



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

SOCIAL SERVICE GRANTS COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: July 15, 2020

Time: 10:00 a.m.

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

Committee members present: Councilmembers Karen Hiller (Chair), Christina Valdivia-Alcalá, Michael Padilla

City staff present: Corrie Wright (DNR), Rachele Vega-Retana (DNR), City Manager Brent Trout

1) Call to Order

Chairwoman Hiller called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Committee members introduced themselves and agency members who were attending via Zoom were asked to introduce themselves.

2) Approval of July 8, 2020 minutes

Committee will review and approve minutes for July 8 and July 15 meetings at the next meeting.

3) Agency Appeals

Chairwoman Hiller provided ground rules for appeal meeting. The committee has made decisions on appeals immediately following the meeting, in the past. However, the committee would have seven days to make any final decisions should it be deemed necessary to allow for some extra time.

- Agencies will present their appeal to the committee one at a time.
- Appeal based only on scoring. Agency may only focus on challenging the score received based on the application that was submitted.
- Committee will discuss with the agencies for clarifications.
- Committee did not receive comments to appellants. Appellants are asked to describe the scoring issue, the score received, the explanation given by United Way, and why that score should be changed.
- The only reason for a change would be for an undeniable flaw in the way a question was asked or in the way the review team made the score.

Chairwoman Hiller noted that once the process has been completed for the 2021 grant cycle, the committee will meet to review and make changes for improvement.

Appeals

- Catholic Charities, Dani de León & Natalie Spar- Applicant has achieved outputs and outcomes on prior grants per meaningful measures. Received 0 out of 20. Ms. de León discussed in further detail the comments provided by the review panel, as well as agency comments that had been included during the application process.

Chairwoman Hiller noted that in the past, errors were made on the City's staff-end and inquired with Ms. Wright as to what staff had previously done. Ms. Wright noted that outputs and outcomes have not been allowed to be changed by the appellant following the application cutoff deadline.

Committee member Padilla noted that the understanding of outcomes and outputs seem to be a troublesome spot for many applicants. Committee member Padilla inquired if there had been some additional assistance to agencies who came forward with inquiries. Ms. de León noted that the correction was added to the report that was submitted in 2019.

Chairwoman Hiller inquired if the numbers submitted on the application were by the agency or by the review team. Ms. Wright stated the review committee looked at what was proposed and what was received in the year prior and made the final score. Ms. de León noted comments were submitted with the application in e-ClImpact. Ms. Wright noted those comments were not received with the appeal letter in this format prior to the current meeting. Ms. de León clarified that after receiving the score and explanation, she went back to past year grant applications to find the information. She noted that the 2020 funding has not been received yet, thus reporting is not able to occur. Ms. Wright found the application, and noted the review committee was able to see the comment. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá inquired how far off the award was. Chairwoman Hiller noted they scored 79%, which was not high enough to reach the 83% threshold to receive funding. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá inquired if any of the information presented showing confusion due to communication with the third-party vendor or if applications were difficult to understand. Ms. Wright answered that outcomes and outputs

reviewed were from the 2019 funding, which would have been prior to the third-party vendor.

Chairwoman Hiller concluded those errors were not reflective of the third-party vendor. Natalie Spar, Catholic Charities, noted there had been staff turn-over in the time from application submission and current time, and as such, she was not sure what questions had been previously asked.

Committee members reviewed and discussed the report from e-Impact with City staff and appellant. Chairwoman Hiller concluded that the committee will not be able to grant the appeal, however encouraged Catholic Charities to apply for the funding again as the 2021 funding cycle opens.

- Salvation Army, Shelly Robertson - Inquired about the prior grant history piece, and what the parameters were for being considered a “new program”. Chairwoman Hiller noted the Salvation Army was considered a new agency, as the organization had not applied for the Social Service Grant in a number of years. As a new program, 70 points would have been the maximum score. Two additional issues raised included a definition to the term “rapid” and “measurement of stable housing”. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá inquired if Ms. Robertson had contacted United Way with inquiries. Ms. Robertson noted she had not.

Chairwoman Hiller asked Brett Martin, United Way, for additional comments. Mr. Martin stated the question posed by the reviewer was how to define the word “rapidly” without specific numbers being provided in the application. Without this detail, the reviewer was unable to provide a score for this area.

Mr. Martin stated record collection on how to further improve the application process has been ongoing throughout the process and will be presented to the committee.

Appeal denied.

- Topeka SENT, Nikki Ramirez-Jennings - Thanked the committee and United Way for the guidance provided throughout this process, which is new to her.

- Topeka LULAC Senior Center, Kathy Votaw - Challenged the Board Requirements section. Ms. Votaw noted the attendance of the board and the quorum of the board are two different things. The application does not split the two things out. Ms. Votaw felt there is confusion of the interpretation of scoring. This caused the agency to lose two points in the category. Ms. Votaw is asking for clarification. Mr. Martin stated that Ms. Votaw's assumption of the reviewer's interpretation was correct. The score of 3/5, reflected the agency's ability to meet all of the requirements of application section of the board except for the area of attendance.

Chairwoman Hiller noted that the City had changed that particular question this year, and that it did appear that there was some disconnect with the scoring sheet, which had remained unchanged. She inquired if this confusion could be something that affected other applications; that it is not uncommon for a quorum requirement to be 51%, but that with this application's requirement being set at 80%, it is possible that the confusion occurred between scoring the applications alone and scoring them based on the scoring metric. Mr. Martin stated the review panel scored all applications using the same interpretation throughout the scoring process, and that other applicants had not had the same issue. This indicated the applicant may have misunderstood the question.

