



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

SOCIAL SERVICE GRANTS COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: November 22, 2019

Time: 9:00am

Location: Holliday Building 1st Floor Conference Room; 620 SE Madison

Committee members present: Councilmembers Jeff Coen (Chair), Michael Padilla, Councilmember Michael Lesser

City staff present: Brent Trout (City Manager), Sasha Haehn (Director of Neighborhood Relations), Corrie Wright (DNR), Rachelle Vega-Retana (DNR),

1) Call to Order

Councilmember Coen called the meeting to order at 9:00am. Councilmember Padilla arrived at 9:02am.

2) Approval of the September 19, 2019 Minutes

Councilmember Lesser made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilmember Coen seconded. Minutes approved 2:0.

3) Discussion: Outsourcing Grant Process

Sasha Haehn provided information pertaining to the process. Staff contacted different agencies who perform the type of service the committee is inquiring about. A soft inquiry was made regarding pricing. It will be difficult to get price quotes without first issuing an RFP. Information was provided of cost estimation for Staff's time. Ms. Haehn stated there would likely still be some difficulty for the full Governing Body to move toward a different way of doing things. Staff is supportive of whatever direction the Governing Body chooses to do, whether that is to stay in-house, or to outsource portions of the grant process. Ms. Haehn stated that regardless of the final decision, the grant program would still belong to the City.

Councilmember Lesser inquired about Staff's recommendation in regard to keeping the process in house, or submitting it out to RFP. Ms. Haehn noted that the County outsources the process, and that it is common for other cities to do the same. The small community that she came from also outsourced the process.

Councilmember Lesser made a motion to move this discussion forward to the Governing Body.

Councilmember Coen inquired if there were any specific recommendations on who a contractor or how the process would work, or simply generally speaking.

Councilmember Lesser stated he would like to have the information that has been presented to the committee be sent to the Governing Body to allow Staff to move forward with sending out an RFP.

Ms. Haehn stated a decision on either side was time critical. Either the RFP process and going over directives with an outside vendor needs to get under way, or Staff needs to begin their work on the process as it has been done in previous years. The cycle begins in early February.

Councilmember Coen felt he would like to have the committee make an action now to move forward.

Councilmember Padilla seconded Councilmember Lesser's motion, and had some follow-up questions for Staff.

Councilmember Padilla inquired if, during Ms. Haehn's initial evaluation, the outside agencies have the capacity to perform this proposed function without any issues. Ms. Haehn stated there are two agencies, and Ms. Haehn is confident they would both be able to complete the required tasks. The first agency is currently performing a similar task for Shawnee County. The second agency, United Way, would be another outside agency that would be interested in taking this. There is a third agency that has stated they would not want to be considered for the task.

Councilmember Coen inquired if this item would be added to a December agenda or would need to wait for the new year.

Brent Trout, City Manager, responded that this item might be able to be added to the December 17th agenda. All of the documentation has been provided and could easily be added to the agenda item.

Councilmember Coen inquired if there was any public comment. No speakers came forward.

Christina Valdivia-Alcalá, Councilmember-elect District 2, stated she did not feel outsourcing this process with the use of tax dollars was wise. Many of the District 2 constituents have voiced concerns about being on fixed incomes and that using budget dollars and raising taxes in other areas would not be beneficial for those community members.

Councilmember Coen led a final vote on the motion to move the item forward to the December 17th Governing Body agenda. Motion passes 3:0.

4) Update Priorities

Corrie Wright, Division Director of Housing, stated the priorities have not changed much from the previous year. Ms. Wright stated that the current dollar amount found at the bottom of the page are the current budget amount for 2020, however can be discussed if the committee would like to do so. Councilmember Lesser inquired if there was a ranking of the priorities, or only a list of the priorities. Ms. Wright stated that there is no rank to the order. This sheet only has the dollar amounts and that all agencies would be given the same priority at this time.

Councilmember Coen inquired if there was any public comment on this matter prior to taking action. Ms. Haehn stated the agencies who had gone through the process for the current year would have seen this priority sheet, however noted the year had been changed, and the dollar amount has changed as it is based on the 2019 funding totals rather than the 2020 funding totals. Ms. Haehn stated she could have copies made and distribute them to the audience.

Councilmember Coen initiated a short intermission to allow for the copies to be made and distributed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathy Votaw, LULAC - Would like to see the area titled "Activities" to be more clearly defined. Ms. Haehn stated that the language could be modified to be more specific. Ms. Votaw stated she felt an activity is much different from programming. Something as simple as coming into the center and eating a cookie could be an activity, however something such as participating in a nutrition class would be more involved and would have a greater impact on the community. Councilmember Lesser stated that the sheet says "Senior citizen neighborhood-based programming to include - meals, activities, transportation". Ms. Votaw stated that on the grant application, there is a difference between the two. Councilmember Lesser restated his comment. Councilmember Padilla added that detailed comments could be added to the grant application.

Karen Streeter, SLI - Inquired about the process for how new organization applications are taken into consideration to become eligible to receive funding. Ms. Haehn stated that the "new untested programs" section is fairly new and was added due to a conversation by a previous committee regarding agencies applying for funding with new programs without having a track record. The concern was that without the background, the new program would be able to apply for the same amount of funding as established programs. Any funding left over from what was provided to the established programs would be used toward funding those new untested programs. Ms. Streeter inquired about the definition of untested program, as SLI has been serving in the community for 48 years. Ms.

Haehn responded that an untested program is one that the City has not funded before. New program applications are considered, however in year one, the program is considered for funding at a lower amount. In years following, that cap is removed and the program is no longer considered to be untested.

Ms. Haehn stated that the current process has evolved to be more objective as a score-based selection system that is solely based on the merits of the application and the performance of the program within the community rather than the subjective methods that had been used in years prior. As the scoring system was changed, the agencies were reacting by increasing the dollar amounts requested for their programs. During that discussion, the committee decided to put a funding cap into place. There were two agencies have annually been deemed, by the committee, as vital to the service of at-risk populations. These agencies are the only two in the community that provide the specific service to the populations they are serving. The Shawnee Medical Society provides medical care and prescription assistance for individuals who are in the “donut-hole” of insurance...they are not making enough money to afford their own insurance but do not qualify for, or work for an employer who does not offer insurance coverage. They have no other options for insurance. This provides medical care for chronic medical care, such as insulin for diabetics. Positive Connections provide services to individuals in the community who are living with HIV and AIDS. Ms. Haehn stated that the agencies present to the committee about their programs. If the committee would be interested in hearing this testimony, Staff would get it scheduled.

Councilmember Lesser stated he would find it helpful to hear from those agencies, however he would prefer to hold on that meeting until the new committee has been selected in 2020. Ms. Haehn stated that it would be strongly recommended to have the priorities finalized before the December 17th Governing Body meeting as it will be a piece of the process regardless of if a decision to outsource is approved or not.

Ms. Valdivia-Alcalá inquired how long the Medical Society and Positive Connections have been funded by the City. Ms. Haehn stated those agencies are grandfathered, however they still have to submit a grant application and go through the same process as the other agencies. The only difference is that those agencies are allowed to ask (and potentially received) a higher cap for funding. However, the dollars received are tied to the score they receive.

Councilmember Coen inquired if either of the other committee members have served or currently serve on the Medical Society board. Neither Councilmember Lesser or Councilmember Padilla have.

Councilmember Lesser made a motion to move the priorities forward as presented to the Governing Body. Councilmember Coen seconded. Motion passed 3:0.

5) Other Items Before the Committee

None

6) Adjourn

Councilmember Coen adjourned the meeting at 9:41am.

Meeting video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/EzvEUC3lf4>