for gathering information from businesses on how to best support them and better understand what their specific needs are.

Committee Questions and Comments

Committee continued earlier discussion regarding childcare.

Chair Mertz asked Ms. Belton if she would be willing to work with Ms. Peters and Ms. Martinson on issues surrounding childcare. Ms. Belton agreed. Chair Mertz would like to know what current childcare provider's needs are in order to reopen. Ms. Martinson states that there are potential grants available for childcare providers.

Chair Mertz discussed an issue that was brought forward by CBJ Manager Rorie Watt to identify protocols and standards for cruise ships when they return. Ms. Martinson and Mr. Forst agree to assist in this workgroup.

Chair Mertz stated that he has the following workgroups noted:

Child Care:

Ms. Martinson, Ms. Peters, Ms. Belton

Cruise Ship Protocol:

Mr. Forst, Ms. Martinson, Chair Mertz

Restaurants & Small Business:

Mr. Forst, Ms. Peters, Chair Mertz

Business Mentoring Program:

Ms. Martinson, Ms. Thomas

Business Needs Platform:

Ms. Martinson

Tribal Assistance Options:

Ms. Belton

Ms. Thomas discussed the importance of communication and providing this information to the Assembly and the public. Ms. Maclean responded to say that there is a high volume of information being sent to the public from the City and Borough currently and information is largely being funneled through the EOC and communications team via Lisa Phu, the CBJ Public Information Officer. Ms. Maclean believes that the communications team can be a resource for putting out information to ensure that it is readily available to the public and its intended audience.

Chair Mertz discussed the potential of local stimulus options for businesses. Currently the stimulus options that exist for businesses are all debt based. Chair Mertz would like to explore options to offer local businesses assistance or stimulation that is not debt based. Mr. Botelho requested that this item be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Chair Mertz agreed.

Mr. Koelsch requested that the next agenda include discussion regarding cruise ship protocol and infrastructure.

Chair Mertz agreed to add the above items to the next agenda.

MOTION: Mr. Rogers requested confirmation of passing the motion to delay for one-week the recommendation to the Assembly on rental assistance. Chair Mertz seconded the motion.

With no committee objection, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Botelho stated that the timeline was to be in time for the Assembly meeting, one week from Monday. [Either Thursday 4/16/2020 or Monday 04/20/2020]

Rob Palmer, CBJ City Attorney, stated that the Task Force should strive to keep these and any subcommittee meetings public however possible. Mr. Palmer also stated that any information submitted in Task Force packets becomes a part of the public record.

Beth McEwen, CBJ City Clerk, requested that anyone responding to email inquiries, 'cc the Economic Stabilization email to allow for record keeping.

The Task Force discussed the difference between subcommittees and fact-finding groups.

Mr. Palmer clarified that committees and subcommittees are subject to the open meetings act and must adhere to the regulations of public notice and participation.

Mr. Palmer confirmed that fact-finding groups do not need to adhere to these regulations as long as all pertinent information gathered is shared with the Task Force at a meeting that is publicly available.

ACTION ITEM: Any group referenced as a subcommittee in this meeting will be treated as a fact-finding work group and will report their findings to the Task Force.

Next Meeting Date

To be determined, Ms. Thomas recommends early next week and will send out an electronic poll to members of the committee.

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Appointed Task Force Members

Max Mertz, Co-Chair • Linda Thomas, Co-Chair • Theresa Belton • Bruce Botelho • Eric Forst

Ken Koelsch • Lauren MacVay • Laura Martinson • Terra Peters