Mr. Martin noted that during the RFP meeting, there had been conversation about the change in the "Organizational Leadership" piece. Mr. Martin reviewed the communication log, which is kept for each applicant throughout the application process, and there had been no questions raised by the agency about this concern.

Committee reached consensus to take information under advisement and make clarifications to the application in the future, but will not award the appeal.

- Topeka Center for Peace & Justice, Glenda DuBoise & Edie Snethen - Stated they were first-time applicants, and did not have the past grant administration with the City of Topeka. Chairwoman Hiller noted that, as a new applicant, certain scoring criteria were not counted against them. The final score was 58/70, and that points lost in the areas of descriptions provided on Outputs and Outcomes, demonstration of other resources available, and Board & Leadership section. Committee consensus was that score stands as presented.

- Sole Reason, Krystal Wiltz & Sandra Clear - Ms. Wiltz addressed the committee to appeal scoring and comments pertaining to the “Organization sources to produce outcomes efficiently and effectively” section.

Ms. Wiltz discussed the portion of the comment section that noted no budget history had been provided. Ms. Wiltz stated a conversation with City staff in 2019, prior to the outsourced process, guidance was provided that budget history was not necessary due to no prior Social Service Grants funding being received in years 2019 or 2020. There was some discussion between parties, with Ms. Wiltz concluding she would be mindful to re-ask questions to United Way in the future. Chairwoman Hiller inquired if the budget increase would improve the ability to achieve higher outputs or outcomes. Mr. Martin stated he would not be able to answer the question at current time. Chairwoman Hiller inquired about the program budget. Ms. Wiltz clarified the language in the application requested a program budget which was different from the agency budget.

The second comment Ms. Wiltz called to attention requested that the application be changed to remove the option for funding toward salaries in the future, if reviewers do not want to score on applications requesting funding for salaries. Chairwoman Hiller inquired about grant awards received from other funding sources. Ms. Wiltz provided that information. The comment received regarding the budget stated that it was only going toward salary. Ms. Wiltz stated that within the definition of “Eligible Expenses”, found in the RFP, it provides examples of what would be accepted and that staff salaries were included. Ms. Wiltz noted she was an experienced grant writer, and that due to requests for grant money for staff salaries to be allowed, that is what they included in their application.

The third comment brought forward by Ms. Wiltz pointed to the sustainability of the program. Ms. Wiltz noted that the program budget that had been provided showed otherwise to include: costs for sneakers, total agency budget for the program, and other funding sources mentioned in the revenue section. There was lengthy discussion for clarification between the committee members, Ms. Wiltz and Ms. Clear. Appeal not awarded.

Committee member Padilla noted he did not feel the need to meet again to review these appeals. Chairwoman Hiller stated that since the committee has agreed to not reconsider the appeals, there would not be a need for an additional meeting on the matter.

Chairwoman Hiller inquired if the committee wanted to move forward with the recommendation as presented, including the four agencies which received under the \$10,000 minimum, or to recalibrate to distribute the remainder of funds to those agencies. Committee member Padilla recognized that the \$10,000 minimum seemed to work well, however questioned if reducing the award to below \$10,000 would harm the efforts in the coming year for granting awards. Ms. Wright stated she appreciated United Way's interpretation of the award and supported the recommendation presented by United Way as it stands, and noted the awards are not far from the \$10,000 threshold.

4) Committee: Final Recommendation to the Governing Body

Committee member Padilla made a motion to accept the recommendation of allocations as presented, to send to the Governing Body for approval.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá inquired about the misunderstanding of the \$10,000. Mr. Martin stated the area speaking to the minimums and maximums in the Social Service Grant details portion of the RFP, it was interpreted that the minimum request amount would be \$10,000, and the maximum request amount would be \$25,000. New and untested programs would have a maximum request amount of \$15,000. Chairwoman Hiller clarified that this situation has occurred before, and that the wording in the grant application states grants would not be under \$10,000. If the committee chose not to move forward with funding the agencies, the remaining balance would go back to the City. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá voiced concern regarding communication between United Way and the City to make sure there were no glitches within the system that prevented those agencies from reaching the \$10,000 minimum. Chairwoman Hiller stated the priorities sheet states the application will be scored, and based on the score and the request provided on the application would be combined and awarded based on the percentage that the application received. The conflict comes between the understanding of that the grants have a minimum of \$10,000...but that using the Council-adopted formula, some applications would still score under that \$10,000 threshold. Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá inquired if the language should be changed in the next grant cycle to clarify the intent of the threshold. Chairwoman

Hiller stated language could be added to the priorities sheet to state “The application should be for no less than \$10,000”.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá seconded the motion.

Motion carries 3:0.

5) Future meeting date & Adjourn

Chairwoman Hiller inquired if the committee would prefer to have the aging services discussion before or after the 2020 Budget. Committee member Padilla stated he would prefer to wait until after the budget has been passed.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá stated she also wanted to review the area of the application to move Latino origins out from under Caucasian. Chairwoman Hiller noted there were two tasks the committee would like to review and confirmed the topic brought about by Committee member Valdivia-Alcalá would be one of those.

Aging services in September. Overall process review in October and November. Approved. There will be no meeting in August.

Chairwoman Hiller adjourned the meeting at 12:38pm.

Meeting video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/HNYg-wutvsY>