



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

SOCIAL SERVICE GRANTS COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
City Hall, 215 SE 7th Street, Suite 255
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Date: June 5, 2019

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: Classroom A; Law Enforcement Center 320 S. Kansas Ave Ste 100

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

City staff present: Sasha Haehn (Director of Neighborhood Relations), Corrie
Wright (DNR), Rachele Vega-Retana (DNR)

1) Call to Order

Councilmember Coen called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

2) Approve Minutes from May 29, 2019 Meeting

Sasha Haehn, Neighborhood Relations, noted a correction to the minutes was necessary to change all approved motions from 2:0:1 to 2:0, as Councilmember Coen was absent, and not able to abstain from voting.

Councilmember Lesser made a motion accept the minutes as amended from May 29th. Councilmember Coen seconded the motion. Motion carried 2:0.

3) Input from Agencies on Process

- Debbie Guilbault, Positive Connections - Noted she thinks the entire process is much improved from previous years. Ms. Guilbault noted during the process of reporting, not all of the receipts have been able to go through, however staff has been responsive and helpful with this. Ms. Guilbault's suggestion to the committee is to focus on how Outcomes can be improved; noting that currently, if all outcomes are met you get ten points, meeting half of the outcomes generates five points, and meeting less than that receives zero points. Ms. Guilbault inquired if it would be possible to round the scores up, or pro-rate the percentage of funding received. Ms. Guilbault noted she would hate to see people lower their projections due to fear of being docked on scoring. Ms. Guilbault likes EImpact and appreciates the meeting rather than four minutes before the City Council.
- Corrie Wright noted that staff did conduct research based on Board Composition regarding the quorum and the score sheet. Staff felt that the

suggestion was relevant and will make the change to include boards meeting quorum 65% attendance rather than a percentage of the total board.

- Councilmember Lesser noted speaking to Jessica Lehnerr with United Way who used same system and might be someone who could offer feedback to City staff with regard to the review process.

4) Discussion: Outsourcing Grant Process

Councilmember Coen introduced the idea of contracting this process out to another agency to keep the politics out of this process.

Sasha Haehn noted that staff performed some research into the cost to administer this process and the amount came to \$52,600 based on employees and their pay rates. This figure did not include Financial Department staff or the Council Assistant's time, so the figure would be higher. Ms. Haehn noted staff would be ok with sourcing this process out.

Councilmember Lesser inquired as to the comparative price to sub-contract the process out. Ms. Haehn noted that she had not spoken to United Way or the Topeka Community Foundation to get specific numbers from them, but it was her understanding that both agencies would charge a percentage of the total dollar amount being vested with them. Ms. Wright replied she thought it would cost less than \$52,000. Ms. Haehn stated staff would find that information out and share with the committee at the next meeting.

Ms. Haehn noted that grant applicants have made suggestions to find a way to keep the process consistent would be favorable of outsourcing the application review process. Ms. Haehn noted that the agencies in attendance at the meeting may be able to provide input. Councilmember Coen invited feedback from the attendees.

- Mary Thomas, Community Resources Council (CRC) - Ms. Thomas noted that CRC has managed the grant process for the Shawnee County Commission for many years. The CRC does not take a percentage, rather is a line item on the County's budget to receive a flat negotiated rate. The CRC would be another way to go about the outsourcing process. Ms. Thomas noted that the volunteer review committee members are a diverse group, and serve a staggered two-year term which retains continuity but also allows new volunteers to come in. Ms. Thomas walked through the process as the County uses CRC and noted that CRC staff has no influence on the process.
- Jean Stueve, Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging - Ms. Stueve appreciates accountabilities using the current process. As a tax payer, Ms. Stueve feels it is

necessary for the follow up when City money is being spent, and Ms. Stueve appreciates this process. Retaining this aspect of the process is important to Ms. Stueve, and she would like to see it continued regardless of if the City Staff continues to oversee this process or if it is outsourced.

- Tawny Stottlemire, Community Action - Ms. Stottlemire appreciates the suggestion of outsourcing the grant process to keep the staff and committee members out of the position of difficult positions. Additionally, with an independent review of the material, information and decision making that comes as a recommendation level would be something that would benefit all parties. Ms. Stottlemire encouraged having a more open review process, noting that with the current system, the review team does not receive information regarding outcomes in the grant from the grantee. That process is performed by the City staff and follows a heavily defined set of rules and regulations which does not allow for any deviations.
- Dawn McWilliams, Boys & Girls Club Topeka - Ms. McWilliams voiced support of outsourcing the process. Ms. McWilliams commented that United Way and CRC has received funding from the City in past years. Ms. McWilliams and others she spoke to would feel more comfortable outsourcing to the Topeka Community Foundation, as they have not received past or current funding from the City. Ms. McWilliams also introduced the idea of multi-year funding as a way to have better provide sustainable change in the community. Ms. Haehn noted she would speak with the Legal Department to see if this might be something that could happen, but expressed concern that due to the City not having a multi-year budget, there may be an issue with committing to a multi-year funding process. Councilmember Lesser noted he appreciated the multi-year funding suggestion. Ms. McWilliams also addressed a concern with the Board Diversity section of the application process noting that it is difficult on a national level for Boards to have a large percentage of diversity on a board.

