



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

SOCIAL SERVICE GRANTS COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
City Hall, 215 SE 7th Street, Suite 255
Topeka, KS 66603-3914
Tel: 785-368-3710
Fax: 785-368-3958
www.topeka.org

Date: July 8, 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 10:19am. Committee members introduced themselves and agency members who were attending via Zoom were asked to introduce themselves.

2) United Way: Presentation of Scores

Survey Results

Brett Martin, United Way, introduced the results of the survey that was sent out with applications. Used a Likert Scale model for the survey along with a comment section following each question to allow for more explanation. United Way received about 40% response rate, which is a good number. Committee members were provided the results of the survey.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala inquired about commenting received from Sheltered Living Inc. which stated the application process was tricky, and what was United Way able to provide in the way of customer service to assist with the questions presented. Mr. Martin referred to a communications log. Committee member Valdivia-Alcala stated she did not need to see the log, however wanted to ensure that agencies were able to receive timely assistance during the process. Mr. Martin noted Staff received a number of inquiries throughout the process and responded to those within a 24-hour period.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala inquired what the best way would be to receive full response rate from agencies. Mr. Martin stated that typical results are around 20% for surveys, but that continued communication to place emphasis on the importance of the survey feedback may help to raise the percentage.

Score Sheet

Mr. Martin explained the areas on the score sheet. New agencies could only score a full amount of 70 points possible, whereas established programs could receive a full score of 100 points. The funding recommendations are based on the funding that is available; that amount for this funding cycle is \$434,904.00. The score cutoff was 83%. Two programs received 83%. One applicant received a score of 84%, and the remaining amount was divided between the two other programs.

Committee member Padilla inquired about the cut-off amount for new programs which had a total points possible amount of 70. Mr. Martin noted 58 points would have been the 83% for those programs.

Chairwoman Hiller inquired about the location of the application regarding new program applicants. Corrie Wright, Neighborhood Relations, stated that information could be found on the Priorities Sheet as well as in the RFP.

Chairwoman Hiller noted last year saw a threshold of 90%, and inquired with United Way as to any guidance that had been given to them regarding the past score sheets. Mr. Martin noted applicants were ranked based on score. Ms. Wright noted the methodology used was the same as in years past, however the percentage will change due to how calculations are totaled.

Chairwoman Hiller inquired if there had been any training in past grant administration with regard to scoring. Mr. Martin stated language relating to a minimum ask was pulled from the RFP, and the minimum request was \$10,000. There are a few programs that made it through the e-Impact process that had requested less than \$10,000. That has to do with a process piece. The maximum threshold was set up, and those agencies which requested less than \$10,000 did not receive high enough scoring to receive the funding.

Chairwoman Hiller noted the threshold was removed in the Emergency Funding category, which was different from previous years.

Committee member Valdivia-Alcala inquired about the difference between Emergency Aide verses program funding. Chairwoman Hiller clarified that that category defines that those programs are serving the community by providing emergency funding. Ms. Wright noted the CDBG portion of the funding that is set aside for social service agencies are used to assist with funding emergency aid

programs. Chairwoman Hiller stated that the funding from CDBG would be determined and provided later from the City. Ms. Wright confirmed.

Chairwoman Hiller noted one program asked for substantially more funding than the maximum limit, and United Way was able to catch that and make appropriate changes.

Committee member Padilla inquired about the recommendation for some agencies to receive lower than \$10,000. Mr. Martin explained the threshold used was established by calculating percent of the score multiplied by the request, and then going through the total amount of dollars that were available. There was a \$10,000 minimum request in the application, not a \$10,000 reward in grant recommendation.

Appeals

Chairwoman Hiller inquired about appeals. Mr. Martin noted that the surveys that were received only one agency marked “disagree”. The appeal process deadline was July 7th at 5:00pm. Six agencies submitted appeal letters. Those letters will be compiled into a PDF and sent to the Committee following the current meeting. Mr. Martin explained the areas of the application in which the applicants would be appealing on.

Chairwoman Hiller stated the agencies have historically been informed that appeals could only be made on the basis of a disagreement on scoring. The award system was rating-based. Occasionally, when an appeal has come in, in the past, Staff was able to correct any issues prior to the appeal process. Chairwoman Hiller inquired if that was something United Way experienced, or if it would be something they would do in the future should a similar issue arise.

Mr. Martin provided the Committee with a sample of the letter that was sent to all agencies. It was noted that United Way adopted the same language, and that appeals were to be made by email and received by July 7th, 2020, End of Business, and that the application packet must be the basis for the appeal, and explain the reason for the appeal in the response.

Chairwoman Hiller inquired if Committee members could also receive a copy of the full application along with the appeal letter submitted by the six agencies. Mr. Martin confirmed that could be done.

Chairwoman Hiller inquired if Committee members would be granted access to the e-Impact system to also review all applications. Mr. Martin confirmed that could be done. Mr. Martin added that all of the appeals received were from agencies that submitted applications for a single program.

Chairwoman Hiller discussed the process for the appeal hearing for July 15th, noting that agency staff or board members would be welcome to attend the meeting in person, or via Zoom, to present their appeal to the Committee.

Committee members Valdivia-Alcala and Padilla thanked United Way for the seemingly smooth process to outsourcing the social service grants. There were some hesitations in the beginning, but are appreciative of the communication and results that have been shown thus far.

Public Comments

Mike Spadaford - Inquired about the structure of the list rankings and asked if the list would stand as it has been presented, or would be reshuffled so that the current agencies will fall above the new applicants. Chairwoman Hiller stated that scenario had not been seen before, however, is not out of the realm of possibilities. In the case that an appeal would come through, the recommended figures could be changed by the committee.

Nikki Ramirez-Jennings - Thanked United Way for quickly answering questions, as she is new to grant writing.

Aaron May, Big Brothers Big Sisters - Clarified a point on the application regarding reporting. This year was more challenging for reporting outcomes as the national database changed programs and experienced delay. That has been worked out and hopefully will not be a challenge in the future.

3) Next Meeting is July 15, 2020. Adjourn

Chairwoman Hiller adjourned the meeting at 11:02am.

Meeting video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/BPrs0PJogxo>