



Richland County Council
Community Impacts Grants Committee
MINUTES
May 25, 2023 – 4:30 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: Don Weaver, Michelle Onley, Chelsea Bennett, Anette Kirylo, Angela Weathersby, Abhijit Deshpande, Ashiya Myers, Kyle Holsclaw, Lori Thomas, Jennifer Wladischkin, Stacey Hamm, Dale Welch, Patrick Wright, Susan O’Cain, Leonardo Brown, and John Thompson

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chairwoman Jesica Mackey called the meeting to order at approximately 4:30 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. May 11, 2023 – Mr. Livingston moved to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Ms. English.
In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English
The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. English moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Mr. Branham.
In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English
The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. **ITEM FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**
 - a. Proposed FY24 Community Impact Grant Application – Ms. Mackey noted at the last meeting the committee looked at the draft applications that the Discretionary Grant and Hospitality Tax committees have used. The committee provided feedback on things they wanted to see in the Community Impact Grant application. Staff addressed those edits and have provided a draft application for review.

Mr. Livingston inquired if someone could submit an application that would cross multiple areas. For example, if someone is dealing with workforce development but also has an educational program.

Ms. Mackey responded she believes that would be possible.

Ms. Lori Thomas, Assistant County Administrator, responded the application requests for the applicant to select all applicable areas.

Ms. Barron indicated if we are taking an application from an organization that is proposing a particular project or program, and they select all that apply, are we stating this one program could cover multiple areas, not that they would have multiple programs within one application?

Ms. Mackey replied it was her understanding it would be one program per application but that the one program could touch many areas. We can spell that out in the guidelines section if that needs to be clearer.

Ms. Barron mentioned for consistency; we may want to include the language “select all that apply” for question #4.

Ms. Mackey stated that questions #8, “Total Project Cost,” and #9, “Total Amount Requested,” were requested at the committee’s last meeting to clearly understand the total project cost versus the total amount requested. The discussion centered on ensuring that the County was not funding the entire program but contributing toward the project. In addition, a comment was by one of our colleagues related to determining the percentage amount of the project on the back end.

Ms. Thomas replied that they could add a question if it does not calculate it on the back end.

Ms. Mackey inquired if the committee was interested in the organization's total budget or just the total project cost.

Ms. Thomas indicated later in the application there is a budget section. However, the application will not allow you to enter multiple budget questions, so they have requested the organization's last two year's total budgets as required documentation.

Ms. English inquired, based on when the award is made, if there is a timeframe when they need to have this done.

Ms. Thomas replied that the projects were intended to be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

Ms. Mackey noted there were some comments regarding question #13: "Please describe detailed plans to sustain the project after one year of funding." This came out of the committee's concern about organizations looking at ways to fund the projects and not solely depending on the County in hopes that we can diversify the organizations we support each year.

Mr. Livingston inquired if the community partners would be allowed to submit applications for these funds.

Ms. Mackey responded the community partners would still be required to complete an application.

Mr. Livingston inquired if there were two pools of money.

Ms. Mackey replied there are not two pools. The one mill set aside for the Community Impact Grants will be split, and 60% will be utilized to fund the community partners. The other 40% will be used to fund other organizations.

Mr. Livingston inquired if an organization received funding from the 60% would they be able to receive funding from the 40%.

Ms. Mackey indicated the committee still needs to determine the guidelines for submission of multiple applications.

Ms. Barron suggested including ARPA funds as a funding source listed in question #16.

Ms. Mackey agreed with that suggestion.

- b. Community Impact Grant Guidelines – Ms. Mackey stated the "Program Description," which sets aside the millage amount of 1 mill. Then there is the proposed "Community Impact Grant Timeline," when the application window opens and closes, the committee meeting date, award notifications, and quarterly and final report deadlines. She inquired if "Richland County will not award grants to individuals, fraternal organizations and organizations that support and/or endorse political campaigns" and "Religious organizations may receive funding..." is standard application language.

Ms. Thomas responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Mackey indicated the fund is set up as single-year funding. Organizations can apply for funding up to \$40,000. If the organization is funded, the organization must wait one fiscal year before applying again. If you receive One-Year funding in FY23, you may not apply in FY24.

Ms. Barron inquired if there is an expiration date intended for the community partners, or are we of the mindset that they will be able to apply each year?

Ms. Mackey responded that it will be a decision of the committee.

Ms. Barron maintained that the community partners are the "preferred vendors," as such, they are allowed to continue to apply as long as they comply with the guidelines. For example, Senior Resources is a community partner and provides ongoing service to Richland County and its citizens. She would encourage the committee to say they should not have to wait a year. If we want to put a time limit on them, the committee could revisit their validity every three years.

Ms. Mackey suggested the organizations be funded up to \$50,000 instead of \$40,000. In addition, to allow organizations to apply each year and the committee decides whether to fund them.

Ms. Barron moved to fund organizations up to \$50,000 and eliminate the language, "If the organization is funded, the organization must wait one fiscal year before applying again," seconded by Mr. Livingston.

Ms. English inquired if the organization were not compliant, would we know?

Ms. Thomas responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Branham inquired how the \$50,000 compares to the amounts we have given the community partners in the past.

Ms. Mackey replied previously, it was up to \$30,000. She mentioned that the up to \$50,000 does not apply to the community partners.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Mackey inquired if staff could create a separate section for community partners to reduce confusion regarding the up to \$50,000 grant cap.

Ms. Thomas replied staff would work on putting language in the "Program Description" delineating the two groups and where to find the list.

Ms. Mackey stated there is a detailed list of things that will not be funded. In addition, the "Application Package" section details what needs to be included in the applicant's package. The "Application Evaluation" is broken up as follows:

- Project Summary – up to 35 points
- Project Impact – up to 30 points
- Organization Background – up to 20 points
- Budget – up to 15 points

Ms. Barron inquired if we are utilizing the same scoring format/rubric as in the past.

Ms. Thomas responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Mackey acknowledged the committee needs to address whether an organization can submit more than one application or program. This would apply to the community partners, as well as other organizations.

Ms. Barron asserted her suggestion would be not to allow multiple applications. She believes we will see duplication of services and does not want to see staff go through what they are going through now with the ARPA funding. Historically, we are seeing that organizations are continuing to apply for Richland County money, and we have become permanent in their budget with no plan for sustainability.

Mr. Livingston maintained he does not want organizations to apply for both pots of Community Impact funding. Still, he does want to allow them to apply for other funding (i.e., hospitality, accommodations, etc.).

Ms. Barron moved for applicants to only be allowed to apply once for the Community Impact Grants, seconded by Ms. English.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Barron indicated this process is different. She assumes because it is different, we will be doing technical assistance workshops to educate those applying regarding the differences.

Ms. Thomas stated that would be the intent, as well as a communications campaign, once the process is approved.

Ms. Mackey noted this is an application we are putting out for the first time. Nothing says we cannot amend or adjust the application in the next cycle to match the need(s). Also, the body will still be required to determine the amount organizations are awarded.

Ms. Barron stated for clarification there is no set amount for the community partners.

Ms. Mackey replied the community partners will have to submit their applications and the body will determine the amount they are funded.

Mr. Livingston moved to forward the Community Impact Grant application to Council for approval, seconded by Ms. Barron.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Livingston moved to forward the Community Impact Grant guidelines to Council for approval, seconded by Ms. English.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

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

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15 PM.