



Richland County Council
Community Impacts Grants Committee
MINUTES
September 12, 2023 – 1:00 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Chakisse Newton (via Zoom), Chelsea Bennett, Anette Kirylo, Kyle Holsclaw, Lori Thomas, Stacey Hamm, Leonardo Brown, Patrick Wright, Sarah Harris, Abhijit Deshpande, Aric Jensen, Tamar Black, Angela Weathersby, Ashiya Myers, Jennifer Wladischkin, Susan O’Cain, Dante Roberts, and Zachary Cavanaugh

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chairwoman Jessica Mackey called the meeting to order at approximately 1:07 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. August 29, 2023 – Ms. Barron moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Mr. Livingston.
In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English
The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. Barron moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. English.
In Favor: Branham, Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English
The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEM FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**
 - a. Application Review – Ms. Mackey noted that we reviewed the community partners’ list at the last committee meeting and made recommendations. At this meeting, we will be focusing on the other non-profits. The total amount available to be awarded is \$872,000. The applications were all reviewed and scored by the third-party consultant. The committee members were provided with the scoring rubric and the applications.

As we look at the applications, Ms. Barron admonished the committee to keep in mind that even though the score could be perceived as their ability to perform, there are programs near and dear to our hearts. We want to put ourselves at an advantage to provide these services and do them with as little exposure to the County as possible.

Mr. Livingston stated that one thing he is considering is that a couple of agencies did an excellent job for us last year. There were agencies he felt did some things relative to the Strategic Plan that received lump sum funding. He will be considering some of the agencies because they have demonstrated what they can do.

Mr. Livingston moved to award \$50,000 to Communities in Schools of South Carolina and \$50,000 to the Career Development Center at St. John (a division of Community Development Corporation), seconded by Ms. Barron.

Mr. Branham indicated he plans to vote in favor of Communities in Schools but is less familiar with the other organization.

Ms. Barron stated she fully supports the work that both these organizations do, and they have done an excellent job for us in the past. Her challenge is one scored very low, and the only rationale in supporting this organization is that they have a track record for their work in the community. At a later date, there needs to be a discussion on how, or if, the County provides resources to ensure those organizations who

have done an excellent job are offered technical assistance to ensure their paperwork aligns with the programmatic things they do.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Branham

The vote was in favor.

Ms. English moved to award \$50,000 to Tri-City Visionaries, Inc., \$50,000 to Serve & Connect, and \$50,000 to Olympia Community Educational Foundation, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

Ms. English noted that Serve & Connect received a low score; however, they have been working in the community with those with developmental disabilities.

Ms. Newton inquired about what we mean by County staff assisting individuals with their paperwork.

Ms. Mackey requested to table this item until after the current discussion.

Ms. Barron noted she would be voting “no” on this motion because the organizations scored low.

Mr. Livingston inquired if Serve & Connect received funding from another source.

Ms. Thomas responded Serve & Connect received ARPA funding in the amount of \$77,477.

Ms. Barron stated she compared this list of organizations to the list of entities already receiving ARPA funding and the amount they received. As well as the programming part to ensure we are not funding the same program twice.

Mr. Livingston made a substitute motion to divide the question, seconded by Ms. Barron.

Ms. English moved to award \$50,000 to the Olympia Community Educational Foundation, seconded by Mr. Livingston.

Mr. Livingston made a substitute motion to award \$25,000 to the Olympia Community Educational Foundation, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Livingston, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Branham and Barron

The vote was in favor.

Ms. English moved to award \$50,000 to Tri-City Visionaries, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Mackey and English

Opposed: Branham, Livingston, and Barron

The motion failed.

Mr. Branham moved to award \$25,000 to Epworth Children’s Home, seconded by Mr. Livingston.

Ms. Barron noted Epworth Children’s Home received ARPA funding.

Ms. Mackey acknowledged we want to make that a point. Still, our application only precluded organizations from funding if they had received hospitality or accommodations tax funding. We did not state that ARPA funding was a disqualifying factor.