Councilmember Coen inquired as to when the requirement for board diversity occurred. Ms. Wright and Ms. Haehn were not entirely sure, but thought perhaps four to five years ago. Committee members and staff discussed options for the board diversity requirements. Ms. Wright noted that 15% of the board is required to be made up of racial or ethnic minorities.

- Karla Hedquist, Shawnee County HealthAccess - Ms. Hedquist appreciates EcImpact and feels that a lot of the political nature has been removed with the introduction of independent grant reviewers. However, Ms. Hedquist also appreciated the idea of outsourcing the process altogether. Ms. Hedquist

inquired about the possibility of loss of funding to social services through having an independent agency review the social service grants. With regard to the topic of board diversity, Ms. Hedquist noted that in the case of HealthAccess, the twenty-member oversight committee is composed of individuals who have been chosen by their place of employment to serve on the oversight committee.

5) Review Draft 2021 Calendar

Councilmember Lesser inquired if the decision to outsource the process was approved, what the timeline would be. Ms. Wright noted the possibility could occur in 2021. Additionally, staff could reach out to the agencies which might perform the outsourcing process prior to the next committee meeting.

Councilmember Lesser noted he would be making a suggestion to the full Governing Body to request that at least one committee member carry-over to assist with continuity from year to year.

- Dawn McWilliams spoke to the committee and noted that in past years, when there has been one carry-over committee member and two new members, it was still difficult to keep continuity. However, in the years of two carry-over members and one new committee member, the process was able to run more smoothly.
- Karla Hedquist noted having some of the agencies report to the Governing Body during meetings throughout the year to provide an update on their agency and the program they are doing. Councilmembers Lesser and Coen appreciated this suggestion. Ms. Haehn noted this would be something that could be arranged to be presented with the recommendation that is sent to the Governing Body.
- Tawny Stottlemire noted that some of the agencies would be willing to sit with committee members in a round-table type of discussion to work through suggestions and ideas on how to make the process better. Councilmember Coen inquired with staff as to what this might look like. Councilmember Lesser would like to move forward with setting up this type of open meeting. Ms. Haehn noted the suggested type of meeting would be something that could be done. Additionally, information gathered at the meetings would be something the committee could include in their report to the Governing Body.

Councilmember Lesser noted he did not feel comfortable reviewing the calendar as presented at the June 5th meeting. Councilmember Lesser noted he would like to make suggestions to the calendar. Ms. Haehn inquired if an RFP could be developed now and that at the round-table discussion, it could be reviewed rather than beginning the process at the new grant cycle.

There was discussion between Councilmember Lesser and staff regarding the calendar and the timeline. Ms. Wright noted that the only thing in the RFP that agencies might want to review is the score sheet, noting that the language in the remainder of the RFP is standard language. Ms. Stottlemire expressed that she felt that there were multiple areas of the RFP that would be helpful to receive input by the agencies.

Ms. Stottlemire addressed the committee to suggest that the agencies have input on the RFP.

6) Review Priorities Sheet

Ms. Wright noted that there were no changes made to the priorities sheet with the exception of changing the dates.

Councilmember Coen inquired with the agencies as to if there were any comments regarding the Priorities Sheet. There were no public comments. Councilmember Lesser stated that he did not have any additional feedback. Councilmember Coen reviewed the priorities sheet.

Debra Dawkins, East Topeka Senior Center - Noted that all three Senior Centers in Topeka were denied funding for 2020. Ms. Dawkins is of the opinion that the smaller senior centers are at a disadvantage to some of the larger agencies in the grant writing arena. In Ms. Dawkin's experience, the process for Shawnee County has been less stressful than the City's process.

Councilmember Coen noted a disadvantage for smaller operations to larger ones were explained by Ms. Dawkins. Ms. Haehn noted that all of the agencies are invited to attend an annual training process with Sheena Schmidt, the City's Senior Grant Administrator, as well as any ongoing support by agencies as needed.

Councilmember Lesser inquired as to what the agency participation in the workshops were. Ms. Haehn replied she would bring that information to the next meeting.

Councilmember Coen made a motion to approve the priorities sheet. Councilmember Lesser seconded the motion. Motion to approve the grant priorities sheet passed 2:0.

7) Other Items Before the Committee

Councilmember Lesser inquired when the committee should meet next. Ms. Haehn stated that thirty days would be acceptable. Within that time, staff will reach out

to the grant making agencies regarding the cost of outsourcing that process, discuss calendar changes with agencies, find out if the grant making agencies would want to participate in the RFP and if the score sheet would need to be changed, and staff would bring a calendar to the committee listing out the process and timeline for the new process.

Councilmember Coen inquired if there were any other grant making agencies that were known. Staff would look into that information and provide an answer at the next meeting.

Councilmember Lesser stated that he would prefer to meet in forty-five days, around July 15th.

8) Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned.

Meeting video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/Wc2K1iHpz3E>