



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: September 23, 2022

Time: 10:00am

Location: 1st Floor Conference Rm; Cyrus K. Holliday Bldg 620 SE Madison (*virtual option also available*)

Committee members Present: Spencer Duncan (Chair), Christina Valdivia-Alcalá, Hannah Naeger

City Staff Present: City Manager Stephen Wade, Chief of Staff Bill Cochran, Rachelle Mathews (Interim Finance Director), Kalea Pauole (Grants Manager), Heather Shurtliff (Finance), Sylvia Ortiz

1) Call to Order

Chairman Duncan called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Committee members introduced themselves.

2) Approve Minutes from August 19, 2022 Meeting

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee member Naeger seconded. Minutes approved 3-0-0.

3) Secondary Round: ARPA Application Review

Chairman Duncan reviewed a few items and solicited input from the Committee.

In terms of a timeline, Chairman Duncan stated it was laid out from day 1 that the Committee did not want to hurry the process but also wanted to keep it productive and have an eventual end date in sight. The goal has been to get something to the Governing Body before the end of the year, to allow the organizations to know what funds they have or do not have available to them. An October meeting was always built into the process, and the next meeting will be October 28. As such, there is no pressure to have the Committee set their recommendation today, however some decisions may be made today. There may be some adjustments to balances, and there will likely be additional questions to agencies for follow-up. And some decisions to not move agencies forward to the next meeting may be made.

Chairman Duncan continued that today, the Committee will go through each application. Each Committee member will have the opportunity to ask questions

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or make comments on that application. If there are questions from the Committee and a member of the group is present, they will be allowed to answer. If a member of a group is not present to answer questions, it will not eliminate them, but the follow-up questions will be sent to them through Staff, but they are not automatically disqualified simply because of their absence.

In regard to questions; the Committee may not have questions for some applications. Chairman Duncan cautioned against reading too much into that...it does not mean the Committee likes the application or does not like the application, it just means the answers to the follow-up questions were sufficient and there were no additional questions. If the Committee does have questions, Chairman Duncan asked applicants to know there are no "gotcha's"...no members of the Committee are trying to box anyone into a corner or get applicants to say anything...they literally have very sincere questions as they go through the process and try to make decisions as to where best to put the dollars. He politely asked applicants to please stick to the question at hand, and not to get too far away from the topic at hand.

Chairman Duncan noted that the number of applications has been reduced from 85 original applications to now 54 applications, and that the total remaining funds requested is \$12,557,324.68. That is still a difference in just over \$2,550,000 meaning additional cuts in requested funding will need to be made. He reminded everyone that, even if the total does "drop below" the \$10M on some decisions, it does not mean the applicants remaining are in yet. The goal and priority is to make sure the dollars are going to programs that meet the criteria that had been previously laid out in the direction that was given to the Committee by the Governing Body.

Chairman Duncan's final request for the meeting was for those applicants who were not selected to move on after the first round of reviews. He noted that, after the first 30 days of the meeting, staff or the committee had been able to reach out to those agencies and answer any questions that had remained. He noted that if he had not been in contact, that it was not something done on purpose, and to please follow up with him. He noted that he understands frustration and concerns that followed after the first review, however the Committee is not here to discuss that today. He reminded everyone that there was no formal appeal process in this Committee, and that once the Committee has created their full recommendation, it will be sent before the Governing Body. The Governing Body will have a vote, and an opportunity for input so any of those types of concerns for final recommendations can be made at that time.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala thanked everyone in attendance. She noted that this remains a difficult process. She stated that going through this process has helped her to understand more deeply that our system, overall, is not working. She stated that she knows this is not something people want to hear, but that it is important to hear. It is not just the City-system, or the County-system, or the State-system...but that it is our system as a whole that is not working. She is unsure how to fix the system, noting that there are some requests in applications for agencies trying to raise wages by a dollar an hour, when we know that an honest living wage in Topeka is close to \$17/hour. The need for small wage increases may not even get them to the level where they need to be to maintain quality employees.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá stated there is a need for housing that is truly accessible and affordable, not by HUD criteria, but that specifically states in the Topeka Housing Study which means that if more than 30% of your income is going to pay for your housing, your housing costs are a burden. She also stated that, as the community moves forward, that the intimacy and smallness that we have within our city, must do a better job when it comes to duplication of services. Although she does not feel it is the City's job to rectify that duplication, she does believe it is the job of each organization to do their due diligence to get beyond our "silo mentality" and begin partnering together to make the dollars that are received more efficient for serving the community.

