

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: April 21, 2009

Date Submitted: April 10, 2009

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
Lindsay Stevens, Assistant County Administrator
Alfred Nelson, Housing Director
Robin Dias, WAP Coordinator

Subject: Request to Ratify Board Workshop on April 21, 2009 Regarding Acceptance of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) Grant Funding

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item is to ratify the issues discussed by the Board in the April 21, 2008, Board of County Commissioners Workshop, where Alfred Nelson, Director of Wakulla County Housing Services, presented the issue of the acceptance of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Weatherization Assistance Program grant and the impact that this significant grant funding will have on the County's Housing Services Program.

Background:

At the April 7, 2008, Board Meeting Housing Services requested a workshop before the Board to outline the proposed acceptance of funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was signed into law on February 17, 2009. This Act provided \$5 billion in additional funding into the nations Weatherization Assistance Programs, a 30-year-old branch of the Department of Energy that provides weatherization services to low-income families. In the United States, home energy usage consumes 40 percent of our energy nationwide. The funding will be for a three year period (2009 – 2012) and the national goal is to weatherize 1 million homes.

Through the ARRA, the State of Florida is projected to receive an allocation in the range of \$88 million to \$175 million in funding over the next 3 years. Of which, Wakulla County is slated to receive grant funds which could range from \$1.3 million to \$3.5 million over the next 3 years.

Analysis:

Alfred Nelson, Director of Wakulla Housing Services, presented a PowerPoint that covered the following topics:

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Weatherization Assistance Program Grant
 - Review the established federal and state policies and procedures for the ARRA funding allocation.
 - Recommend specific initiatives to encourage participation in and facilitate growth of the Weatherization Assistance Programs.
 - Proposed distribution of the ARRA grant funds.
 - Evaluate the effects of the ARRA funding on Housing Services, the Local Government, and the Wakulla Community.
- Workload distribution
- Anticipated funding to Wakulla County in the amount ranging from \$1.3 million to \$3.5 million over the next three (3) years.
- Request to hire additional staff to provide increased services to Wakulla County:
 - Two (2) Weatherization Program Assistants
 - One (1) Office Assistant
 - One (1) State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Coordinator/Section 8 Inspector
- The additional positions within the Housing Division will be filled in Other Personnel Services (OPS) utilizing the ARRA grant funds.
- Request to purchase two (2) 4WD pickup trucks for transportation of personnel and equipment utilizing the ARRA grant funds in the form of fee for services from the ARRA in the amount of \$26,000.00 for each vehicle.
- Additional grant funding for other programs within the Housing Services Division, including \$500,000.00 SHIP Impact Proviso and the \$350,000.00 SHIP normal allocation, 157,000.00 LIHEAP, \$100,000.00 WAP-LIHEAP, and an expected 30% increase in the \$845,000.00 Section 8 Funding.
 - Review and rank other grant funding within the Housing Services Division from 2009 – 2012.
- Provide input relative to all phases of the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) program \$500,000.00 Impact Fee Proviso from the Florida State Legislature.

After the PowerPoint presentation by Alfred Nelson, a discussion was held in which Mr. Nelson further described the new role of the Housing Services Division as a result of the ARRA and the additional grant funding allocated to all programs within the Wakulla Housing Division, followed by a brief question and answer session.

The Housing Department is aware of the fact that this agenda request is an unusual action and is not within the normal practices of the Board; to allow a matter to be ratified in such close proximity to its up-brief. If the Board allows this agenda request to be expedited, Housing Services feels that it would greatly enhance the County's position in order to take full advantage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Stimulus funding offered. Therefore, a favor result of this process will be greatly beneficial to our Local Government and to the Citizens of Wakulla County.

Options:

1. Ratify the April 21, Workshop Accepting the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) Grant Funding and approving one or more of the following:
 - a. Accept the ARRA funding and direct staff to bring forth appropriate documentation for Board ratification once received.
 - b. Request to hire additional staff to provide increased services to Wakulla County:
 - i. Two (2) Weatherization Program Assistants
 - ii. One (1) Office Assistant
 - iii. One (1) State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Coordinator/Section 8 InspectorThe additional positions within the Housing Division will be filled in Other Personnel Services (OPS) utilizing the ARRA grant funds.
 - c. Request to purchase two (2) 4WD pickup trucks for transportation of personnel and equipment utilizing the ARRA grant funds in the form of fee for services from the ARRA in the amount of \$26,000.00 for each vehicle.
2. Do not ratify the April 21, Workshop Accepting the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) Grant Funding.
3. Board direction

Recommendation:

Option #1