



Richland County Council
Community Impacts Grants Committee
MINUTES
June 13, 2023 – 3:30 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Jessica Mackey, Chair, Gretchen Barron, and Cheryl English

NOT PRESENT: Jason Branham and Paul Livingston

OTHERS PRESENT: Allison Terracio, Chakisse Newton, Derrek Pugh, Michelle Onley, Chelsea Bennett, Anette Kirylo, Angela Weathersby, Ashiya Myers, Kyle Holsclaw, Lori Thomas, Jennifer Wladischkin, Stacey Hamm, Dale Welch, Susan O’Cain, John Thompson, Leonardo Brown, Patrick Wright, Tamar Black and Zachary Cavanaugh.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chairwoman Jessica Mackey called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 PM.

Ms. Mackey noted Mr. Branham and Mr. Livingston are traveling and are unable to attend today’s meeting.

2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. Barron moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Barron, Mackey, and English

Not Present: Branham and Livingston

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **ITEM FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**

- a. **Recommended Use for \$400,000 of ARPA Funds** – Ms. Mackey remarked, at the last committee meeting, the committee reviewed the application and guidelines for Community Impact Grants. Council approved the committee’s recommendation at their June 6, 2023, Council meeting. During 3rd Reading of the FY24-25 Budget, a motion was made to send \$400,000 in ARPA funds to the Community Impact Grant Committee. Therefore, this committee needs to discuss incorporating the additional \$400,000 into the current application and guideline project.

Ms. Barron noted there were discussions and motions made by Councilmembers during the budget process regarding the non-profit organizations placed in the General Fund. There were budget motions made by Council members. The Coronavirus Ad Hoc Committee had a conversation about how we could support some of the non-profits that are not one of the Community Partners or Councilmembers have intended for them to be funded through the traditional budget process. After a lengthy discussion, the decision was made to provide \$400,000 in ARPA funds to the Community Impact Grants Committee for distribution. She indicated she would like these funds to be a part of the application process that Council has already approved. However, it would be worth having a separate application or adding a box to the existing application denoting they are applying for ARPA funds. The motions for these non-profit organizations averaged around \$100,000. She noted that no organizations would be allowed to skate the competitive side.

Mr. Pugh shared the same sentiments as Councilwoman McBride, who is concerned that smaller organizations cannot compete for the grants because they may not have the skill set to apply. He inquired if it is a conflict of interest for the Office of Small Business Opportunity to assist those who have problems filling out the grant application.

County Attorney, Patrick Wright, responded he did not know if it was a conflict of interest. If Administration believes this is the proper department, it would be fine.

Mr. Pugh stated the competitive process creates transparency and ensures the residents that Council is responsible with the taxpayers’ money. At the same time, we do not want our competitive process to “X” out those in the community doing the work because they cannot complete an application that meets the guidelines.

He knows the Office of Small Business Opportunity assists with business plans and ventures, which is why he suggested offering their services to smaller organizations.

Ms. Mackey indicated a member of the Grants Department has assisted in the past, and she would assume they could do so in this instance. She is unsure if the Office of Small Business Opportunity helped with applications in the past.

Mr. Leonardo Brown, County Administrator, declared they may have taken phone calls or provided general information when we received COVID funds applications. He stated that he generally has no issue with the office assisting, but he would not want any member to feel they were sent down the wrong path by the County and did not get the funds they needed.

Ms. Mackey specified the organizations need to be non-profits, but she thinks we can figure out how to help individuals needing help. The committee has done a good job streamlining the application and simplifying the process. She said we can assist with staff and the Grants Department if needed.

Ms. Barron asserted in our previous meeting that we would have technical assistance and workshops so applicants would have an audience with staff to review the application. She noted that the COVID application was very detailed, but this process will be much simpler for the applicants. She reminded her colleagues we are working within two (2) different guidelines, the ARPA and Community Impact Grants, which the applicants still must adhere to.

