



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

SOCIAL SERVICE GRANTS COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: December 10, 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: 1st Floor Conference Room; Holliday Bldg 620 SE Madison (*virtual attendance option also available*)

Committee members present: Councilmembers Karen Hiller, Christina Valdivia-Alcalá, Tony Emerson

City staff present: City Manager Brent Trout, Chief of Staff Bill Cochran, Corrie Wright (Housing Services Director), Carrie Higgins (Housing Services), Katrina Rice (Housing Services)

1) Call to Order

Chairwoman Hiller called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Committee members introduced themselves. Staff from the City of Topeka and from United Way introduced themselves.

2) Approval of November 19, 2021 minutes

Committee member Emerson made a motion to approve the November 19th minutes. Committee member Valdivia-Alcala seconded the motion. Minutes approved 3:0.

3) 2023 Process Timeline, Priorities, and Scoring/Rating

2023 Calendar/Timeline

Corrie Wright, Division Director, noted she provided an updated version of the calendar to reflect changes discussed at the last meeting. These include the Request for Proposal being released by April 18, 2022 and the Application workshop then being on April 26, 2022. The second change was for the Governing Body to adopt the City Budget by October 1, 2022.

Chairwoman Hiller stated there had also been discussion about hosting a special session to review the data brought by United Way regarding their community stakeholder input sessions on gap-analysis. She would like to see that added to the calendar to a section under "Recommendation", perhaps something titled "Post-Approval session" to keep the timeline in chronological order, and would be

prior to working on the 2024 cycle. Division Director Wright agreed and would be sending the revised version to the Committee.

2023 Priorities

Chairwoman Hiller noted that there were no changes made to this sheet at the November meeting. No additional comments or changes.

2023 Score Sheet

Division Director Wright stated that Brett Martin, United Way, had sent some changes out. Division Director Wright created a combined document that shows the changes in the United Way proposal as well as some changes that were on her list to create one document for review.

Changes included:

- Addition of language to “Need” section that points the applicant and reviewer to corresponding question within the RFP. This additional language states “Program Narrative Question #1”.
- After each of the sections throughout the score sheet, additional language is included to help applicants and reviewers to the corresponding section within the application, for directional advisory.
- Mr. Martin read the descriptions for each of the subsections found under “Capacity”
 - Subsection “Organization has the resources to produce the proposed outcomes efficiently and effectively” - Mr. Martin stated there was nothing new added to this from the prior meeting, however the language has been inserted.
 - During the November 8th meeting, there was discussion on how to request additional information about past grant administration being effective and exactly how original language could be incorporated while also reducing the amount of points for past grant administration. “Organization manages program effectively” includes language and the associated points as follows:
 - “There is a history of effective program management, cost effective and quality service delivery and evaluation/planning.” - 5 points
 - “Limited evidence of agency effective program management, cost effective and quality service delivery and evaluation/planning.” - 3 points

- “Program management, cost effective and quality service delivery and evaluation/planning are weak or not apparent.” - 0 points

The point values had changed from 10, 5, and 0 to 5, 3, and 0 to maintain 30 overall points for “Capacity” but to also make the changes that the Committee had requested. Committee members Emerson and Valdivia-Alcala expressed approval of this change. Chairwoman Hiller noted that the change currently does not identify information regarding other funding sources, but focus more clearly on how that program budget is separated from the agency budget in a much better way than it has before.

Chairwoman Hiller noted that with the slight request to change the calendar timeline language, it would be her preference to have an additional short meeting to approve those items once received.

4) Other Items

United Way request for additional funding

Jessica Lehnherr, Director of United Way, shared an overview of the proposal for increased funding by the City of Topeka to continue with providing the service of grant management. Ms. Lehnherr spoke to the learning experience that United Way has endured during this new process over the past two years. The scope of service that United Way originally responded to, do not reflect the current expectations and levels of service that has since been provided to the point of affecting other parts of operations within United Way. In order to maintain to fulfil the aspects of this contract, United Way will need to hire an additional part-time staff member. Ms. Lehnherr stated that in the initial letter sent to City Manager Trout, a request to receive \$45,000 in order to fulfil the contract along with some suggestions regarding way to change the scope of service to reflect the additional work United Way was doing. Since that time, the price proposal has changed and information was provided to the Committee with additional information regarding what is being proposed for salaries, the grant management system and all of the other aspects.

Chairwoman Hiller would like to have additional information to defend the significant increase requested sent to the Committee. She noted that, in very simple terms, the idea was that outsourcing the process would relieve staff on the City side, and that with United Way already doing grant management work that the process would slide in on United Way’s side, for a nominal fee. She noted that the consulting and level of expertise has been very appreciated, but that perhaps

the Committee does not understand, fully, those hours that were tracked for the grant process and would like to be better prepared to defend why it would be a benefit to approve the increase in money.

