

AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA



Thursday, May 4, 2006

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#5

Neighborhood Housing and Community Development RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Subject: Authorize ratification of contracts with apartment complex owners and other housing providers, utility service providers and the furniture and supplies provider to provide interim housing assistance for evacuees of disaster declared Gulf States related to Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita in a total amount through May 31, 2006 not to exceed approximately \$5,568,571 and authorize continuation of the housing assistance, utility service and furniture and supplies contracts on a month-to-month basis until the Federal Emergency Management Agency terminates the program, contingent upon the availability of grant funding.

Amount and Source of Funding: Funding in the amount of \$5,568,571 is available in a grant from the Texas Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management for interim housing under Presidential disaster declarations related to Hurricane Katrina.

Fiscal Note: There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

Additional Backup Material

(click to open)

- ☐ [Status Memo to Council](#)
- ☐ [Exhibit A](#)

For More Information: Paul Hilgers, Director Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, 974-3108.

Prior Council Action:

Boards and Commission Action:

As a result of Hurricane Katrina, evacuations of residents from disaster declared Gulf States (both before and after the storm) resulted in evacuees traveling to and seeking shelter in Austin, Texas. Evacuees who relocated to the State of Texas were temporarily sheltered in the Austin metropolitan area and surrounding communities.

Approximately 1,745 households were assisted by the Department of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) to obtain temporary housing when they left the emergency shelter at the Austin Convention Center. Our emergency procurement policies require us to obtain Council ratification of any purchases that exceed the City Manager's administrative limit, which was \$46,000 during the relief effort. NHCD planned to bring the City Council an itemized list for approval as soon as a reasonably accurate estimate of the amounts to be paid to each apartment owner, and other vendors could be ascertained. Due to the significant policy changes that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has made as relief efforts proceeded, this has made it difficult to calculate the amount to be ratified since timelines continue to shift.

In November, FEMA informed the City that all Public Assistance funding would cease as of March 1, 2006, and in FEMA's letter dated January 20, 2006, the City was told not to terminate any leases until FEMA has made a determination regarding evacuee eligibility for their Direct Assistance program. Since the final date that the City can provide assistance has continued to change, NHCD recommends that Council ratify interim housing expenses through May 31, 2006,

and approve the continuation of expenses thereafter on a month-to-month basis until FEMA terminates funding for the program. NHCD will update the Council with a report on total costs and grant reimbursements when final amounts have been determined.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Michael McDonald, Acting Assistant City Manager

DATE: February 13, 2006

SUBJECT: Update on Katrina Evacuee Housing and Assessment Project

As you know, the City assisted Katrina evacuees to obtain temporary housing when they left the emergency shelter at the Convention Center. After the Convention Center shelter closed, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) established a Disaster Recovery Center at Rundberg and I-35. The Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) closed on January 11, 2006, but information on housing assistance continues through the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) offices. As of February 7, 2006, 2,271 evacuee households are benefiting from the City's Public Assistance Program, funded by FEMA. No additional contracts are allowed under this program, based upon FEMA's most recently published program requirements and deadlines. The initial grants we received were approved by FEMA based on the understanding that we would be able to assist evacuee households for at least a six-month period.

At the DRC, NHCD provided families with general information, housing and utility assistance. The Health & Human Services Department (HHSD) provided individual assessments for families to help ensure they are making arrangements for permanent housing or making plans to relocate back to the impacted areas. These assessments include identifying needs and making appropriate referrals to community service providers, where needed. HHSD and NHCD worked closely with FEMA from December 1 – 19, 2005, focusing on evacuees in hotels, assisting them in relocating to apartments. During that time, there were 285 hotel visits and 262 families were assessed at hotels or the DRC. FEMA is now working directly with the remaining evacuees in hotels to determine their status and their ultimate destination. As of February 5, 2006, FEMA reported there were 57 hotels in Austin that still have 132 rooms with evacuees. Most of them have received approval from FEMA to extend their hotel stay.

In January, the HHSD Evacuee Assessment teams began doing assessments for those evacuee households who are receiving housing assistance in apartments through the Public Assistance Program. NHCD is providing HHSD with information about evacuee locations. HHSD assessment teams use these lists to assess the situation with each family or individual. As of February 3, 2006, NHCD has provided a list of 1,419 evacuee households and HHSD has conducted assessments of 833 households. About 160 are out of town, moved, or refused the assessment. Those evacuee households who will need continuing case management services are being referred to various social services agencies, some of whom have received specific grant funding to provide case management for evacuees. From the assessments completed thus far, over 50% have indicated a desire to stay in Austin, 12% are currently employed and 32% report that they would like job training or assistance finding a job. This is identified as the highest need in the assessments. We are working with WorkSource for employment assistance through designated funding they have received. Furniture and food stamps were the next

highest identified need. As of February 3, 2006, 769 furniture orders have been placed with the City's vendor, Gage Furniture, and 640 households have received the furniture.

