



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: August 19, 2022

Time: 3:00pm

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: Interim City Manager Bill Cochran, Stephen Wade (Finance Director), Kalea Pauole (Grants Manager), Amanda Stanley (City Attorney),

1) Call to Order

Chairman Duncan called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. Committee members introduced themselves.

2) Approve Minutes from July 25, 2022 Meeting

Chairman Duncan made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee member Valdivia-Alcala seconded. Minutes approved 3-0-0.

3) Initial ARPA Application Review

Chairman Duncan made a few opening comments, noting that this meeting serves as the beginning of a complicated process. The ARPA applications received have highlighted something that is already well known, which is that there are many good people and organizations in this community that are working daily to better the lives of others, and to make Topeka a place that takes care of people. The \$10M that is available is a significant amount of money that will make a difference, however is also not enough to meet all of the needs is. The City received 85 applications, with requests totaling just more than \$34M. Every application received is an effort to address a need in the community, ranging from mental health to homelessness, from senior care to economic development, and to just simple, everyday necessities. This Committee thanks everyone who has applied, and more importantly thanks each applicant for the work they do and the positive impact they have in Topeka. The simple reality is that the City cannot fund everyone. Not receiving funding through this process does not mean a project is not valuable to the community. It only means determinations have had to be made based on where the Committee believes the dollars can have the most

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impact today, and can continue to have an impact well past tomorrow. The Governing Body, as a whole, did not pass any official guidelines or rules to the Committee to follow for this process. Through a process of several meetings, however, members of the Governing Body did provide general direction as to what they would like the Committee to prioritize. For the City Council and Mayor, the direction is to prioritize projects that address chronic community problems and social service needs over economic development and private business interests. This also means the Committee will do its best to select projects that have long-term sustainability and long lasting impacts within the community. Chairman Duncan also stated the Committee will do its best to honor the stated goals of their colleagues while also using their own collective judgement to make the best decisions to their ability.

Chairman Duncan stated that today, the Committee would be making one of two decisions for each project. That is whether an application moves forward or does not move forward. If an application does not move forward, it means the Committee has determined that the application will not be recommended for funding. If the application moves forward, it does not mean a project is being approved for funding. It does mean the Committee is looking for additional information before a final determination is made. That information will include the following from applicants:

- Organizational structure chart
- Specific project budget
- Any answers to any additional questions asked by members of the Committee

Chairman Duncan reviewed the timeline for that process. Following the conclusion of this meeting, members of the Committee will have until August 26th to submit questions to the Chair and Staff. Those questions will be sent to applicants on Monday, August 29th along with the request for additional information. Applicants will have until September 9th to provide all follow-up information. The following information will be made available to the Committee by Staff on Monday, September 12th. Committee members will have two weeks to review the information before the next scheduled meeting, Friday, September 23rd. If possible, it is the goal of the Committee to make final recommendations on September 23rd, however if additional information is needed by the Committee members, or if the Committee feels it needs more time to deliberate, then they will. This process will not be hurried just for the sake of getting it over with. If the Committee needs more time, they will plan to continue discussions and possibly make final determinations at the scheduled meeting in October. Upon

completion of the process, a final recommendation will be forwarded to the Governing Body for final approval. These recommendations are only final by vote of the full Governing Body. Applicants and the public will have, at that time, an opportunity to speak to other Council members about these recommendations before any vote is taken. Today, public comment will be offered at the end of the meeting. The same rules will apply for public comment at this meeting as are expected for the Governing Body meetings. Public Comment will not be offered after each application, but only following the review of all 85 applications. If the Committee has a disagreement over a project or discussion on whether a project should or should not move forward, a vote will be taken with a 2-1 majority being the final decision on that application. With that, he hoped the above comments laid out the process in a clear way for people to know where the Committee is going, at this point. He opened the floor to comments from the other Committee members.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá thanked everyone who was watching the meeting or were in attendance. She asked anyone who considered themselves to be a praying person to pray for grace, for the Committee, and intentionality. And that as much as possible, to remove politics from the process, in order to allow the focus to be placed on where the true need is, and the agencies that will best serve that need. She noted that one of the things she was going to be focusing on was the social determinants of health, which are economic stability, education access & quality, healthcare access & quality, neighborhood & built environment and social & community context. The other thing she wanted to be very vocal on, is that she will be looking at the applications from a perspective of racism as a public health crisis in the black and brown community. She stated there is so much need, after looking at the applications, and it begs a deeper question about identifying the systemic issues that are causing these needs to increase rather than decrease. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá stated that she understood this setting was not the place for that, but begged the organizations to dig deeper and search for understanding what the systemic issues are and to be brave enough to come forward with those systemic issues to the Committee/Council members. Topeka is a small community, an intimate community, and as such has to start dealing with it. She feels that whatever challenges lay ahead, the community has to be prepared for them, as a collective. She will be looking at issues that the Council identified, as well as things such as elder care, child care, affordable housing, mental health, digital needs, neighborhood programs, job training, food insecurity, living wage, homelessness, education. She echoed that no promises

could be made, but that all the Committee could do is move forward with intention and hard work.

