



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

SOCIAL SERVICE GRANTS COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: July 16, 2019

Time: 9:00 a.m.

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

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

City staff present: City Manager Brent Trout, Deputy City Manager Douglas Gerber, 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 9:00am.

2) Approve Minutes from June 5, 2019 Meeting

Councilmember Padilla made a motion accept the minutes from the June 5th, 2019 meeting. Councilmember Coen seconded the motion. Motion carried 2:0.

3) Review 2020 Recommendations

Councilmember Padilla noted that he had asked the chair to allow for comment from attendees prior to committee and staff discussion.

Christina Valdivia-Alcala stated she noticed the graph that was provided by staff which shows projections from moving funds around from the awarded programs, and does not want to see funding cut from other programs. Ms. Valdivia-Alcala feels strongly that the lack of consideration for funding all of the senior centers in Topeka is unconscionable.

Michelle Cuevas-Stubblefield addressed the committee. Ms. Cuevas-Stubblefield stated she is a lifelong Topekan and has been proud of the way the city cares for the children and seniors in the community. Ms. Cuevas-Stubblefield stated she appreciates the public-private partnership that has been past practice between LULAC Senior Center and the City of Topeka and feels that this partnership needs to continue. Ms. Cuevas-Stubblefield added that the senior centers serve a

growing population of aging adults, rely on funding to continue the level of care and service they are able to provide.

Norbert 'Blue' Adame addressed the committee and asked them to consider the seniors and LULAC when making their decision.

Kay Grey is a board member with Papan's Landing Senior Center. Ms. Grey addressed the committee and is asking for funding. She noted that without the City's grant allocation, Papan's will lose about 12% of their program budget. Ms. Grey asked for consideration to fund all of the senior centers in Topeka.

Councilmember Padilla asked Sasha Haehn, Director of DNR, to speak about the role of the volunteer review committee and their responsibility to assigning the scores to the applicants. Ms. Haehn noted that the process, which was adopted two years ago by the Social Service Grants Committee, to recruit volunteers to sit on a grant review committee of the applications. The volunteer review committee scores the bulk of the application. City staff scores the portions related to past performance, timely reports, and outcomes portion of the application. Ms. Haehn noted that the grant reviewers who are selected to sit on the committee are professionals in the grant making and writing field with ample experience in the grant process. The Committee developed a guideline last year describing the experience needed to sit on the review committee. This year, there was a committee of three volunteer grant reviewers. The reviewers review the applications and then meet to determine scores for the applications together.

Councilmember Padilla read the Mission Statement and Priorities, found on the 2020 Social Service Grants Funding. The first bullet point within the Mission Statement reads: "Senior citizen neighborhood-based programming to include - meals, activities, transportation". Councilmember Padilla inquired if the volunteer grant reviewers were provided this priorities sheet. Ms. Haehn confirmed that the volunteer reviewers were provided with, and were familiar with, the priorities of the committee. Councilmember Padilla inquired if the programs had a ranking prior to the application process. Ms. Haehn noted that staff completes their two areas of the scoring and provides that information, along with the applications to the volunteer grant reviewers. Councilmember Padilla inquired with staff as to what information regarding scoring and an explanation of the scoring was provided to the agencies. Corrie Wright, DNR, noted that at the end of the scoring process, the reviewers provide explanation of the scoring to the agencies. Ms.

Wright noted that those comments were discussed during the committee meeting when the agency appeals portion was covered.

Ms. Wright stated that all of the agencies included in the scoring process met the threshold guidelines. Councilmember Padilla inquired as to what the minimum score was to receive funding for the 2020 cycle. Ms. Wright confirmed the score was 90. The score for 2019 was 88, however, the score will change from year to year depending on the amount of money that is allotted to the Social Service Grants funding. This cycle, the funding threshold was 90.

Councilmember Padilla inquired with staff as to why the senior centers all scored low and if there was any connection. Ms. Wright stated staff had no knowledge of why all three senior centers scored below the funding threshold, and it was coincidental. Councilmember Padilla inquired if there was a common section of the application that the agencies missed, noting perhaps there was a common misunderstanding on the process. Ms. Wright responded that each agency lost points in different areas for different reasons, and that there was no common reason for the scores being below 90.

Councilmember Padilla suggested perhaps there was a commonality that was shared with the senior center agencies, and perhaps the agency staff not having a strength in grant writing that some of the other agencies have. Ms. Wright stated that there was nothing consistent between the areas where points were lost.

Ms. Haehn suggested reviewing the areas where the four agencies lost points.

- Community Action Latino Family Program
 - 15/20: Outcomes on Prior Grants (Staff scores)
 - 3/5: Organizational Leadership (percentage of the board that is represented by minorities)
 - 5/10: Past Grant Administration (Staff scores. Timeliness and accuracy of submitting reports)

- East Topeka Council of Aging
 - 8/10: Outputs Being Clear
 - 3/5: Outcomes Identified in Plan
 - 5/10: Past Grant Administration

- LULAC Senior Center

- 8/10: Outputs Being Clear
- 15/20: Outcomes from Prior Grants
- 5/10: Past Grant Administration
- Papan's Landing Senior Center
 - 10/20: Outcomes from Prior Grants
 - 3/5: Organizational Leadership

Councilmember Padilla asked for clarification as to which areas are scored by staff and which areas are scored by the grant reviewers. Ms. Wright responded that the Outcomes from Prior Grants and Past Grant Administration is scored by the staff. Staff compares the outcomes with those from the prior year to see if the agency followed through in the way it was stated in the prior grant.

