

SUMMARY OF CITY OF BONIFAY / HOLMES COUNTY REC CENTER DISCUSSION

4/17/2023 MEETING

TOPIC:

This meeting was set by Nicole Smith from the office of Congressman Neal Dunn. Nicole has been working with Holmes County staff and consultants to determine the status of the \$3 million 2022 Community Funding Project awarded to the City of Bonifay.

PARTICIPANTS AT CITY HALL:

Nicole Smith, Congressman Dunn's office
Emily McCann, City of Bonifay Mayor
Rickey Callahan, City of Bonifay, Clerk
Trey Barbee, City Superintendent
Michelle Blankenship-Jordan, City Attorney
Earl Stafford, Holmes BOCC Chairman
David Corbin, Holmes County Coordinator
Tim Parson, Liberty Partners (Consultants to Holmes County)
Jennifer Green, Liberty Partners (Consultants to Holmes County) – *via phone*

OUTCOME / NEXT STEPS:

- All parties discussed the timeline of the City applying for the Community Project Funding Request through Congressman Dunn's office, the fact that the City had been told the funding was not awarded and the City's decision to allow the property to revert back to the County due to lack of funds.
- All parties also discussed the timeline when Mr. Callahan received an award confirmation email, forwarded it to the County Coordinator and a series of emails between Holmes County staff and consultants were exchanged with the assistance of Congressman Dunn's office.
- Nicole Smith talked about some of the confusion with non-City or County contracted consultants seeking to discuss the project with HUD and thanked the Mayor and BOCC Chairman for working now in a cooperative relationship with the Congressman's office.
- Nicole Smith was in the process of setting up a meeting with the City, County and her office with HUD so that the City and County could understand the status of the funding and ask any questions regarding the use of the funding.
- The Mayor and BOCC Chairman agreed that once both had information from HUD on whether the funds were still available, what they could be used for and how the ownership of the Rec Center would affect the funding they could then make an informed decision about whether or not to accept the funds and also the long term viability of Rec Center funding.

4/20/2023 MEETING

TOPIC:

This meeting was set by Nicole Smith from the office of Congressman Neal Dunn. Nicole has been working with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) staff on behalf of Holmes County and the City of Bonifay to determine if the 2022 Community Funding Project awarded to the City of Bonifay is still available, how it can be administered if the property reverted from the City back to the County, how long the funds are available and the process by which the funds will be provided.

PARTICIPANTS ON ZOOM:

Nicole Smith, Congressman Dunn's office

Vaughn Watson, HUD

Lauren Thomas, HUD

Julie Z., HUD

Michelle J., HUD

Emily McCann, City of Bonifay Mayor

Rickey Callahan, City of Bonifay, Clerk

Earl Stafford, Holmes BOCC Chairman

David Corbin, Holmes County Coordinator

Tim Parson, Liberty Partners (Consultants to Holmes County)

Jennifer Green, Liberty Partners (Consultants to Holmes County)

OUTCOME / NEXT STEPS:

- The \$3 million 2022 Community Funding Project through Congressman Dunn's office is still available.
- HUD staff indicated that the funds are part of the 2022 Federal budget and the City will have until August 31, 2030 to spend the funds awarded for the "rehabilitation of the recreation center" which includes the building, ballfields and all infrastructure on the property. The funds cannot be used for expenses such as staffing a Rec Center Director, utilities or other costs not associated with rehabilitation of the Center.
- HUD staff understands that the City allowed the property to revert back to the County in 2022 due to lack of funds to maintain the property and is suggesting two options:
 - **Option 1:** The City can request the Congressman's office consider seeking a technical correction to the award so that it could be transferred to the County. This process is very cumbersome and would be tied to the 2024 appropriations process and could be in flux well into the fall. HUD and the Congressman's staff strongly discouraged this option.
 - **Option 2:** This option was recommended by HUD staff who indicated that if the City accepted the funds and the County owned the Rec Center, the City and County could work collaboratively and the County could be a sub-recipient of the funds (and comply with all requirements under 2 CFR 200.331). The reason this option would be preferable is because the work could begin immediately and the 2022 funds like this because as of February 17, 2023 this award would be exempt from the requirements of the federal BAB Act.

- HUD staff walked all parties through how the process worked, the fact that they would be available for all assistance on the administration of the funds and were very willing to assist the City and County.
- HUD staff indicated that there were only two reports due on an annual basis in January and July and these funds were the least restrictive in terms of use and compliance.
- HUD staff updated all records and confirmed Rickey Callahan was the POC for the City along with Mayor McCann. In addition, David Corbin was added as the County's POC and third POC for the project. HUD staff re-forwarded all previous award emails and updates to the group.
- The City and County will need to determine the next steps to acceptance of these \$3 million in funds.