Ms. Thomas indicated Epworth Children’s Home received \$131,901 in ARPA funding.

Ms. Barron maintained that given the number of applications we received, we want to be good stewards of our funds and look at opportunities to fund different and/or new organizations.

Mr. Branham stated he is looking for the organizations that are most in need and least able to help themselves when awarding the grant funding.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Mackey moved to award \$50,000 to the Northeast Columbia Empowerment Coalition and \$20,000 to The RAM Foundation.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Branham

The vote was in favor.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$50,000 to Turn90, \$50,000 to the Midlands Technical College Foundation, \$16,000 to Girl Scouts of South Carolina Mountains to Midlands, and \$8,5000 to the Southeastern Chapter of the National Safety Council, seconded by Ms. English.

Mr. Branham moved to divide the question, seconded by Mr. Livingston.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$50,000 to Turn90, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Branham

The vote was in favor.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$50,000 to the Midlands Technical College Foundation, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$16,000 to the Girl Scouts of South Carolina Mountains to Midlands, seconded by Ms. English.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$8,500 to the Southeastern Chapter of the National Safety Council, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Branham and Livingston

The vote was in favor.

Mr. Branham moved to award \$16,000 to the Indian Waters Council, Boy Scouts of America, seconded by Mr. Livingston.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Livingston moved to award \$15,000 to the Alston Wilkes Society, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Branham moved to award \$10,000 to Harvest Hope, seconded by Ms. Barron.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Livingston moved to award \$20,166 to Able South Carolina, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, and Mackey

Opposed: Branham

Recuse: English (due to Able being in collaboration with her employer)

The vote was in favor.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$14,855 to W. J. Keenan Cluster STEAM Booster Club/NoMa STEAM, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Branham

The vote was in favor.

Ms. Mackey moved to award \$26,000 to Sistercare, Inc. and \$50,000 to Palmetto Place Children & Youth Services, seconded by Ms. Barron.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$10,000 to the Midlands Education and Business Alliance, \$50,000 to the She Did That Community Advocate Foundation, and \$50,000 to the Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina, Inc.

Mr. Livingston made a substitute motion to divide the question, seconded by Ms. Barron.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$10,000 to the Midlands Education and Business Alliance, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Branham

The vote was in favor.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$50,000 to the She Did That Community Advocate Foundation, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Barron

Opposed: Branham, Livingston, Mackey, and English

The motion failed.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$50,000 to Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina, Inc., seconded by Ms. Mackey.

Mr. Livingston made a substitute motion to award \$25,000 to Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina, Inc., seconded by Ms. Barron.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Livingston suggested not allocating the total amount at this time.

Ms. Mackey maintained she believes it is the duty of the committee to allocate all of the funding.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$50,000 to the Brookland Center for Economic Change and \$49,665 to 7435 Monticello Road, Columbia SC 29203 (Columbia International University), seconded by Ms. Mackey.

Mr. Livingston inquired if Brookland Center for Economic Change was in Richland County.

Ms. Thomas responded the address on the application was a Columbia address.

Ms. Barron withdrew her motion for Brookland Center for Economic Change until staff could determine where the organization is located.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Branham

The vote was in favor.

Ms. English moved to award \$50,000 to Homeless No More, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Branham, Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Livingston

The vote was in favor.

Ms. Thomas indicated the Brookland Center for Economic Change's request is to expand their facilities in Northeast Columbia.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$50,000 to the Brookland Center for Economic Change, seconded by Mr. Livingston.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Branham

The vote was in favor.

Mr. Branham moved to award \$50,000 to the Midlands Area Food Bank, seconded by Ms. English.

Ms. Barron noted this is one of the organizations that did not score as high as some of the others. She is familiar with the work they have been doing. She thinks what they are doing is important, but we must find a creative approach to provide resources for the organizations so their paperwork looks like what they are doing.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Mackey moved to award \$15,000 to Healthy Learners, seconded by Ms. English.

