



# CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

## POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL  
City Hall, 215 SE 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 255  
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Date: May 20, 2022

Time: 10:00am

Location: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room; 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)

### 1) Call to Order

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

### 2) Approve Minutes from March 1, 2022 Meeting

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

### 3) Review of ARPA Funding Grant Application Templates

Chairman Duncan led discussion and review of the City's ARPA Funding Grant draft application for distributing funds allocated toward social service agencies.

#### Draft Application

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá inquired where applicants will be able to find the application, once made live. Kalea Pauole responded there would be a location on the City's website that would allow for applicants to complete the form through a fillable PDF, or other format, and that hard copies could be made available upon request as well.

Chairman Duncan commented about the character limit, and felt a 3,000 character limit was sufficient for most of the sections of the application. He brought up question 3 under Section II, which states "Please describe how receiving these funds will benefit the community". There has been a recommendation to the language to state "Please describe how receiving the funds will provide long-term benefits for citizens of the community". He sought input from the committee.

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Minutes Taken: May 20, 2022

Minutes Approved: July 25, 2022

Committee member Naeger agreed and stated she felt this helped to highlight that the goal is to amplify the effect of these dollars rather than them going out in a one-time disbursement to other people.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá stated she appreciated the language that was added to page 2 (of draft application) under Section III which states “Please discuss whether this service is duplicated by another agency, and if so, address why this duplication is justified based on community need”. She cautioned to anticipate some of the feedback that applicants may provide and noted the City should stay firm on requesting that information. Sometimes asking a question like this may allow agencies to look outside of their own bubble to see what duplicate services other agencies may already offer and if they can work together to make a greater impact for the community. The committee would like to increase the character limit on this section from 3000 characters to 5000.

Committee member Naeger appreciated the information found under Section IV “Beneficiary Information”, as having information about the demographics which will be served by the agencies will be important.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá brought up concern about the LMI population, and the affordable housing needs. She inquired if there would be a way to ask about if an agency is using the funding to help with housing needs. Ms. Pauole inquired if it was the desire of the Committee to have an additional question related to housing/rental assistance services offered by an agency on the application. The Committee confirmed, with Chairman Duncan adding that any answer to the question would be acceptable, but would provide some important information regardless.

Chairman Duncan noted that there had not been a formal determination yet as to what group would be overseeing this process. He stated he would be advocating to the Governing Body that the Policy & Finance Committee serve as that oversight board. He reminded that any member of the Governing Body was welcome to attend the Committee meetings and have their thoughts shared. Committee members Valdivia-Alcalá and Naeger agreed.

Chairman Duncan inquired if, in the classification system on the online application, there would be an additional box if applicants were unsure of their Federal IRS classification and perhaps to provide the link where they could look that information up, was already included? And if not, could it be? Ms. Pauole confirmed that she could add that link to the application.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá gave two items which she felt would be important functions to the online application to ensure are in place:

- For applicants to have the ability to save their progress within the application, and come back to it. She noted that this was a request that had come up during the Social Service Grants process, as some agencies get part of an application filled out, and realize they need to find additional information for other questions and she does not want to make them lose their place within their application to have to start over again. Ms. Pauole stated she would find a way to allow for that to happen.
- To have multiple staff assigned to help with answering applicant questions. Many applicants will have questions during the application process, and especially as the deadline approaches, there will be an uptick with communications via phone and email. From what Staff with United Way and the City have said, during the Social Service Grants dispute process, when programs were denied for any particular reason, there were times when it was brought up that applicants had not received a phone call or email back before a deadline. In most of those instances, Staff were able to produce proof of communications that had occurred back to the applicant prior to the deadline.

City Manager Cochran stated that this will be an area that needs to be planned out still. Staff will not be denying applications. He also noted that a piece still left to figure out is how to contact applicants who were denied and to be able to inform them as to the reason(s) for that denial.

Chairman Duncan agreed, and stated that some form of contact “tree” to help answer questions from applicants who had been denied should be in place. He stated he would be drafting that list and would send it to the Committee to confirm, but then would be able to have that piece in place before the application process began.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá noted that for the Changing Our Culture of Property Maintenance, Staff created a Standing Operating Procedures (SOP) guide for the other people who were helping on the phones, who are not as intimately familiar with the program. And she suggested creating something similar for this process.

Chairman Duncan referenced the timeline, he felt a 30-day window would be appropriate for accepting applications, however was also open to a 45-day window if it was more preferable. The target date for reviewing applications will be August. City Manager agreed that a 30-day window to receive applications was appropriate. He stated the prior to the start date, the City would do a big media push to ensure everyone is made aware of the start and end date for applications.

Ms. Paoule inquired if creating a webinar or video tutorial, which could be found on the application website, and may help mitigate some of the questions from applicants and reduce the number of calls made to Staff. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá voiced a strong suggestion to do so. She also suggested that whomever is helping to answer questions, if there will be some portal or program that will allow for all call notes to be documented. She placed emphases on keeping any and all documentation in the chance that it come into question during the dispute process.

### Guidelines Draft

Chairman Duncan stated the list of guidelines were to help guide applicants through the types of programs that would be considered for funding. He noted that although some of these may or may not impact consideration of an application, it should provide basic information for potential applicants toward what the funding can and cannot go toward. Some of the reasons for what funds cannot be used for are Federal stipulations. Chairman Duncan would like to remove/re-word “Wage Payments or salaries” and “Employee recruitment to the organization” from the list of items that funds cannot be used for, as there may be some programming strategies that would be able to qualify for funding and this language may be confusing.

City Manager Cochran inquired if there was clear language that noted this funding was to be a one-time allocation, and not something that would be ongoing? Chairman Duncan confirmed, and noted additional language would be added to state that it is not expected to be short-term, rather a strategic investment to generate long-term outcomes.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá suggested adding elder care that is not within the homes and non-drug/alcohol treatment mental health programs to the list of qualifying programs.

Chairman Duncan reiterated that this funding is not for paying off personal agency loans. He also noted there had been some discussion in the Governing Body workshops about whether to just disqualify applicants if they had received other COVID relief funds, however he noted two organizations made valid points that they serve as a hub for the group and the funds get sent to other agencies, so he felt it should be included as a question, however not be an automatic disqualification.

### Draft Timeline

Chairman Duncan noted that this committee would likely be tasked with overseeing this process. And that he does not want to rush the process, however would like to keep it moving steadily along. Ms. Paoule noted she would be able to

make the changes to the draft application and can get them to the Committee later today.

Chairman Duncan would like to have the Committee members review the draft documents once amended, but next Monday 5/23, and will then be placed on the Committee's webpage online for people to begin looking at and providing any additional feedback that they may have.

Committee member Naeger requested an amendment to the Option One, that on the "additional information may be requested of the applicants at this time" to instead state "additional information will be requested..." to provide that clarifying language. Chairman Duncan agreed and noted that change.

MOTION: To move the draft application packet to the Governing Body for consideration. Committee member Valdivia- Alcalá made a motion to approve. Committee member Naeger seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

#### **4) Other Items**

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá would like to know if the Committee would consider having future discussions on Built for Zero. Chairman Duncan stated he would be happy to bring those discussions to the Committee, as he feels it is an issue the City needs to begin looking at. Chairman Duncan noted the residency requirement topic was also going to be coming before the Committee in July, and felt that it may be a good time to bring that conversation to the Committee.

Finance Director Stephen Wade noted two staff members have been tasked with researching the Built for Zero program, and would be able to bring that information to the Committee.

#### **5) Adjourn**

Chairman Duncan adjourned the meeting at 10:48am.

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