

MINUTES

CITY OF FORT COLLINS • BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS



AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

October 6, 2022 4:00-6:00pm

Remote/Online via Zoom due to COVID-19

DRAFT

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:01 PM the meeting was called to order by John Singleton

1. ROLL CALL

- a. **Board Members Present:** John Singleton, Bob Pawlikowski, Seth Forwood, Kristin Fritz, Sheila Seaver-Davis and Stefanie Berganini joined in progress.
- b. **Board Members Absent:** Jennifer Bray
- c. **Staff Members Present:**
 - Sue Beck-Ferkiss, Staff Liaison – City of Fort Collins
 - Meaghan Overton, Social Sustainability – City of Fort Collins
 - Emily Olivo, Neighborhood Services – City of Fort Collins
 - Heather Young, Utilities – City of Fort Collins
 - Shannon Ash, Utilities – City of Fort Collins
 - Taylor Reynolds, Minutes – City of Fort Collins
- d. **Guests Present:**
 - Marilyn Heller
 - Lisa Cunningham
 - Maggie, Palace Construction

*****Excerpt Related to this Resolution Begins Below*****

5. NEW BUSINESS

- c. **Income-Qualified Assistance Program (Utilities) – Heather Young & Shannon Ash**
 - Utilities is seeking Council approval to make the Income-Qualified Assistance Program (IQAP) an adopted program and follow up on existing program structure on November 1st.
 - The IQAP pilot program launched in 2018 and was set to expire in 2021. An extension was granted (with changes) through 2022.
 - There are three ways in which Utilities hopes to help income-qualified customers lower their utility costs: payment assistance, efficient homes, and efficient practices.
 - Many customers are approved through the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) (60% State AMI or below) and provided an approximate 23% rate reduction.

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- After auto enrollment (through LEAP application) began in 2021, the number of program participants increased by 128%.
- The pilot program was originally extended because of the difficulty of measuring program impact during the pandemic when conditions were changing and to see the impact of the auto enrollment on participation.
- Customer surveys indicate that program participants have an increased quality of life, are able to save for other expenses and budget on a fixed income, experience less stress due to bills, and are educated on ways to conserve energy usage.
- City staff are recommending an increased rate reduction for IQAP from 23% to 25% (evaluating every 3-5 years) based on cost burdens calculated alongside LEAP benefits.
- The IQAP is intended to decrease income disparities and energy inequities in our community and help low-income residents as utility rates continue to increase due to inflation and changeover to carbon neutral energy sources.
- DISCUSSION:
 - How can we support programs like IQAP, that benefit low-income residents with minimal impact to costs or services, and help intergrade them City-wide?
 - The Utilities department has had great success with income qualified programs because of their conservation emphasis in addition to the community needs they are addressing.
 - How is the City addressing the concerns for increased utility costs in the switch to all electric?
 - As renewable energy technology improves, the hope is that costs will decrease. Until then, the rising costs are a concern for all residents.
 - Are residents who earn 60% AMI or less automatically enrolled in LEAP?
 - Residents must apply for LEAP benefits, it is not automatic enrollment; however, those who qualify for LEAP are automatically enrolled in IQAP.
 - There are households that do not qualify for LEAP, including those who are undocumented or receive housing vouchers. City staff are working to ensure that anyone who is eligible knows about and can apply for reduced utility rates.

Stefanie Berganini moved to that the Affordable Housing Board strongly advocate that City Council adopt the Income Qualified Assistance Program as a Utility program.

Bob Pawlikowski seconded. Approved 5-0.