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

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$25,000 to Christian Assistance Bridge, seconded by Ms. Mackey.

In Favor: Branham, Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Livingston

The vote was in favor.

Ms. English moved to award \$50,000 to Home Work of America, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Branham, Barron, Mackey, and English

Opposed: Livingston

The vote was in favor.

Mr. Livingston moved to award \$20,000 to the Nickelodeon Theatre, seconded by Ms. English.

Ms. Thomas indicated that the Nickelodeon Theatre was an ineligible organization.

Mr. Livingston withdrew his motion.

Ms. Barron moved to award \$25,000 to Our Place of Hope, seconded by Mr. Branham.

In Favor: Branham, Barron, and English

Opposed: Livingston and Mackey.

The vote was in favor.

Mr. Branham moved to award \$25,814 to The Cooperative Ministry, seconded by Ms. Barron.

Ms. Mackey inquired if The Cooperative Ministry received ARPA funds.

Ms. Thomas responded they were awarded \$138,091.20.

In Favor: Branham, Barron, and English

Opposed: Livingston and Mackey

The vote was in favor.

Ms. Barron thanked Ms. Mackey for her leadership in this committee. She believes the process has helped remove the stigma of “Lump Sum” appropriations. The process still needs work, but we should be proud of it. She encouraged the committee, as we move forward with the recommendation(s), that we stand by the work we did.

Mr. Livingston thanked the staff for presenting the information straightforwardly and organized.

Ms. Newton stated her earlier request was for clarification. At several points, we have talked about providing assistance to grantors. She noted that we need to be transparent and make the process as simple as possible but still get the information we need to be good stewards of the public dollars. She would like to understand what kind of additional type of assistance we could provide. In some discussions, it sounded like people were requesting a full-time employee to assist in ways we are not necessarily staffed for.

Ms. Mackey replied she did not think a clear answer was provided along the way. She noted the Community Impact Grants Committee is one part of many grants offered or made available to citizens in Richland County. She believes this is a larger conversation because not every grant we offer is the same. Some grants are federal grants that we have no control over. Some are tied to hospitality dollars. Overall, every grant is different. She suggested discussing this matter further in the Strategic Planning Committee.

Ms. Newton inquired if there is a different body that should be providing assistance.

Ms. English acknowledged that we cannot write grants, but we can share the expectations and requirements. She noted it is up to the individual agencies to ensure they have those things in place. It is her belief staff is capable of providing general clarification on the applications.

The County Attorney, Patrick Wright, stated staff has to be careful not to give legal or tax advice.

Ms. Barron expressed that the County’s Grant Department is not a department but an office. We need to support what we ask them to do by funding them appropriately so they have the staff they need to address basic concerns. We create these new opportunities and applications. Then, we expect the staff members to do technical assistance workshops and answer questions. She inquired as to the number of employees currently in the Budget Department.

Mr. Brown responded there are three employees in the department.

5. **NEXT STEPS** – Ms. Mackey stated we are at the point where we have recommendations for our Community Partners and our other grant applications. If all those are approved, staff will move forward with distribution beginning October 1st. She requested Ms. Thomas to speak on the guidelines and the reporting structure.

Ms. Thomas indicated that once the awards are approved, we will contact the grantees to get the grant award letters executed so we can start distributing the funds. As in the past, there will only be a 25% layout of the payment, and they will have to be in compliance on a quarterly basis to receive additional funds. There will be a mid-year check-in to ensure their expenditures align with the guidelines. Additionally, they will have to provide benchmarks of what is being done. If, at some point, we do not receive compliance from the organizations, the funding will cease until they become compliant. All funds have to be expended by June 30, 2024. Periodic updates will be provided throughout the process (i.e., January and April/May). She noted that staff can provide the scoring by category in an email to each group so they know the areas in the grant process they need to improve.

6. **ADJOURNMENT** – Mr. Livingston moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, Mackey, and English

Not Present: Branham

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:33 PM.