FEMA sent a letter, dated January 20, 2006, stating that "State and local governments should not terminate any lease agreement that FEMA is presently reimbursing until receiving direction from FEMA. State and local governments will continue to receive 403 {Public Assistance} funding for apartments until eligible occupants in leases can be successfully transitioned to 408 {Individual Assistance.}" City staff met with FEMA and received verbal approval to continue all aspects of the program while the evacuees are transitioned to the Individual Assistance program. A formal response is expected soon. This will allow the City to continue the rental assistance through NHCD and HHSD will be able to complete all the assessments and coordinate transfer to Social Services case managers where appropriate. We have been in contact with other major Texas cities to develop a coordinated approach in working with FEMA. We are trying to schedule a time for the Texas cities to have a joint meeting with FEMA to present a united front on addressing this issue.

The City of Austin is partnering with local non-profits and the faith-based community to provide a forum for Katrina evacuees to get together as a community and talk with one another about their experiences and to provide access to social service agencies. The event will be held on Saturday, February 18, 2006, from 10am to 4pm at the Austin Community College Eastview campus. The event will provide an "exhibit hall" for social service providers, break-out sessions, and chat rooms for evacuees to participate in discussions with one another. This will provide the City and its partners with valuable information about the needs of these families. Several evacuees are helping with the planning to make the event feel more personal and inclusive and to make sure we are providing information and services that are helpful and relevant.

Our emergency procurement policies require us to obtain Council ratification of any purchases that exceed the City Manager's administrative limit, which was \$46,000 during the relief effort. We plan to bring you an itemized list for approval as soon as we can compile a reasonably accurate estimate of the amounts to be paid to each apartment owner. Due to the significant policy changes that FEMA has made as relief efforts proceeded, this has made it difficult to calculate the amount to be ratified since timelines continue to shift. In November, FEMA informed us that all Public Assistance funding would cease as of March 1, 2006, and in FEMA's letter dated January 20, 2006, we were told that we should not terminate any leases until FEMA has made a determination regarding evacuee eligibility for their Individual Assistance program. Since the final date that the City can provide assistance has become a moving target, we will submit these expenses for ratification as soon as we possibly can once we can calculate the actual amounts spent, or provide an accurate estimate of the amount to be spent. We will also update you with a report on total costs and grant reimbursements when final amounts have been determined.

If you have any questions, please contact David Lurie at 972-5010, or Paul Hilgers at 974-3108.

cc: Toby Hammett Futrell, City Manager
Joe Canales, Deputy City Manager
Rudy Garza, Assistant City Manager
Laura Huffman, Assistant City Manager
Kristen Vassallo, Chief of Staff
David Lurie, Director, Health & Human Services
Paul Hilgers, Director, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development

Hurricane Disaster Assistance
Contract Amounts

Apartment Complex owners:

Anderson Mill Apartments	\$65,551	
Arbors of Austin	112,057	
Ashbury Parke	170,546	
Audubon Square	75,819	
Avenel Apartments, LTD	55,844	
Banyan Realty	87,697	
Chelsea Creekside	77,499	
Circle S Apartments	55,466	
Cross Creek of Texas, LTD	64,913	
Cypress Creek at Lakeline Apartments	51,652	
Douglas Landing Apts.	73,677	
Eagles Landing Housing Partners, LTD	295,217	
Eagles Pointe Housing Partners, LTD	196,097	
Greystone Park	48,657	
Huntington Meadows	206,793	
Lincoln Oaks	58,286	
Meadowood Apartments	91,171	
Merchants of Hope Charities, Inc.	238,429	
Mountain Ranch Apartments	54,806	
Paradise Oaks Residence	69,727	
Polo Club Apartments	100,547	
Primrose at Shadow Creek	86,047	
Princeton Apartments	76,154	
Regent, Chelsea	48,532	
Rosemont @ Heather Bend	77,821	
Rosemont at Oak Valley	123,377	
Rosemont at Williamson Creek	114,010	
Sorrento Apartments	101,487	
Spring Hollow Apartments	52,448	
Spring Valley Apartments	93,840	
St. Johns Village Apartments	70,173	
Stonehaven at Round Rock Apartments	71,236	
Stony Creek Apartments	66,413	
Town Vista, LP	78,634	
Trails at Vintage Creek Apts.	57,248	
Trestles of Austin	93,008	
Volente Villas	170,890	
Watch Omega Holdings, LP	64,153	
Wildflower Apartments	60,320	
Woodland Heights	62,916	
Woodway Square	268,876	
Worthing Ridge Apartments	49,906	\$4,137,938

Utility providers:

City of Austin Austin Energy	300,000	
Texas Gas Service	43,283	
TXU Energy	37,095	
Pedernales Electric	34,377	414,755

Furniture and supply provider:

Gage Furniture	1,015,878	<u>1,015,878</u>
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Grand Total**\$5,568,571**

Through: 28 February 2006