Committee member Naeger reminded everyone that this is the first, and hopefully last, time the task to distribute American Rescue Plan Act dollars due to a pandemic. She noted that during her review of applications, she noticed multiple agencies that had similar mission statements. She encouraged organizations to reach out to other organizations within the community to see if there could be ways to work together if their mission was similar. She thanked everyone who spent time putting their applications together, the volunteers who help these organizations support their mission, and the anticipated patience shown to the Committee through this vetting process.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá commented on the large number of religious organizations and asked Finance Director Stephen Wade to comment on information he found related to the use of these dollars and how such agencies could apply. Director Wade stated it was the Staff's interpretation that the Governing Body has chosen to go the route of revenue replacement and lost revenue in the way that the City has sought ARPA funds, that some of the restrictions that would normally be placed on religious applications are removed. However, upon his review of the original Federal ARPA restrictions tied to this, it states "the funds cannot be utilized for any religious purpose, including but not limited to: religious worship, instruction and evangelism. Funding may only be used to support non-religious social services". Director Wade stated Staff would be seeking full clarification with the City Attorney, but he believes this to be the accurate interpretation. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá stated she wanted to be clear that one thing she is committed to is tracking results and efficacy, and how the monies were spent, etc.

Review of Applications:

- Topeka LULAC - Advancing 3-0
- Topeka North Outreach - Advancing 3-0
- East Topeka Sr. Center - Advancing 3-0
- IBSA - Advancing 3-0
- Topeka Performing Arts Center - Not advancing 3-0
- Patterson Family Child Care - Advancing 3-0
- Team Blake Foundation - Not advancing 3-0
- Community Center @ Ripley Park - Advancing 3-0

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- Positive Connections - Advancing 3-0
- Most Pure Heart of Mary - Not advancing 3-0
- [Video minute mark 22:06] Mirror, Inc - Advancing 3-0
- Trinity Presbyterian Church - Not advancing 3-0
- Total Fitness Body Zone - Not advancing 3-0
- Cornerstone of Topeka (transitional housing duplex) - Advancing 3-0
- Kansas Children's Discovery Center - Not advancing 3-0
- Strengthening & Equipping Neighborhoods Together (SENT) (Freemont Hill Housing Project) - Not advancing 3-0
- Topeka Collegiate School - Not advancing 2-0-1 (Chair abstained)
- Jayhawk Theatre - Not advancing 3-0
- Open Arms Outreach Ministries - Advancing 3-0
- Topeka Habitat for Humanity - Advancing 3-0
- [Video minute mark 32:10] Community Resources Council (CRC) (broadband hubs within neighborhoods) - Advancing 3-0
- Fellowship Hi-Crest - Not advancing 3-0
- Shawnee County Medical Society Health Access - Advancing 3-0
- Prevention & Resiliency Services - Advancing 3-0
- Doorstep, Inc - Advancing 3-0
- Stormont Vail Building Blocks Child Care facility - Advancing 3-0
- City of Topeka Housing Impact Avenues - Advancing 3-0
- Positive Connections - Advancing 3-0
- SENT (mental health services for Hi-Crest) - Advancing 3-0
- Child Care Aware - Advancing 3-0
- [Video minute mark 44:10] First Congregational Church - Advancing 3-0
- Salvation Army of Topeka - Advancing 3-0
- Florence Crittenden Services of Topeka - Advancing 3-0
- Topeka Renovation - Not advancing 3-0
- Breakthrough House (payee program for those in financial crisis) - Advancing 3-0
- Breakthrough House (residential program for mental health) - Advancing 3-0
- Crayola Kids Child Care - Not advancing (outside of City limits) 3-0
- Love Fellowship Church - Advancing 3-0
- Valeo (assertive community treatment mental health program) - Advancing 3-0
- [Video minute mark 52:20] Cornerstone of Topeka (construction of affordable housing duplexes) - Advancing 3-0
- Cornerstone of Topeka (construction of three single-family affordable homes) - Advancing 3-0

