



Richland County Council
Coronavirus AD Hoc Committee Meeting
MINUTES
June 27, 2023 – 2:30 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Gretchen Barron, Chair, Jason Branham (arrived at 3:19 PM), and Chakisse Newton

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Livingston, Allison Terracio, Jesica Mackey, Michelle Onley, Sarah Harris, Lori Thomas, Leonardo Brown, Angela Weathersby, Anette Kirylo, Kyle Holsclaw, Patrick Wright, Dale Welch, Sarah Harris, and Ashiya Myers

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairwoman Gretchen Barron called the meeting to order at approximately 2:30 PM.

Ms. Barron noted that Mr. Branham notified her he would arrive late to the meeting this afternoon.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. June 1, 2023 – Ms. Newton moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Barron and Newton

Not Present: Branham

The vote in favor was unanimous.

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

In Favor: Barron and Newton

Not Present: Branham

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**

- a. American Rescue Plan Application Review and Recommendation – Ms. Barron stated that we have been discussing the applications presented by our third party for the last several meetings. Thus far, the applicants have submitted all the necessary documentation and have gone through several layers of review to ensure they are properly before us and in line with the American Rescue Plan application. We are down to the last three categories. There is one other category we will take up separately. She noted our desire has always been to ensure the dollars get out to the community. Community members are concerned about the length of time we have taken to go through the applications, but we wanted to ensure we had a transparent process and that we set every organization funded up for success.

1. Education Assistance – Ms. Lori Thomas, Assistant County Administrator, noted we had recommendations of \$1,057,422. Since then, Riverbanks Society has withdrawn its application for \$125,000, bringing the category down to \$932,422. The recommended groups are:

- Richland County Public Library (Education Studio: Helping Young Readers with Learning Loss - \$64,000);
- Lower Richland Alumni Foundation (The Educational Assistance Project of the Lower Richland Alumni Foundation - \$155,931.75);
- Lynn Brown Inspires: Young CEOs and Leaders of Tomorrow (Young CEOs and Leaders of Tomorrow - \$50,000);
- SC Thrive (Connecting Richland County Schools to Mental Health First Aid - \$179,740);
- Planned Parenthood South Atlantic (Comprehensive Sex Education in Richland County - 100,000);

- United Way of the Midlands (Midlands Reading Consortium - \$200,000); and
- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands (Project Learn - \$182,250)

Ms. Barron inquired if any of these organizations have been funded in another category.

Ms. Thomas responded Richland Library was funded in another category.

Ms. Barron inquired if a reason was given for Riverbanks Society's withdrawal.

Ms. Thomas responded in the negative.

Ms. Newton requested Ms. Thomas explain the process after the County recommends an organization for an award. She noted that one thing that concerned her was everyone outlined a timeline and body of work for a particular timeframe, and unfortunately, we are behind schedule. There might be an organization with a single calendar year program, but we are already in month six. She inquired how the desk review process would take this into consideration.

Ms. Thomas indicated the desk review process begins following the award. At that time, they will get more in-depth with the applicants. They will request additional information, documentation, the organization's processes and procedures for monitoring and receiving the grants, etc. Based upon that, they will then assign them a risk category and recommend monitoring for the organizations. Thus far, we have seven (7) desk reviews back, all of which are low-risk. For those that require the least amount of monitoring, the County may do those internally. However, we will have our third-party vendor involved to ensure the grantees receive the assistance they need to ensure they stay in compliance and can provide the necessary documentation. She noted the ARPA funds can be used retroactively if the groups began the projects without County funds. The organizations could potentially request reimbursement for expenditures if they comply with all federal requirements. Otherwise, they may only be able to do a one-year program. If they did so, it may require less money, and those unexpended funds could be reallocated to the Family Services Center.

Ms. Newton inquired if there would be a determination of capacity to do the work or has everyone that made it to the list have the capacity to do what they have asked.

Ms. Thomas replied they would look at capacity, which is assigned during the risk assessment, and could be classified as a high-risk.

