



Economic Stabilization Task Force

Appointed by the City & Borough of Juneau's Mayor
Adopted Meeting Minutes from April 30, 2020

Call to Order

The Economic Stabilization Task Force meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m. by Ms. Thomas.

Task Force Members Present: Max Mertz, Linda Thomas, Theresa Belton, Bruce Botelho, Eric Forst, Ken Koelsch, Lauren MacVay, Laura Martinson, and Terra Peters

Task Force Members Absent: None

Staff Present: CDD Director, Jill Maclean; and CDD Administrative Officer, Brenwynne Grigg

Special Guest Speakers: None

Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to approve.

Recommendation on Matrix

Ms. Thomas introduced Ms. MacVay and Ms. Martinson as the Task Force members assigned to making recommendations for addressing and using the public comment matrix.

Ms. MacVay presented a Communications Plan, with general practices and response steps as they relate to the Public Comment Matrix.

Ms. Martinson showed an overview of public feedback related to each topic area and the main themes in each. She highlighted Business Assistance as having received the largest number of comments.

The Task Force discussed ideas for assisting businesses, such as incentives for buying local and property tax rebates. An email from Mr. Rod Swope was referenced often as a source of ideas from a program implemented by the City of Camas, Washington (<https://www.cityofcamas.us/supportlocal>).

They acknowledged concerns that some of the comments received addressed topics outside of the Task Force's purview. It was decided that those topics should be forwarded to the appropriate body, which could better address them.

ACTION ITEM: The Economic Stabilization Task Force will communicate with the public on the status of topics addressed in public comments through statements published on the website. Published statements will be updated as topic areas progress or change.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. MacVay and Ms. Martinson will work with CBJ staff to capture the data and highlight comments that need addressing at each meeting.

ACTION ITEM: The Task Force will build a work management tool by adding columns to the matrix to track associated tasks and decisions related to each topic.

MOTION: by Mr. Botelho to accept the Communications Plan as a working document. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mertz.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Mertz clarified that Ms. MacVay and Ms. Martinson will work on adding a tracking mechanism to capture the direction the Task Force is taking on each topic area.

Hearing no objections, the motion carried.

Business Recommendations

Ms. Peters gave an overview of her memorandum on Juneau Businesses Dealing with COVID-19, which is included in the meeting packet. She spoke about the downtown business environment, the construction industry, the fishing community, and other Juneau businesses.

She communicated that many businesses need ways to sustain themselves until the 2021 tourist season that do not involve going further into debt. She advocated for a Juneau Stabilization Fund that would grant funding to businesses based off their decrease in revenue as compared to previous years. Ms. Peters demonstrated the need is greatest as it pertains to affording monthly rent and mortgages.

Mr. Mertz suggested meeting with Mr. Rogers, CBJ Finance Director, to brainstorm ways the City may be able to collaborate with an initiative such as this.

Ms. Martinson pointed out that seasonal tourism businesses are already experiencing low cash flow, as they have not operated since last summer, 7 months ago. She explained that April and May rent in the downtown is high but June rent is even higher, due to the seasonality of the downtown business activity.

Mr. Forst cautioned against separate funding for tourism related businesses, since many businesses in Juneau receive an indirect benefit from the tourism economy. Many Juneau businesses are experiencing their own challenges and lost revenue.

Mr. Botelho asked if there was a way to gauge the magnitude of the need.

ACTION ITEM: Task Force members Mr. Mertz, Ms. Peters, and Ms. Martinson will meet with Mr. Rogers to brainstorm ways of determining the magnitude of the need, as well as potential ways to provide assistance.

Mr. Rogers replied to the Task Force that he is happy to meet on this topic.

Tribal Childcare Grants Update

Ms. Belton reported that CCTHITA's Childcare Department is assisting childcare providers and parents with purchasing items for homes and daycares in order to create small stockpiles for when they need them and/or when the childcare facilities open. In Southeast Alaska, 338 payments have been provided to parents and childcare centers, totaling \$174 thousand. The Tribal Emergency Operations Center also has their own supply of gloves and masks for distribution if needed.

Unemployment Insurance

Mr. Mertz updated the Task Force regarding his communication with Mr. Keith Graham, an Employment Security Analyst in the Unemployment Insurance Unit with the State of Alaska Labor and Workforce Development Department. Mr. Mertz hopes to have a completed report by the next Task Force meeting and will present in more detail then.

Good of the Order

Ms. MacVay updated the Task Force on the Rental Housing Assistance Fund. According to Tamara Rowcroft with Alaska Housing Development Corporation, the administrative processes associated with the program should be complete in the next day; they will begin processing applications at that time. As of April 29, there have been 10-15 inquiries on the program.

Ms. Martinson updated the Task Force on Childcare Recommendations going before the Lands Committee on May 4. An assessment was initiated, along with interviews of childcare providers and AEYC, to determine the need for financial assistance for childcare. Childcare centers will be reopening over the next few weeks at 20-30% capacity, moving toward 60-70% capacity. Until childcare centers are able to operate at full capacity, there is a need to cover enrollment shortages. The memorandum submitted to the Lands Committee is in the Task Force packet and will provide a starting point for discussions.

Mr. Koelsch updated the Task Force on community outreach initiatives. Mr. Koelsch and Mr. Mertz have appeared on "1 Hour with Kelly" on KINY, "Juneau Afternoon" on KTOO, and daily updates at 8:20 a.m. for a 10-minute slot. They are encouraging the public to send comments to Economic-Stabilization@juneau.org.

MOTION: by Mr. Mertz for Mr. Forst to develop a PSA to provide to city staff for the CBJ Facebook page. The motion was seconded by Mr. Koelsch.

Hearing no objections, the motion carried.

Mr. Koelsch shared that he is receiving information on cruise ship protocols that are still under development. The CDC is continuing to adhere to July 24 as the earliest possible start date for a cruise season in Alaska. The

Visitor Industry Task Force released a draft copy of their recommendations today. He asked if there was interest in having Cruise Lines International Association Alaska (CLIAA) volunteers speak with the Task Force to provide an update.

ACTION ITEM: The Task Force unanimously consented to an update from CLIAA volunteers.

Ms. Belton shared that CCHITA has purchased sewing machines and plans to facilitate volunteers in making masks at the Elizabeth Peratrovich Hall.

Ms. MacVay suggested having a representative from the JEDC Chamber group talk to the Task Force about their focus.

Ms. Maclean shared that the JEDC Response and Recovery Task Force met this morning and discussed a “Beautify Juneau Campaign,” similar to “Adopt a Neighborhood.” They also discussed a “Shop Local App,” currently used by the cities of Durango and Winnipeg, which would promote local shopping first.

Mr. Mertz thanked the Alaska Brewing Company for the hand sanitizer it is providing to the community in partnership with the Juneau Community Foundation and the City & Borough of Juneau.

At 4:25 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

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