Committee member Naeger agreed with comments made by Chairman Duncan and Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá. She wanted to ensure the Committee is working through the process in a way that is fair and makes sense with this once in a lifetime opportunity for these funds. She appreciated the Committee for not rushing the process.

Committee member Naeger stated that reading through the applications, it is obvious that the need is there. She also reminded that these are finite funds, and that the decisions made hold not bearing as to whether a service is good or bad, rather that the Committee is trying to figure out a way to leverage the once in a lifetime funds to serve as many people as they can. In review of the current round of applicants, the total financial request is over budget by a little over \$2M. If the \$10M was to be evenly spread between the remaining 54 projects, each project would get \$185.19. She appreciated the applicants who did some deep soul searching and found ways to make financial cuts for this second round of review for consideration by the Committee. Those organizations know the programs the best, and know what areas need the most help and what areas can be trimmed or where other sources of funding can be procured to supplement.

Committee member Naeger stated there were a few applications where the funding request far exceeded the even distribution, and that did not make any budgetary cuts at all for the second round of reviews. She stated she would likely have the most amount of questions for those agencies because all of them are hundreds of thousands of dollars. In order to ensure everyone is getting a piece of the pie, the Committee can either have everyone compromise and work together or the Committee will have to make cuts in areas where they are not the experts. She challenged applicants who are moving forward into the second round to figure out how share the \$10M and for applicants to really look at their organizations to see how the City can be the most helpful to them with the finite resources available.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá inquired with Grants Manager Kalea Pauole if there was a process the Committee and staff would specifically and intentionally follow to track the end result with what has been stated in applications? Although she understands the money can only be used until 2026, she feels there should be intentional tracking to see how the request met with the actions that they use this money for, and that the information can be saved within the City records to be transparent while also serving as a future guide if anything of this nature ever comes down the track again. Ms. Pauole confirmed that there is a reporting mechanism required for awardees which will require City staff to keep track. That information will be available if the Committee chooses to make it public. Staff can also make it into some sort of guide. Ms. Pauole clarified that the City is required to do reporting, and that depending on the amount that recipients receive, and the Treasury's guidelines, reporting and tracking of information such as how the funds are spent, how well they are spent, etc will be tracked and recorded.

Chairman Duncan inquired if funds have to be spent by the end of 2026, or if they have to be committed by the end of 2026? City Manager Wade stated it was his understanding that the funds have to be committed and contracts signed by 2026, however with some of the supply chain delays and certain challenges there, it may change the requirement. He stated staff would get the specific deadline for commitment to funds and will outlay that before actually providing the money. Ms. Pauole stated that the funds have to be committed by the end of 2024, and they have to be spent by December 31, 2026.

Chief of Staff Bill Cochran inquired if by "being spent" it meant the City transfers those funds to the organization? Ms. Pauole responded that it means the organization has to spend those funds by the end of 2026. It is not just the City giving it to them, they have to be completely gone by the end of 2026.

Chairman Duncan voiced appreciation for the clarification, noting that some of the Capital Improvement Projects that have been requested have been committed for a couple of years. Chief of Staff Cochran responded with a request to have

staff research that further, as it was his understanding that if the funds are transferred out of the City to a private entity, the City would not have much control over how those are spent.

City Manager Wade clarified that what Ms. Pauole was saying is technically accurate, in that if the money was given directly to the organizations as initially outlined by the Government. But, because the City of Topeka is doing revenue replacement, it gives a little bit of leeway that was not there before.

Chairman Duncan rephrased to press upon agencies that there is a set timeline component to the expenditure of these dollars that has to be met, and that has to be one of the criteria as well.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá stated she had inquired with these second-round of agencies that she wanted to know if they had materials in Spanish, and if there was accessibility to translation. She had also sought to know what the population was that the agencies served and if the population of the board reflected what Topeka looked like. She explained that it was a very necessary dialog to have as part of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). She thanked all of the organizations that came forward and were transparent in their responses. She stated that she felt about half of the second-round organizations stated they either already had translation services in place or were willing to move toward providing this service. She felt deeply that having translations available in this day and age should be expected. Many times, in first generation families, the children are used as an interpreter to help their parents or grandparents. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá strongly feels this practice is an extra burden for these children, and that having to be pulled away from their schooling or other activities to act as an interpreter because of a lack of services in Spanish.

Comments by Committee during application review process

At the video minute mark 46:15, after review of Positive Connections' second application, Chairman Duncan stated he had received inquiries as to when the application information would be made public. He responded that it would be part of public record once the Committee moves to their final recommendations.

