



Richland County Council
Community Impacts Grants Committee
MINUTES
February 14, 2023 – 4:00 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Jesica Mackey, Chair, Jason Branham, Paul Livingston, Gretchen Barron, and Cheryl English.

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilman Overture Walker, Councilwoman Chakisse Newton, Councilmember Don Weaver, Leonardo Brown, Michelle Onley, Chelsea Bennett, Anette Kirylo, Sarah Harris, Angela Weathersby, Dan Kim, Abhijit Deshpande, Ashiya Myers, Dante Roberts, Elizabeth McLean, Jennifer Wladischkin, Stacey Hamm, and Dale Welch.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chairwoman Cheryl English called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. December 7, 2022 – Mr. Livingston moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. Barron

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Mr. Livingston moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. Barron

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. **ELECTION OF CHAIR** – Mr. Livingston moved to elect Ms. Mackey as Chair, seconded by Ms. Barron

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

The vote in favor was unanimous.
5. **ITEM FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**
 - a. Committee Goals – Ms. Mackey stated during the budget process a motion was made to rename the Discretionary Grants Committee the Community Impacts Grant Committee. Last year the focus was on the application process and the \$300,000 Council allocated. Most of the meetings were devoted to reviewing applications and awarding the funds. As we move into the budget process for the next fiscal year, the committee needs to determine how to move forward, the process to distribute grants to the community partners, and align the initiatives and priorities to the strategic plan. She noted staff has prepared a presentation that shows how Council has historically supported community organizations.

- b. Staff Presentation – Historical Funding - Ms. Thomas stated she has prepared a spreadsheet on how the County previously funded its community partners and the sources of funding. The funding was as follows: 2019 - \$2,715,988; 2020 - \$2,384,439; and 2021 - \$2,002,439. It was noted all of the funding in these previous years came from the General Fund. In 2021, they pulled back significantly due to COVID's impact. The County received ARPA funding in 2022, which allowed them to reallocate funding from the General Fund to ARPA funding, as they realized significant pressures and responsibilities across the County. In 2022, \$1,067,230 came from the General Fund and \$934,709 came from the ARPA funds. In 2023, \$770,445.75 came from the General Fund and \$1,113,296 from ARPA funding, with an additional \$985,000 for potential millage agency shortfalls. In the last 5 years, approximately \$12M has been allocated to the community.

Historically, the Discretionary Grants Committee would review the applications and recommend allocation of \$400,000. In 2021 and 2022, the amount was roughly \$200,000. There was one year the amount was under \$200,000 due to a group not utilizing their full allocation.

Lump Sum allocation come to Council in the form of council motions during the budget process, and are not competitive. A total of \$7.5M has been allocated over a 5-year period, with the largest amount being \$2.3M.

Of the \$300,000 allocated for the Community Impact Grants, \$259,445.75 was appropriated.

It was noted, over the last 5 years, some organizations received multiple sources of funds.

Ms. Mackey inquired if the ARPA funds includes just the organizations that were approved, and not organizations awaiting approval.

Ms. Thomas responded in the affirmative. She noted that many of the appropriations have not been secured, as FY23 has not closed.

Mr. Weaver stated he would like to find funding for Pathways to Healing and The Therapy Place.

Ms. Mackey stated committee's purpose is for Council to identify a unified process for all non-profits to follow. Upon approval of said process, all non-profits can submit applications through the same process. At that time, Council will be able to make a decision.

Ms. Barron stated, over the last few years, we had ARPA and Federal funds to help fund some organizations. She inquired how we could continue to fund these organizations without those additional funding sources.

Ms. Mackey responded Ms. Barron is correct, and the purpose of this committee is to determine the process for how to plan for the upcoming budget cycle, as well as future budget cycles, to align with the strategic plan.

Ms. Barron inquired if the process has started for organizations that want Lump Sum appropriations.

Ms. Mackey responded there is no formal process; therefore, organizations reach out directly to the Councilmembers. She noted staff has started to receive requests, and the committee needs to decide how to move forward with the process.

Ms. Barron stated Councilmembers could make recommendations, but moving forward there needs to be a uniform way to do business. She noted there is a need for a Grants Office, which would make this conversation and the process less difficult.

Ms. Mackey stated, based on previous concerns, this is our opportunity to make changes, give feedback, and agree on the amount to be allocated. This will allow staff to communicate with the public regarding the process.

Mr. Livingston stated he wants to ensure we do not punish agencies this coming year because we switched their funding to ARPA funding. He noted some agencies will need to receive an annual appropriation due to their impact on the County, and how they evolved. For example, Senior Resources assumed the responsibility of the Council on Aging.

Ms. Newton requested a formalized way of recordkeeping and transparency when it comes to Lump Sum appropriations. She noted there may be organizations that could be put in the General Fund. In addition, to potentially set contribution thresholds or budget percentages for nonprofits.

Mr. Livingston inquired if the committee will discuss Lump Sum and discretionary grants, or continue setting aside the \$300,000 per year.

Ms. Mackey stated, when Council approved the motion, the Discretionary Grants Committee was dissolved. The Community Impact Grants Committee needs to look holistically at how we are giving out grant funding and working with community partners. Currently, the committee has not allocated a dollar amount. Before entering the budget cycle, we need to decide on an allocated amount, the process, and the criteria for funding.

Mr. Livingston inquired about the total amount spent in discretionary, Lump Sum, and ARPA funding last year.

Ms. Thomas responded it was \$2.828M. She noted the chart includes historical funding amounts for the last 5 years.

Ms. Barron inquired if the goal is to have the structure in place before entering the budget cycle or to create the process with the understanding this year's budget cycle will be a little different as we begin implementation for the FY24 budget.

Ms. Mackey recommended having a set amount we want to commit before we discuss the process.

c. Next Steps

i. Timeline – Ms. Mackey inquired about the dates for the budget readings.

Ms. Thomas responded they expect to transmit the budget book by April 10th, with First Reading in May and Third Reading on June 6th.

Ms. Mackey inquired if Council should have an agreed-upon amount in April or before May 1st.

Ms. Thomas responded, ideally, late March would assist staff in proposing a balanced budget.

Ms. Mackey stated, based on Ms. Thomas' response, the committee would need to meet to discuss the funding amount and then forward the recommendation to Council for approval.

6. ADJOURNMENT - Ms. Barron moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:36 PM.