Ms. Newton specified the funding level is up to \$400,000. She stated she would like to see things as standard as possible. She would like to see the guidelines for the ARPA funds mirror the guidelines for Community Impact Grant funding.

Ms. Mackey detailed the application everyone would complete to receive Community Impact Grant funds, which committee members will review and make recommendations to Council. She inquired if Ms. Newton would like to have all applicants fill out the additional ARPA questions.

Ms. Newton indicated her intent was for all applicants to fill out the questions, which will assist with the County funding the maximum number of organizations.

Ms. Mackey requested Administration to provide an overview of how the additional information could assist us with meeting the requirements.

Ms. Lori Thomas, Assistant County Administrator, stated that in speaking with Guidehouse, they recommended requesting additional information in the process guidelines. She noted we cannot comingle funds. The proposed changes are as follows:

- ***The Program Will Not Fund:*** CIG Awards may be funded in whole or in part by SLFRF funds authorized by the ARPA. As such, SLFRF funds cannot be used to replenish financial reserves, satisfaction of settlements or judgments, or undermine CDC guidance and recommendations.
- ***Grant Application:*** Geographic information – what areas of Richland County will be the project focus. **Please note census tracts if possible.**
- ***Grant Application:*** Project Description – This is the “meat” of the application where you describe your project – who, when, what, why, and **where as specifically as possible including characteristics of the community or individuals that will directly benefit from the project.**
- ***Grant Application:*** Benefit to the Community – Detail who is being served by your project, geographic location of your audience, how the project impacts the community. **Please be as specific as possible about target population.**

Ms. Thomas asserted the “SLFRF Project Scope of Work Development Form” will assist staff in walking through the applications to determine who would have projects and activities that would be eligible for the \$400,000.

Ms. Barron stated that for clarification, there would be one application, staff will be checking boxes, and one applicant could receive money from both funding sources.

Ms. Thomas responded the applicant could receive the funding for specific activities.

Ms. Barron indicated her concern is this is a difficult task to do.

Ms. Thomas replied since these are ARPA funds, we have the benefit of using our contract vendor. While it may be more difficult, you may have one or two applicants with a project that consumes the \$400,000 (i.e., Community Partners).

Ms. Barron inquired if the document’s intent is to limit the funding level to \$50,000.

Ms. Thomas responded in the affirmative.

Ms. English inquired, if you knowingly do not qualify for ARPA funding, do you still have to fill out the document?

Ms. Thomas stated no section in the application asks ARPA-specific questions. We ask they be aware this is a pot of available funding and give us as much information as possible. This does increase their probability of receiving funds if they are eligible.

Ms. English acknowledged as people continue to fill out grant applications, it helps them move toward sustainability and foster the ability to apply for other funds from additional organizations. The guidelines help to build the needs of the organization. In other words, they can grow by discovering what worked and what did not. Some of the unintentional outcomes are increased community involvement, better communication, and the development of social circles. She does not want to minimize their ability because they will continue to grow as they continue through this process.

Ms. Barron inquired if this is a recommendation the staff has brought to the committee.

Ms. Mackey responded it is more of “this is the information on how to address the money received.”

Ms. Thomas replied this is information on an opportunity we could move forward with the process.

Ms. Barron moved to utilize the information in the agenda packet presented by the staff.

Ms. Mackey inquired, based on the motion, if there was any clarifying language needed to move forward with the application.

Ms. Thomas responded if the County Attorney is satisfied, she is also.

Mr. Patrick Wright, County Attorney, stated he believes the motion is adequate if they understand the intent.

Ms. Thomas indicated the idea would be for Council to approve the motion. Once the motion is approved, staff could move forward with workshops and open the application process on July 1, 2023.

For clarification, Ms. Mackey asked if we are staying with \$50,000 or if the amount is changing.

Ms. Barron expressed she was concerned we might be mudding the waters by increasing the amount. As previously stated, there were at least four motions where the organization’s need averaged \$100,000. She noted she would refrain from increasing the amount.