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- Fellowship & Faith Ministry - Advancing 3-0
- ArtsConnect (art healing for veterans and first responders) - Advancing 3-0
- Topeka Center for Peace & Justice - Advancing 3-0
- Smith Properties & Family Services - Not advancing 3-0
- ArtsConnect (afterschool songwriting @ Boys & Girls Club) - Advancing 3-0
- Andel Forbes Enterprises - Not advancing 3-0
- Catholic Charities of NE Kansas - Advancing 3-0
- [Video minute mark 1:02:05] SLI - Advancing 3-0
- Macintosh Law Offices - Not advancing 3-0
- Community Resources Council (CRC) (more affordable housing for LMI individuals) - Advancing 3-0
- Central Topeka Oasis Group - Advancing 3-0
- Gil Carter Initiative (healthy food accessibility and child obesity) - Advancing 3-0
- Ad Astra Per Aspera Counseling (equine therapy) - Not advancing 3-0
- It Takes a Village (performing arts program) - Advancing 3-0
- Launch & Thrive Corporation - Not advancing 3-0
- Downtown Topeka, Inc - Not advancing 3-0
- Watchguard Ministries CDC, Inc - Not advancing 3-0
- [Video minute mark 1:13:50] Battle Tested Armored Ministries - Not advancing 3-0
- Working Men of Christ - Not advancing 3-0
- Gil Carter Initiative (food & clothing assistance for LMI) - Advancing 3-0
- Wonderful Works - Not advancing 3-0
- Community Action (rental assistance, food, etc) - Advancing 3-0
- Papan's Landing Senior Center - Advancing 3-0
- Ad Astra Logistics - Not advancing 3-0
- Ad Astra Per Aspera Counseling (summer program for at-risk youth) - Not advancing 3-0
- YWCA (day center for traffic victims) - Advancing 3-0
- Topeka Opportunity Fund - Not advancing 3-0
- [Video minute mark 1:22:05] Stay Calm - Advancing 3-0
- Boys & Girls Club (busses) - Advancing 3-0
- Boys & Girls Club (staff recruitment) - Advancing 3-0
- Boys & Girls Club (boiler/hot water tank replacement) - Not advancing 3-0
- Valeo Behavioral Health (expanding access to homeless) - Not advancing 3-0
- YWCA (facility repairs and HVAC replacement) - Advancing 3-0
- El Centro (immigrant assistance clinic) - Advancing 3-0

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- Community First International Academy - Advancing 3-0
- Tara D. Wallace, LLC - Not advancing 3-0
- TARC (feeding clinic) - Advancing 3-0
- [Video minute mark 1:37:05] Family Service & Guidance (new youth crisis/recovery center) - Advancing 3-0
- Washburn University - Not advancing 3-0
- International Public Policy Institute - Not advancing 3-0
- Housing & Credit Counseling, Inc (HCCI) (tenant/landlord counseling & eviction prevention) - Advancing 3-0
- Vita Ministry Inc - Not advancing (outside of city limits) 3-0
- H.E.A.R.T.S. - Advancing 3-0

Committee member Comments during application review:

During the review process, the following comments were made by Committee members regarding the second review.

[Video minute mark 22:37] Chairman Duncan noticed that some applicants have requested several items within their application, and he would like to have further conversation with some of the groups at a subsequent meeting about the possibility of reduction in the amount requests. That, if the Committee is not comfortable on agreeing to funding the full requested amount, if there would be some ability to discuss needs within the needs. Committee member Naeger agreed, and stated she would want to request a breakdown of exactly what the costs are, to allow the Committee the ability to figure out where the best places to allocate funding toward would be from a strategic perspective. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá also agreed, and stated her rationale is that due to these being tight funds, finding any way to shave some of the funds following conversations with the applicant, could ensure that some funding was provided.

[Video minute mark 53:53] Following approval of moving program application from Fellowship & Faith Ministry forward to the next round, Chairman Duncan stated that this was an opportunity to point out that one of the criteria expressed by the Governing Body was, that when it comes to Capital Improvement projects, would the Body want to fund those types of improvements. He explained that the discussion clearly laid out that if there was a program that has a mission, and helping with that Capital Improvement takes the burden off of them having to fundraise to fix that equipment and lets them continue with the program, then yes, make a consideration to review that program. Committee member Naeger

added that she felt there was a difference between some of the other Capital Improvements that have been proposed, and this one. This is for food assistance, and they have to have cold storage in order to service that program.

[Video minute mark 1:42:23] Following the initial application review process, Chairman Duncan directed Staff to provide the Committee with the updated spreadsheet with the applications that are moving forward, by Monday.

Public Comments: [Video minute mark 1:43:00]

Lazone Grays, IBSA, provided public input. He voiced support for the Impact Avenues program and clarified that it was different from the Mobile Access Partnership (MAP) program. He also asked that consideration be made to add any reserve funds from the City's ARPA award to the non-profits, if any remained. He suggested the Committee and Staff review some of the requirements for infrastructure projects, as it seemed to him that many of the things being talked about were infrastructure-related. He suggested the Committee keep a program's sustainability in mind when moving to the next round of questioning.

Jill Rice, SENT, provided clarification to state that Fellowship Hi-Crest is a completely separate entity and program from SENT.

Sandra Lassiter, thanked the Committee and Staff for the opportunity to apply for the ARPA funds. She felt this was an opportunity for her agency to be able to make a greater difference in the community.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá stated that the minority community (the black and brown community) present in the meeting, has shown up in a large capacity. She stated that, at the City Council level, there is often remiss to talk about racism as a public health crisis. That many times, the only time it is mentioned is when something good has happened, and although that is good and needed too, that this type of review and funding process is where the rubber meets the road, and to find out where the most vital needs and empty spaces remain within the community.

Chairman Duncan reminded applicants that additional information should be received by applicants who are moving forward via email on Monday, August 22nd. He encouraged people to check spam boxes or contact himself or City Staff if they believe they had missed the email.

4) Other Items

No additional items.

5) Adjourn

Chairman Duncan adjourned the meeting at 5:02pm.

The video of this meeting can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/WwIQc5F3iRE>