Ms. Haehn noted that once the grants are awarded, the agencies have an opportunity to adjust their outcomes during the contract phase. This step serves as a safety measure to adjust accordingly projected outcomes and outputs based on the dollar amount that was received. Councilmember Padilla inquired if the agencies are aware of the process. Ms. Haehn noted that Rachelle Vega-Retana contacts the agencies once the dollar amount is known and within the first quarter, agencies are able to adjust the outcome totals one last time before the scoring is locked.

Councilmember Coen inquired with Councilmember Padilla as to if he feels the process is flawed. Councilmember Padilla stated he felt there were times throughout the process that could be changed. Councilman Padilla stated that he felt the system may not be totally flawed, but he also feels it is not perfect yet either. Councilmember Padilla noted that at a prior meeting, Councilmember Lesser stated he would like to meet with the agencies at a meeting later this year, to openly discuss changes they feel need to made.

Councilmember Padilla stated that he does not want to appear to be partial toward the four specific agencies, however would like to see the large pot of money shared to allow those agencies the minimum threshold of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). Councilmember Padilla noted that although the other agencies may lose some funding, they would still receive more funding than 2019. Ms. Haehn stated that was not the case for all of the other agencies. Ms. Haehn and Councilmember Padilla reviewed the revised funding amounts based on the addition of the four agencies. Thirteen of the recommended agencies would receive reduced funding

from what was received in 2019. Ms. Haehn stated that in addition to the four agencies that Councilmember Padilla had concerns about, there were two new agencies with new programs which also did not meet the threshold to receive funding in 2020.

Councilmember Padilla stated he feels there needs to be a way, through the process or by Council recommendation, that everyone should get a portion of the funding available if they meet the priorities. Ms. Haehn stated the funding ran out at 90%. Sole Reason scored 70% and Midland Care received an 84%. The Latino Family Development Program, and the three senior centers each scored 88%. Councilmember Padilla inquired if the lower scoring of the new agencies was due to them not having a program history to report on. Ms. Haehn noted that the new agencies received a weighted score due to not having a program history to report.

Councilmember Coen inquired if Councilman Padilla is asking to increase the total operating budget to move the additional \$40,000 dollars to the SSG fund. Councilmember Padilla stated he was still wanting to see the request of the \$40,000 be made through moving funds around within the allotted \$434,904 SSG budget. Councilmember Coen stated if the committee was going to make an exception to find funding for the four programs, he would like to also see funding go toward the two new programs that did not meet the threshold to receive funding. Councilmember Coen stated that the current process was established as a way to trust the system and allow it to work.

Ms. Haehn stated that the committee could choose to change the policy, however both members present would have to vote in favor of the change at the current meeting, or two of the three votes from a future meeting with all members present. Staff is not recommending a change to the process for this funding cycle. The second option is to accept the original recommendation and move it to the Governing Body for approval, and Councilmember Padilla proposing an amendment during the full budget discussion to find additional funding for the agencies, as earlier stated.

Councilmember Padilla called Brent Trout, City Manager, to the podium. Mr. Trout stated that in order to lower the threshold to provide funding to the other programs, it would take both of the attending committee members to take action at the current meeting. Councilmember Padilla inquired as to the process should the committee decide to fail the motion. Mr. Trout noted that there would not be

an amendment to the budget, however there would be a change to the SSG funding that the other agencies receive.

Councilmember Coen suggested if there was an amendment to lower the threshold, he would like to see the other two agencies, who also did not meet the 90% threshold, receive funding. The total would be six agencies. Ms. Haehn requested clarification that Chair Coen was suggesting that all of the scoring process be removed, and the funds be divided equally by all of the agencies which submitted applications. Chair Coen confirmed that was his suggestion. Mr. Trout cautioned the committee with changing the current formula as there would be less money for the other agencies to meet their outcomes and appropriate changes would need to be made. Mr. Trout noted that the current process also allows for high achieving programs to continue to compete and produce high quality programs for the community.

Councilmember Padilla inquired if lowering the threshold to 88% would diminish the integrity of the process. Mr. Trout confirmed.

Councilmember Padilla inquired if additional funding might be found through the discussions and amendment process for the City's operating budget. Mr. Trout stated that might be a more appropriate course of action as it would continue to allow the programs which scored a 90% or above to receive the funding they were approved for.

Mr. Trout noted that if the committee decided not to take action at present time, there would be no change to the original recommendation. An amendment could be made through the budget process to find additional funding to provide to the other agencies.

4) Other Items Before the Committee

None.

5) Adjourn

Councilmember Padilla made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Coen seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

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