Ms. English inquired if we wanted to add one of the organizations from the budget process to the list of Community Partners.

Ms. Barron inquired if that was appropriate. She pointed out that the nine (9) Community Partners went before Council and was approved. She asked if the committee has the authority to add Community Partners to this category or if Council must approve the additional partners.

Ms. Mackey maintained the only matter the committee is addressing is the application. If we need to discuss anything else, it will need to be taken up later by the committee. She requested Ms. Barron repeat her motion.

Ms. Barron moved to accept the information presented by staff in the agenda packet, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Barron, Mackey, and English.

Not Present: Branham and Livingston

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Mackey inquired if this item could be taken up at tonight’s Council meeting.

Ms. Anette Kirylo, Clerk to Council, responded the committee’s report is not on tonight’s agenda because this meeting was scheduled after the Council agenda was prepared.

Ms. Mackey inquired about the next steps.

Mr. Wright pointed out it cannot be on tonight’s agenda because notice was not given to the public.

Ms. Kirylo noted the next Council meeting will be July 11th.

Ms. Barron indicated she believes we should have a Special Called meeting so that we will be able to meet the deadline for opening the application process.

Ms. Mackey indicated she will work with the Chair and the Clerk’s Office to schedule a Special Called meeting.

Ms. English acknowledged the four (4) organizations brought before Council during the budget process were Communities in School, the Wiley Kennedy, Midlands Food Bank, and St. John Foundation. She requested the committee consider adding those entities to the list of Community Partners.

**Community Impact Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2023**

As a reminder, Ms. Mackey stated the committee previously voted on nine (9) organizations deemed as Community Partners. The committee felt these organizations contributed to the whole County and had been longtime partners in providing essential services in key impact areas. The committee sent the recommendation to Council, and was approved. She noted in the current application; there is a 60%/40% split. In addition, 60% will not fund the nine (9) organizations at the amount they were previously funded.

Ms. Barron stated that we had several non-profits that applied as part of the General Fund budget last year. Then they were moved over to the competitive grant side to be funded. It was her understanding the funds were set aside, and they did not have to go through the competitive process. She inquired if we could do something similar with the four (4) organizations notated by Ms. English. The organizations could submit an application through Zoom Grants and go through the same rigorous process that all the other applicants, noting they are not in the 60% category but the 40% + \$400,000 category. Their funding would already be there.

Mr. Brown responded the budget motion did not anticipate that with the \$400,000. Therefore, this would not be possible because that is not how it got to the committee.

Ms. Barron stated since it was a part of the motion that came from the body, could this committee make another motion that would reflect her recommendation.

Mr. Brown expressed that this was a part of the budget process, which had three readings and a public hearing. You are potentially talking about a budget amendment. The request would be to amend the motion that came out of the budget process, which would also require three readings and a public hearing.

Ms. Barron inquired if these organizations are cleared as a part of the General Fund, then would they follow the guidelines of the \$400,000. If they applied and it is solely General Fund dollars, could they not qualify as a part of the process she spoke of?

Mr. Brown responded that if the group qualifies for the 60%/40% split, the 60% goes toward the nine (9) Community Partners. If they are eligible for the 40%, you would allocate up to \$50,000 to those organizations.

Ms. Barron asserted that she felt obligated to make sure these organizations have an opportunity to be seated at the table.

Ms. English acknowledged she thinks we are all on the same page and just wants these organizations that have been working with children to be able to continue their funding throughout this year. She inquired if there was a way we could increase their funding.

Ms. Mackey stated she did not understand Ms. English's statement "to make sure these organizations can continue their work." She noted she had not decided about "not" funding any organization. All of the entities have the opportunity to apply. The point of this is to give everyone the same chance. In the past, not everyone has started off on the same playing field.

4. **ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. Barron moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Barron, Mackey, and English

Not Present: Branham and Livingston

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:24 PM.