



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

SOCIAL SERVICE GRANTS COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: August 11, 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m.

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

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

City staff present: Corrie Wright (DNR), Rachele Vega-Retana (DNR), City Manager Brent Trout, Bill Cochran (Chief of Staff)

1) Call to Order

Chairwoman Hiller called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

2) Approval of July 9, 2021 minutes and July 19, 2021 minutes

Committee member Emerson made a motion to approve both sets of minutes. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá seconded the motion. Minutes approved 3:0.

3) Agency Appeals

Chairwoman Hiller stated the goal of the meeting was to hear from the five agencies that had submitted letters of appeal, in the order the Committee received them. Following the appeals, the Committee will discuss final thoughts and hopefully be ready to create a recommendation to send to the Governing Body for approval.

Topeka Housing Authority - Trey George and Mary Tucker reviewed inquiries as to how their application was formed. One question related to the Demonstrated Capacity section. Brett Martin, United Way, noted that although information had been provided, the reviewers did not feel there was enough information provided to show a percentage to show community impact.

Mr. George also noted the second item related to the Outcomes and Outputs reporting. Ms. Tucker noted the program was not funded in 2020. They were funded in 2021. Mr. Martin stated there were areas on the Performance Measures section, and that based on both reports neither had the information submitted. Ms. Tucker confirmed only the first quarter of 2021 data was able to be submitted. Mr. George inquired if the intent was known? The Committee and

United Way confirmed. Chairwoman Hiller provided some historical context regarding the way new programs were allowed. The intent was to receive past funding information, if the program was seasoned and funded through another grant process. Ms. Tucker and Mr. George voiced an understanding. Ms. Tucker noted the process was difficult to understand for new applicants. Mr. Martin noted their staff did not check for THA's past funding as they had listed that information in their application. Both outcomes were under the performance measures threshold, so it was not necessary to go back to review.

Chairwoman Hiller noted there will be a session in September that would be to review outcomes/outputs, and that the October and November meetings would be to review the process in setting up recommendations for the 2023 funding cycle.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala inquired if there had been training for grant applicants? Mr. Martin confirmed. Ms. Tucker stated she had attended those training sessions.

Papan's Landing Senior Center, Inc (16:20 minute mark) - Debbie Lake stated she agreed with comments made by Topeka Housing Authority regarding the score sheet and the suggestion of additional clarifying language.

To her understanding, Ms. Lake noted the cuts were made due to the outcomes. Mr. Martin noted there were five areas in the application where there were fewer than maximum number of points awarded; three of which were related to outcomes. The first one related to "Outcomes are clear and related to identified needs", had points not awarded there with comments from reviewers stating reporting had been unclear as to whether it was an outcome or an output, in terms of the wording on the outcome.

The second one "Plan has been identified to measure outputs and outcomes" reviewers made notation, again, the information provided had been unclear based on the survey that had been given. Ms. Lake noted that there had been some changing of the language but that it had been made after this year's application had been submitted.

Mr. Martin noted a third section "Applicant has achieved the outputs and outcomes on prior grants, per meaningful measures", three of the four outcomes were met.

Mr. Martin noted a fourth section “Organization has the resources to produce outcomes efficiently and effectively”, was primarily a budget question. Significant surpluses are given, but there is no indication of funding coming in for recreation and transportation, which was related to the program itself.

Ms. Lake wanted to address her concern about the outcomes, stating those numbers reported were from 2020, and the center had been closed for half of the year. Overall, the other outcomes areas jumped up a lot. Phone calls went up 270%. Other services were also higher, but the transportation had fallen short. This year it was more than the years previous, but it was due to three people. This loss is very significant. Her suggestion would be to ask clear questions and provide an example, of how the reviewers would want to see an answer worded. Mr. Martin stated that the only information the reviewers have, is the application. They would only have seen the information as it related to the transportation program, and not the other programs that had reflected growth. Mr. Martin stated that all organizations reported the same thing regarding COVID-19. Mr. Martin noted that while it may feel like a cut, these are one-year, non-renewable grants; so there could be a decrease but not a true “cut” of funding. Mr. Martin noted that for the scoring for this year, there was another program that scored the same, so the funding was split between the two programs. Otherwise, in a different scenario, you would take the 81% and multiply by the full dollar amount and that would be the remainder of the dollars that were awarded.