Committee member Emerson inquired if the process would have to go through the formal bidding process due to the significant increase, as part of the City's contracting process. Chief of Staff Cochran noted that the contract could be re-sent for bid. He inquired if, on the City staff side, the anticipation would be that the time would decrease by working with a third-party vendor. Division Director Wright noted that in 2020, when the process was in-house, there were significantly fewer hours spent by staff on this process. She noted that staff duties were then shifted to other projects. She also noted that attending the Committee meetings were included in the hourly totals, and that aside from meetings, the staff hours were very low and that United Way had really been covering the significant portion of the duties for managing the process.

City Manager Brent Trout agreed with Chairwoman Hiller that the role, from the Governing Body standpoint, is to give direction to staff as to whether or not the City wants to have this outsourced as a process or have it done internally. He stated that his role, as City Manager, is to work to negotiate the best contract possible with United Way or whomever. In this situation, information was sent to him related to whether or not the City could cover the increase that is necessary and where that coverage would come from. From those discussions, City Manager Trout has information to counter with United Way but has not been able to provide them with that offer as of this meeting. City Manager Trout noted that when the bid was solicited prior, there were no other interested parties. With that, it may be possible to look at sole-sourcing this action based on the individuals involved, and what we know may be available in order to speed this process through. He stated that the Finance Department feels the City would be able to cover the extra expense. We know that we are getting a good product. We need to negotiate what is a fair amount. That might be one amount this year with a slight increase for the next year. Chairwoman Hiller agreed to City Manager Trout's comment that it is the Committee's recommendation about continuing the outsourcing versus not, and it is the Committee's recommendation to put forward to advocate for and defend the decision to request the City negotiate terms of the contract to include the substantial pay increase. She stated that a higher level of information and understanding would be needed to backup such a recommendation.

Mr. Martin noted that although the sheet presented did not break down the work done per each United Way team member/per hour/per hourly rate, that the information did provide a robust amount of information to support the request for additional funding. City Manager Trout noted that he appreciated all of the service that has been provided by United Way based on all of the efforts that they are doing, and that it has made a noticeable difference to City operations. He appreciated their level of professionalism and effort that they have brought to the system.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala stated she agreed with the comments made by City Manager Trout that the level of professionalism has really expanded, and done a deep dive into what needs to be done to make the process more efficient, for their reviewers as well as for the applicants, and that the level of customer service, on both the City side and the applicant side, has been well done and that because of this change, the process has been elevated.

Chairwoman Hiller stated that with the discussion that was just had about the Committee being interested in looking further at the gaps, and how to address the budget and other funding sources, has helped to improve the communication and has brought United Way to the City as a resource, and has been helpful.

Chairwoman Hiller circled back to the request for the 2022 contract that would be an increase to \$45,000. She inquired if the original letter that Ms. Lehnherr had sent to the City Manager had been shared with the Committee. Committee member Emerson recalled receiving a letter that had been dated October 12th, to which Ms. Lehnherr confirmed would have been the same letter. Chairwoman Hiller requested that letter be included with the packet that is sent to the Governing Body agenda once it moves forward from the Committee. Video

Division Director Wright stated that staff would recommend approval to continue with United Way, noting that staff time has now been able to shift to focus on other areas that had previously been lacking due to the significant time required to manage the Social Service Grants in-house. The process has gone smoothly, and would continue to become easier and easier as time goes on. She stated that there may not need to be a significant amount of negotiating done with the request, but that it is something to consider...to keep outsourcing the process.

Committee member Emerson reviewed the process; that the Committee would make the recommendation to the Governing Body, who would then approve the action to allow staff to determine to take the RFPs or negotiate as a sole-source provider. Chairwoman Hiller stated she felt the Committee could make the recommendation to the Governing Body that the relationship with United Way continue, with a note that they have requested additional funds, and to leave it at that. There would be four items to pass out:

- 2023 Calendar/Timeline
- 2023 Priorities
- 2023 Score Sheet
- Recommendation to continue with the vendor, with that additional note

Chairwoman Hiller stated that there seemed to be consensus on everything except the newest revised version of the Score Sheet, and that with the additional brief meeting, it should be confirmed to move forward to the Governing Body as well.

Chairwoman Hiller thanked staff and United Way for their work in collecting items and sending them out to the Committee. She inquired if staff felt a packet containing all of the items could be ready to send to the Committee within a week, to then have an all-virtual Committee meeting to formalize and draft a recommendation to move to the Governing Body? Division Director Wright confirmed she felt information could be provided by Friday, December 17th to the Committee. The next meeting will be held on December 21st, 2021 at 11:00am, and would be virtual only.

5) Adjourn

Chairwoman Hiller adjourned the meeting at 10:45am.

Meeting video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/5IG-MH1G6uE>