Program/Organization Application Review:

- Lulac Senior Center - Advancing 3-0
- East Topeka Senior Center - Advancing 3-0

- Topeka North Outreach - Chair requested making full request of \$20K if moving forward, although they graciously made a \$5K cut for this process. - Advancing 3-0
- IBSA - Advancing 3-0
- Patterson Family Childcare - Advancing 3-0
- Community Center @ Ripley Park (capital improvements) - Advancing 3-0
- Community Center @Ripley Park (capital improvement) will also advance but combining applications into one.
- Positive Connections (case management for HIV individuals) - Advancing 3-0
- Positive Connections (youth programming and mobile testing sites) - Advancing 3-0, applications will be combined into one.
- Mirror Inc - Advancing 3-0
- Cornerstone of Topeka (transitional housing) - Advancing 3-0
- Cornerstone of Topeka (construction of affordable housing duplex) - Advancing 3-0
- Cornerstone of Topeka (construction of affordable 3 single-family homes) - Advancing 3-0
- Open Arms Outreach Ministries - Chair would like to propose a reduction of \$8K to be removed from mural, garden and meditation area. The new amount would be \$127K - Advancing 3-0
- Habitat for Humanity of Topeka - Advancing 3-0
- Community Resource Council (CRC) (Internet hubs) - Advancing 3-0
- Community Resource Council (CRC) (affordable housing) - Advancing 3-0
- [Video minute mark 1:06:05] Shawnee County Medical Health Access - Chair declined based on premise that majority of funding is focused on salaries and not actual services. He would like to see Shawnee County support this endeavor. Committee member Valdivia-Alcala stated she would move it forward but perhaps by half. Chair stated he would move it forward with the \$20K, with an asterisk to cut it to \$10K if needed for reduction of total allotments purposes. - Advancing 3-0
- Prevention and Resiliency Services - Advancing 3-0
- Doorstep Inc - Advancing 3-0
- Stormont Vail (Building Blocks child care facility and adding second facility) - Not advancing 3-0
- City of Topeka Housing Services (Impact Avenues) - Not advancing 3-0
- SENT - Advancing 3-0

- Child Care Aware - Chair noted questions were not answered in detail. Second requirement was that dollars have to be spent to service Topeka, answer could not guarantee that these dollars would go toward Topeka only. - Advancing 3-0
- First Congregational Church - Committee requested additional breakdown of funding. - Advancing 3-0
- Salvation Army of Topeka - Advancing 3-0
- Florence Crittenton - Advancing 3-0
- Breakthrough House (rehab/repair) - Advancing 3-0
- Breakthrough House (residential program for mental health) - Advancing 3-0
- Love Fellowship Church - Advancing 3-0
- Valeo Behavioral Health - Advancing 3-0
- Fellowship and Faith Ministry - Not advancing 3-0; Agency did not respond to questions sent following the first round of reviews.
- Topeka Center for Peace & Justice - Advancing 3-0
- ArtsConnect (art therapy for 1st responders) - Advancing 3-0
- ArtsConnect (rebel song academy at Boys & Girls Club) - Not advancing 2-1
- [Video minute mark 2:12:40] Catholic Charities of NE Kansas - Advancing 3-0
- SLI - Advancing 3-0, reduction of energy efficient lighting component.
- Central Topeka Oasis Group - Advancing 3-0
- Gil Carter Initiative (LMI assistance) - Advancing 3-0
- Gil Carter Initiative (healthy food accessibility) - Not advancing 3-0
- It Takes a Village - Advancing 3-0
- Community Action - Advancing 3-0
- Papan's Landing Senior Center - Advancing 3-0
- YWCA Center for Safety and Empowerment (day center for trafficked victims) - Advancing 3-0
- YWCA Center for Safety & Empowerment (facility repairs, HVAC replacement) - Advancing 3-0
- Stay Calm - Advancing 3-0
- Boys & Girls Club of Topeka (new busses) - Advancing 3-0
- Boys & Girls Club of Topeka (staff recruitment & retention) - Advancing 3-0
- Community First/International Academy - Advancing 3-0
- El Centro de Servicios para Hispanos - Advancing 3-0
- TARC - Advancing 3-0
- Family Service & Guidance Center - Advancing 3-0
- Housing & Credit Counseling (HCCI) - Advancing 3-0
- HEARTS - Advancing 3-0

4) Other Items

No additional items.

5) Adjourn

The next meeting will be October 28, 2022. Chairman Duncan adjourned the meeting at 1:12pm.

The video of this meeting can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/CD8izb53c5w>