



Richland County Council
Coronavirus AD Hoc Committee Meeting
MINUTES
June 23, 2022 – 2:30 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Gretchen Barron, Chair, Paul Livingston and Chakisse Newton (via Zoom)

OTHERS PRESENT: Overture Walker (via Zoom), Yvonne McBride (via Zoom), Joe Walker (via Zoom), Cheryl English (via Zoom), Allison Terracio, Jesica Mackey, Angela Weathersby, Justin Landy, Michelle Onley, Anette Kirylo, Leonardo Brown, Lori Thomas, Steven Gaither, Patrick Wright, Ashiya Myers, Abhijit Deshpande, John Thompson, Dale Welch, Kyle Holsclaw, Michael Byrd and Dwight Hanna

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairwoman Barron called the meeting to order at approximately 2:30PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. May 19, 2022 – Mr. Livingston moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. Newton.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, and Newton.

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: Livingston, Barron, and Newton.

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**

- a. Review of Council Approved Funding Recommendations – Ms. Barron stated Council approved the committee’s recommendation for funding. The next steps will be to put the “nuts & bolts” in place to expedite getting the funds into the community.

Mr. Leonardo Brown, County Administrator, noted the County received approximately \$40M from the Federal Government. Initially, Council addressed County employees who were working in heightened transmissible environments by providing stipends and providing mental health assistance to the Sheriff’s Department. In addition, Council dealt with individuals who were struggling with rental and utility payments. There were incentives provided to encourage residents to become vaccinated. During this time, there

was an increase in individuals utilizing online services and a grant management program was approved. Recently, the County looked at the funds they are slated to receive, and those remaining unallocated funds, to determine how those funds would be allocated. We looked at histories of services provided by the County, as well as the needs of the citizens through a community survey. The areas represented were:

- Public Health Response
- Replacing Public Sector Revenue Loss
- Offering Additional Support to Essential Workers
- Investing in Water, Sewer, Broadband and Fiber Security Infrastructure
- Addressing Negative Economic Impacts of COVID-19 (specifically those areas that were disproportionately affected)

We looked at individual areas of focus that aligned with the community, Council, and the charge given to staff. This resulted in the Community Grant and Public/Private Partnership.

Funding for Small Businesses	(\$1,000,000)
Funding for Non-Profits	(\$1,000,000)
Funding for Workforce Training	(\$1,000,000)
Funding for Education Assistance	(\$1,000,000)
Funding for Senior Assistance	(\$1,000,000)
Funding for Recreation and Youth Services	(\$1,000,000)
Funding to Address Food Insecurity	(\$2,000,000)
Funding for Broadband Services in Underserved Areas	(\$2,000,000)
Funding for Affordable Housing	(\$4,000,000)
Funding for Services for Unhoused Persons	(\$2,000,000)
Funding for Third-Party Provider to Process Applications	(\$1,000,000)
Funding for Lower Richland Water Tank	(\$2,000,000)
TOTAL	(\$19,000,000)

This does not include the \$15M allocated for the Public Health Family Services Center.

b. Next Steps

1. *Proposed application process* – Mr. Brown noted the proposed application tracks what the Federal Government has requested from user of the funds. In addition, a third-party auditor has vetted the application.
2. *Proposed grant application* – Mr. Brown stated there are staff members who can provide technical assistance for those smaller entities that may not have experts on grant writing.

As a reminder, all funding must be allocated by December 31, 2024 and expended by December 31, 2026. Therefore, the County will need all reporting information from the entities in early 2026, so we can meet Treasury’s compliance requirements.

Mr. Livingston inquired if there will be assistance with the following information: “A program or service provided at a physical location in a Qualified Census Tract” and “A program or service which the eligibility criteria are such that the primary intended participants earn less than 60% of the median income”?

Mr. Brown responded he believes assistance in this area would be doable.

Mr. Livingston inquired if the answers to the questions listed under “Administrative Systems” could disqualify an entity.

Mr. Brown responded there is potential for disqualification. For example, if there was case of misuse of funds, it would depend on the resolution of said case.

Ms. Barron stated she thinks it would be helpful for an applicant to understand how you cannot qualify for the funds. (i.e. we are not funding individuals, but organizations).

Ms. McBride inquired if there is a means of showing equity or providing an equal opportunity to receive funding for areas that were disproportionately affected and underserved.

Mr. Brown responded applicants apply for the funds. We will be able to find out the area represented, if they are serving an impacted area and the spectrum of funding allocated. There is not a particular mechanism to highlight or segment out agencies by who they serve.

Ms. McBride stated historically these are the communities that do not receive the programs and funding needed. She suggested we look at a weighted system for evaluating the applications.