Chairwoman Hiller noted that corresponding with United Way while working on next year’s application, may help to clear up and questions with the language that they may have. Ms. Lake noted she would certainly take that opportunity.

Chairwoman Hiller noted that the committee had hosted a special meeting regarding Senior Centers. And out of that meeting, Chairwoman Hiller has included advocating for the digital equity expansion and encouraged the Senior Centers to watch for opportunities in that arena as well.

Kay Grey, President of Papan’s Landing Board, stated the Board is appreciative of the award that was received. She felt the Center had been able to achieve what they had wanted to do, but that they will continue to strive for improving.

Positive Connections – Kathleen Link wanted to make clear that Positive Connections is the only organization that works with providing case management

and services for members of the population with HIV. The cut of City funding means one of the case management positions will need to be dropped to a part-time position. In her report, the case management program actually should see an increase in a full time position. The cut is a 39% drop from what had been received in previous years.

One comments received indicated they had not achieved the outputs and outcomes in prior grants to meaningful measures. Mr. Martin noted that in comments related to the outcomes, the outcomes statements that are included show three outcomes. In the three outcomes statements, the outcomes given were in whole numbers rather than percentage format. In terms of the outcomes, two of the three are not achieved. On one, the first outcome statement was 210 individuals, but the total number achieved in the 202 actual given was 190. In the second, 210 individuals again in the outcome statement, and the number achieved was 190. The final outcome statement was 160 clients, with the number achieved being 168. As a result, one of the three outcomes were met. Based on the wording of the outcomes statements, in whole numbers, when compared to the actual in 2020, it shows that they were not achieved.

Past grant administration received a 5/10. Two emails were sent asking for a change of an invoice. Ms. Link stated she had no record of any emails. Mr. Martin noted the City Staff were the reviewers that scored that section. Comments included “the incorrect invoice number had not been received”. Rachelle Vega-Retana, stated she recalled the comments, but would go and print the email for further confirmation. Once the email was provided, Ms. Link thanked Staff for providing that communication.

Ms. Link inquired if the Committee would like to receive additional information about the services offered by Positive Connections. Chairwoman Hiller noted a presentation had been provided in 2020, but that additional comments related to process would be welcomed in the other upcoming sessions.

Breakthrough House, Inc. - Representatives from this program/agency were not present.

Topeka Youth Project - Representatives from this program/agency were not present.

Committee member Emerson noted that at this time, each agency had not received the comprehensive information to see what the other programs had scored, and inquired if this was ever information that was sent out? Mr. Martin and Corrie Wright, Division Director, confirmed the agencies had not received the comprehensive totals in years past. They confirmed that each agency receives the total scores and comments for their own programs, but that is all.

Chairwoman Hiller noted that there were 30 applications received. The scores ranged from 98/100 to 36/100 points. This cycle, it took a score of 81/100 to receive funding. Chairwoman Hiller noted the reason for the scoring recalibration was to address the direction provided by the Committee to vet seasoned programs, even those that perhaps had not previously received City funding.

The committee took a five minute intermission to retrieve the email correspondence referenced during the Positive Connections segment.

Ms. Wright noted emails and report had been retrieved, and correspondence which showed some past grant administration that was deficient, and that is what resulted in the score being what it was. Ms. Link thanked Staff for providing the copy of the email.

Chairwoman Hiller thanked the agencies for bringing forward their appeals for the programs.

4) Committee's Final Recommendations for Governing Body

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala made a motion to recommend the allocations, as presented, to the Governing Body for approval. Committee member Emerson seconded the motion. Motion approved 3:0.

Chairwoman Hiller thanked United Way for their work.

5) Adjourn

Chairwoman Hiller noted the Committee will next meet September 17, 2021 at 10:00am in the Holliday Conference Room. The meeting will review outcomes and outputs. Additional future dates for October and November have been set to set the procedure for the 2023 process. Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:00am.

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