Ms. Newton stated we discussed potentially having a cushion of funds if there was any claw back for items not allowed by ARPA. She inquired how that would play out and if there was something else we needed to do to ensure we had that flexibility.

Ms. Thomas maintained that we would have to return the funds if we do not obligate funds by December 31, 2024, and then expend them by December 31, 2026. Therefore, she is unsure if we can build a cushion, as we cannot set funds aside in a "rainy day" fund.

Ms. Newton inquired if we are looking at outcomes as we do the monitoring process.

Ms. Thomas replied that for the organization to be compliant, they would have to respond on their outcomes.

Ms. Barron moved to fund the applicants Richland Library, Lower Richland Alumni Foundation, Lynn Brown Inspires: Young CEOs and Leaders of Tomorrow, SC Thrive, Planned South Parenthood South Atlantic, United Way of the Midlands, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Midlands up to the amounts they requested and pending any desk reviews, seconded by Ms. Newton.

In Favor: Barron and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

2. Food Insecurity – Ms. Thomas indicated we allocated \$2M toward the y Food Insecurity category. She noted we have already funded Senior Resources for FY22-23 in the amount of \$548,046. The groups that have applied for the remaining \$1,451,954 in funding are Palmetto Aids Life Support Services, Inc. (PALSS – Items for Food Insecurity - \$58,256); Senior Resources (Senior Meals Programs FY 24 & ½ of FY25 – \$822,069); Midlands Housing Alliance (MHA Food Insecurity - \$451,800); Prisma Health -Midlands (Physicians Fighting Food Insecurity - \$380,003); Serve and Connect (Greg's Groceries in Richland County - \$77,500); and The Nurturing Center (Community Impact Project - \$150,000).

Mr. Livingston inquired if we have enough funding to cover all of the requests.

Ms. Thomas responded in the negative. The total funding request is \$1,939,628, so we must reduce the requests by \$487,674.

Ms. Barron expressed that there are certain organizations that, if they did not exist in the community, we would know they did not exist. Therefore, she wanted the committee to keep in

mind that this is not about who is your favorite but who is needed and who has the impact. She noted we see Senior Resources on the list twice, but we are talking about two different budget years.

Ms. Newton stated it is her understanding the request from The Nurturing Center includes transportation-related expenses. She inquired how that fit into this category and the guidelines from ARPA.

Ms. Thomas confirmed the consultant noted a good bit of transportation-related expenses.

Ms. Barron noted we had previous conversations regarding purchasing automobiles, debt elimination, etc. She inquired if that could be factored into this request.

Ms. Thomas responded the purchase of automobiles was recommended to be red-lined, but this is auto expenses (i.e., gas, mileage, etc.). The expenses are relative to deliveries of food.

The County Administrator, Leonardo Brown, believes the committee wants to feel the value of the finances being provided are hitting the targeted service, and there is a question of whether the value of the transportation portion of the expenditure is significant enough to overcome the concern of food insecurity they are trying to address. He noted while there are federal guidelines, these are County grant funds to allocate within the ARPA guidelines.

Ms. Barron expressed the budget narrative on The Nurturing Center is quite confusing. She believes some expenses appear to be redundant, which concerns her. She acknowledged that she is uncomfortable with \$43,000 being given for transportation and maintenance of a vehicle. She noted she is unsure if the vehicle is being used 100% for this project. She inquired as to how we could make adjustments to the amount.

Mr. Patrick Wright, County Attorney, stated we do not fund the applicant's total request.

Ms. Barron declared she does not think the County would be good stewards of the funds to fund 100% of the transportation portion because it is not being solely utilized for the project.

Ms. Newton inquired if the organization could not do the project because the County did not fund the total request, would the organization not receive the funding.

Ms. Thomas responded applicants do have the ability to refuse the grant.

Ms. Barron stated she does not think it is the County's responsibility to fully fund the operations of Senior Resources. Still, if they get a decrease in funding, she is concerned about the number of people that will be missing meals. She noted when she delivered meals, she delivered to the same houses, which means those individuals depend on those meals. In addition, she stressed that Prisma Health regularly provides services in the community. At this point, we need to determine how we can shave the \$487,674 from the requests.