Mr. Brown responded the program’s criteria will be determined by this committee and Council. Provisions that address Ms. McBride’s concerns could be put in place, and would not be prohibited.

Ms. McBride noted, in order to maintain transparency, she does not want to be involved in evaluating the applications.

Ms. Newton noted it may be informative if we inquire about the program’s years of existence. She inquired if we will be tracking what districts the organizations serve.

Mr. Brown responded we will be tracking the information via the grant process.

Ms. Newton noted she wants to ensure the districts are tracked, not just the communities. She inquired if the application process will offered in various formats.

Mr. Brown responded the most efficient way to track the information will be via the online process, but we will also be providing technical assistance to those that are unable to do so.

Ms. Newton stated, it is her understanding, these funds cannot be used for operational expenses (i.e. staff salaries).

Mr. Brown indicated salaries would not be an expense you would want to put. He noted the guidelines are available through Zoom Grants.

Ms. McBride stated, for clarification, the organization cannot have funding for personnel.

Mr. Brown responded we cannot make a general statement that will apply to all scenarios. He noted, if the committee so chooses, we will have a third-party qualifier that vets the applications against the established criteria.

Ms. Barron suggested providing as much information as possible to the applicants (i.e. allowable cost sheet, definitions list). In addition, to host a workshop or seminar to assist those agencies interested in applying. She inquired if certified and single audits are

mandates from Treasury. She feels this could disqualify or force smaller entities to spend funds to provide audits they may not routinely conduct. We want to set them up to be successful.

Mr. Brown responded it will depend on the level of funding and size of the organization.

Ms. Mackey inquired what documentation needs to be provided for entities with total revenue between \$75,000 and \$750,000.

Mr. Brown responded those entities would have to provide an IRS Form 990, but he will double check to ensure that is accurate.

Ms. Lori Thomas, Assistant County Administrator, indicated anyone with revenue over \$50,000 has to submit their Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) and Statement of Activity (Income and Expense Statement). Once they reach the \$750,000 level, the entity will have to have a single audit conducted. Staff will ensure the submission requirements are clarified.

Ms. Mackey inquired about the 100-word limit cap. She noted, depending on the organization's request, they may need more than 100 words to show the full breadth of their outcomes.

Mr. Brown responded he believes that is specifically set within Zoom Grants, but organizations can attach additional information.

Ms. Mackey inquired if the online application will indicate when something is required and not allow you to proceed without providing said information. In addition, is there save capability, so the organization can come back to the application at a later time. She inquired if an organization can submit more than one application, if they have different program areas through the organization.

Mr. Brown responded staff will be seeking guidance from the committee on limiting an organization to one award. He noted they cannot duplicate, but we have not determined whether or not them receiving funding from us will prohibit them from funding from other areas related to ARPA.

Mr. Livingston inquired what documentation an agency with revenue less than \$50,000 would have to provide.

Mr. Brown responded there is a category for those agencies, but it was not included in the agenda packet.

Ms. Denise Teasdell, Budget Manager, responded applicants can save their application and come back. If documentation or a response is required, the system will not allow you to move forward until the information has been provided.

Ms. Mackey inquired if there is a limit of documents and/or size of documents that someone could upload.

Ms. Teasdell responded the application is amendable to allow for additional words, documents, etc.

Ms. Barron indicated the committee needs to address whether we are going to have a third-party qualifier to assist with the process. In addition, how an applicant gets approved and if an applicant can apply for different pots of money if they provide several different services to the community.

Ms. McBride stated, if you do not provide a limit on the number of words, documents, etc. it could become cumbersome.

5. **OTHER ITEMS** – Mr. Brown stated staff is recommending to award ARP funding to the following millage agencies:

- Recreation Commission - \$75,000
- Richland Library - \$400,000
- Midlands Technical College - \$375,000
- Columbia Mental Health - \$135,000

Mr. Livingston moved to forward to Council with a recommendation to award ARP funding to the following millage agencies: Recreation Commission (\$75,000), Richland Library (\$400,000), Midlands Technical College (\$375,000) and Columbia Area Mental Health (\$135,000), less any ARP funding previously received from Richland County, for a total amount of \$985,000, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Livingston and Barron

Not Present: Newton (Audio Problems)

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Brown stated staff is recommending to award \$200,000 in ARP funding to Transitions Homeless Center, which is the same amount they were funded in FY22.

Mr. Livingston moved to forward to Council with a recommendation to award \$200,000 in ARP funding to Transitions Homeless Center, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Livingston and Barron

Not Present: Newton (Audio Problems)

The vote in favor was unanimous.

6. **ADJOURNMENT** – Mr. Livingston moved, to adjourn, seconded by Barron.

In Favor: Livingston and Barron

Not Present: Newton (Audio Problems)

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 PM.