Ms. Newton inquired if Senior Resources' request is to expand existing services.

Ms. Thomas replied the request is not an expansion but a continuation of the services. The documentation submitted is for FY24 and June - December of FY25.

Ms. Newton inquired about the amount of the June - December of FY25 request.

Ms. Thomas responded it would be \$274,023.

Ms. Barron stated when we initially took the applications, applicants had a timeline they were working under. She inquired about how many months we are behind.

Ms. Thomas indicated approximately six months.

Ms. Barron stated if the applicant had a budget based upon twelve months, and six months have passed, could we say we are funding from July 1st - December 31st and make adjustments?

Ms. Thomas replied one thing to consider is that when the applications were opened, the guidelines indicated the funds would need to be committed by June 2024 and expended by October 31, 2024.

For clarification, Ms. Barron stated, essentially, there is no loss of time if they utilize the funds by a particular date.

Mr. Livingston asserted there was a time when there was a Council on Aging that was funded through the General Fund. When the Council on Aging was dissolved, Senior Resources became the agency that dealt with seniors, which is why the County supports the organization as they do.

Ms. Newton recommended funding most of the organizations at the level they requested. Regarding Senior Resources, she would take out the \$274,023, so the funding provided is for a solid fiscal year.

She would suggest not allocating funds to The Nurturing Center. With those recommendations, the requested amount would be reduced by \$424,046. We would still need to identify an additional reduction of \$63,628.

Ms. Barron asserted if we are going to make cuts, it needs to be justifiable across the board to all organizations. She inquired if other organizations have requested funding for a year and a half as Senior Resources did.

Ms. Thomas responded she could not say specifically because it was not spelled out in the application. She can say the timing to spend the funds is the same.

Ms. Barron indicated because Senior Resources was detailed in their application, we know they planned for a year and a half. Generally speaking, the other applicants also have a year and a half.

Mr. Brown clarified as long as the organizations abide by the federal guidelines, there is no proportion or synchronized amount. As the grantor, we have full sway within the bounds of the federal guidelines.

Ms. Barron inquired if we would be noncompliant if we decided only to fund programs for one year.

Ms. Sarah Harris, Grants Director, responded the County holds the discretion to release the funds and have them expended within the timeframe established. Certainly, there are things in the process and background with our team, but we can set a shorter timeline if necessary.

Ms. Barron inquired if we looked at a one-year funding cycle; is there a recommendation of the percentage/number we could make adjustments on each applicant for consistency?

Ms. Harris asserted it might require further review regarding how those responsibilities are scaled back. Operationally if we were to tie the date down, our vendors would work in the background with the risk assessment process to determine whether they have the full range of capabilities to execute the activities outlined in their grant application.

Ms. Barron noted the most challenging thing is reducing the funding levels because we have applicants in this category who are worthy of being funded.

Mr. Livingston inquired how the \$548,046 for Senior Resources ties into the available funding.

Ms. Thomas responded the \$548,046 has been backed out of the \$2M available.

Ms. Barron stated, for clarification, we were working on this process, along with the budget cycle, last fiscal year. We already outlined the categories, so now we are backing that amount out of the available funding.

Mr. Brown stated that the committee expressed early on that they wanted to give more consideration to organizations with established processes or programs. In addition, concerns have been raised about funding an agency. In looking at that, the math adds up.

Ms. Newton moved, pending a successful desk review, to fund the following organizations in an amount up to: Palmetto Aids Life Support Services, Inc. - \$58,256; Senior Resources - \$548,046; Midlands Housing Alliance - \$419,986; Prisma Health-Midlands - \$348,189; and Serve and Connect - \$77,477. Ms. Barron seconded the motion.

In Favor: Branham, Barron, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. Workforce Training – Ms. Barron noted Ms. Newton has recused herself from this category.

Ms. Newton stated she recused herself from this category because she works for the Midlands Fatherhood Coalition's umbrella corporation.

Ms. Thomas indicated there was a total allocation of \$1M in Workforce Training. The qualified recommendations total \$1,471,111. The recommended organizations in this category are the Alston Wilkes Society (Non-Profits: Alston Wilkes Society – Employment Supports for Former Offenders - \$80,000); USC Columbia Technology Incubator (USC Columbia Technology Incubator Workforce Development Accelerator - \$680,400); Midlands Fatherhood Coalition (Nonprofit/Workforce Development to Strengthen Economically Disadvantaged Families - \$50,000); Richland County Library (Workforce Digital Equity Program - \$83,750); Lower Richland Alumni Foundation (The Workforce Training Project of the Lower Richland Alumni Foundation - \$101,961.25); and National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina Successful Transitions (Synergy Success - \$475,000). She noted the Alston Wilkes Society, Richland County Library, and Lower Richland Alumni Foundation have been recommended for funding in one or more other categories.

To reduce the recommended funding amounts to meet the available funding, Ms. Mackey suggested only funding the top four scoring organizations.

Ms. Barron stated she is comfortable with the applicants listed. She indicated the notes from the third-party consultant make her feel more confident with the recommendations. She requested Ms. Thomas to assist with determining the reduction to the six applicants if we equally divided the \$471,111 overage among them.

Ms. Thomas stated the reduction would need to be \$78,518.55.

Mr. Branham requested the proportion for each applicant as it relates to the total amount requested.

Ms. Thomas responded that the percentages represented are as follows: Alston Wilkes Society - 5.44%; the USC Columbia Technology Incubator - 46.3%; Midlands Fatherhood Coalition - 3.4%; Richland County Library - 5.7%; Lower Richland Alumni Association - 6.93%; and the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina Successful Transitions - 32.3%.

Mr. Branham requested to divide the \$471,111 by the percentages represented by each entity.

Ms. Thomas stated the amounts would be as follows: Alston Wilkes Society - \$2,563; USC Columbia Technology Incubator - \$218,125; Midlands Fatherhood Coalition - \$17,000; Richland County Library - \$4,774; Lower Richland Alumni Association - \$7,035; and the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina Successful Transitions - \$153,425. She expressed that if this is the direction of the motion, she would suggest having a financial person proportionally apply the allocation to their request.

Mr. Livingston inquired if the intent is to proportionally reduce the allocations for all entities.

Mr. Branham responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Livingston indicated he would prefer to get rid of something instead of cutting the funding to each applicant.

Ms. Mackey noted she does not see why we would reduce funding to someone who submitted a good application. She suggested not funding some entities versus reducing funding for all entities.

Ms. Barron moved to reduce each applicant's requested amount in proportion to the allocation requested, seconded by Mr. Branham.

In Favor: Branham and Barron

Recuse: Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Barron indicated that we have awarded funding in all categories except Small Business and Youth Services, a future meeting will be set to discuss how to proceed with this category.

b. Staff Updates:

1. Desk Reviews – Mr. Livingston stated that the information was shared information earlier in the meeting.

5. ADJOURNMENT – Ms. Newton moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Branham.

In Favor: Branham, Barron, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:50 PM.

June 27, 2023



Richland County Council

STATEMENT OF RECUSAL

In accordance with Section 8-13-700(B) [provides in part that no public official, public member or public employee may make, participate in making, or in any way attempt to use their official office, membership or employment to influence a governmental decision in which they, a member of their immediate family, an individual with whom they are associated, or a business with which they are associated has an economic interest.], I hereby recuse myself from all votes, deliberations and other action on the following matter(s):

(Please add agenda item number and description):

Item 4 a. 1 workforce training
Allocation of ARPA funding for workforce.

REASONS FOR DISQUALIFICATION:

One applicant (Midlands Fatherhood Coalition) is a subsidiary / child organization of my recent client The SC Center for fathers and families.

CHAKISSE NEWTON

Print and sign your name

Chakisse Newton

Print and sign your name

6/27/23

Date

6/27/23

Date received by Clerk Dept.