

MEETING MINUTES
Bloomington Common Council
Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee

Clerk/Council Library, Suite 110
Bloomington City Hall, 401 North Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana
February 25, 2019

Committee member Susan Sandberg called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Susan Sandberg, Dorothy Granger, Isabel Piedmont-Smith, Andy Ruff, Kaye Lee Johnston, Nidhi Krishnan

Committee members absent: Allison Chopra

Staff present: Dan Niederman (Program Manager), Stacy Jane Rhoads (Council Deputy Administrator/Deputy Attorney), Dan Sherman (Council Administrator/Attorney), Stephen Lucas (Chief Deputy Clerk)

I. Welcome

Sandberg introduced and welcomed committee members.

II. 2019 Hopkins Funds: \$306,000 (budgeted) + \$5,027 (2017 unused to date) = \$310,027

Sandberg said there was approximately \$310,027 for the committee to allocate in 2019. Rhoads explained that the exact amount available would not be known until the end of March, after final claims were submitted.

III. 2018 Grants – HAND Monitoring Report

Niederman provided the committee with an update on unspent funding from 2018. He said some agencies had received funding extensions and noted there was a report that detailed why each extension was granted. He explained that the report also included detail about any unused funds. He identified one agency, the Center for Sustainable Living (CSL), that was unable to use its funding because it was not able to meet the terms of its funding agreement. He said other funding went unused for various reasons, such as agencies overestimating costs or finding better prices.

Rhoads said that agencies were obligated to report back to the committee after they submitted their final claims. She said agencies that received extensions would still be required to report back to the committee. She explained that the reports were meant to help the committee decide if agencies were spending their funding as the committee intended, which could impact future funding decisions.

Rhoads provided additional information about why CSL could not meet the terms of its funding agreement. She said CSL had requested \$3,000 for a sewer connection, but the connection was more expensive than expected. The connection would have cost \$25,000, and CSL could not provide funding for the additional amount. Also, she noted that the funding agreement was contingent upon CSL acquiring ownership of the property. Because CSL could not meet the terms of the funding agreement, it could not use the \$3,000 it was awarded. She said the committee might want to address requests for funding that would pay for capital improvements to real property where the property is not owned by the applicant. She suggested that the committee consider adding a clarifying statement to its criteria to address such requests.

Rhoads noted that agencies that received operational funding were also required to file another report in March.

IV. The Hopkins Process – Review and Issues for 2019

Rhoads explained the purpose of the Jack Hopkins Social Services funding program. She said the fund was meant to help the community's most vulnerable residents by supporting services that addressed certain needs. She reminded committee members that various criteria were used to evaluate requests for funding. The criteria included whether a proposal addressed a previously-identified need, whether it was a one-time investment (with certain exceptions), whether it took advantage of fiscal leveraging, and whether it made a broad and long-lasting contribution to the community. She said the committee typically assessed applicants against those criteria over a series of meetings. She said that the committee assessed the criteria annually to make sure they were clear to applicants. She noted that the committee loosened the one-time investment criterion in 2016 and 2017. She said the committee did so because it recognized a growing need for such funding in light of challenges faced by community organizations in getting funding. She said the committee should address whether it wanted to continue allowing agencies to request operational funding.

Piedmont-Smith asked if the criterion that called for projects to make a broad and long-lasting contribution was too vague. She wondered if that language could be clarified. Rhoads explained that was language from the original founding of the committee. She said that the committee used outcome indicators to try to measure the efficacy of the funding. The committee discussed whether and how it could be more specific about what it meant to make a broad and long-lasting contribution.

Krishnan asked whether applicants were required to leverage Jack Hopkins funding with other funding, or if the committee just preferred applicants who did so. Piedmont-Smith explained the committee had historically taken a broad view of that criterion. She said the fact that the city provided funding to an applicant might help that applicant receive funding from additional sources. Sandberg added that the committee liked to see applicants who had other funding sources available to them, because it demonstrated that the organization was stable and would be around for some time to provide services. Rhoads said the committee did not require matching funds to be lined up, even if the committee preferred to see applicants leverage funding. Krishnan asked if the committee should continue to use that criterion. Granger said she preferred to keep it in place, because it encouraged applicants to think about and seek other sources of funding. Piedmont-Smith noted that agencies could leverage funding in a number of ways, including obtaining other funds, receiving in-kind contributions, or using volunteers. Krishnan said she wanted to make sure agencies were not

dissuaded from applying for funding simply because they did not know the committee was taking a broad view of the leveraging criterion. Rhoads said that applicants who read through the materials would understand how the committee was operationalizing the criteria.

Rhoads asked whether the committee wanted to renew its broad allowance for applicants to request operational funds. Granger said she preferred to continue the allowance, even though it might lead to an agency being disappointed in the future if the same funding were not available. Sandberg agreed that agencies were in need of operational funding. She suggested that the committee look at past applications to not fund the same operational expense two years in a row. Rhoads pointed out that was not an existing restriction. Sandberg wondered if that restriction should be added. Piedmont-Smith agreed that the committee should not fund the same operational expense two years in a row. Rhoads confirmed that the committee wanted to allow requests for operational funding but add language to the materials that stated agencies should not submit a request for the same operational expense two years in a row. The committee agreed to continue the broad allowance for applicants to request operational funds but to add language to not allow the same operational funding in consecutive years.

Rhoads noted that the committee had encouraged collaborative applications in the past. She asked if the committee wanted to change any criteria related to such applications. The committee made no changes to the criteria.

Rhoads said the materials included an elaboration of the criteria. She suggested that the committee consider clarifying how it viewed applications for capital improvements to property the applicant did not own. She asked whether the committee wanted to prohibit or discourage such requests.

Granger said she preferred to discourage such requests rather than prohibit them. She said an agency might not have any intention of moving even if it did not own the property where it was located. She said agencies could lease property or purchase property on contract without intending to move. Niederman said that agencies buying property on contract were more likely to remain in the property than an agency simply leasing property. Piedmont-Smith asked if the committee should distinguish between a lease and a purchase contract. She asked if there was a way to get that information from applicants. Rhoads said the application already included a question about whether the applicant owns the property. Piedmont-Smith suggested adding a follow-up question if the applicant did not own the property, to determine whether there was a long-term commitment in place for the applicant to buy the property. Niederman suggested that the committee ask for some sort of documentation as well. Sandberg preferred to add language discouraging such requests but not prohibiting them. Granger agreed. The committee discussed how best to word a new question on the application.

Piedmont-Smith moved and it was seconded to authorize staff to craft language to discourage requests for improvements to real property not owned by the applicant agency. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Ruff said that he was hesitant to ask about commitments or intentions of applicants or their landlords, as circumstances could always change in the future. He said information about someone's intentions to occupy property would not be persuasive to him. The committee discussed what information applicants should provide to demonstrate their interests in property. Krishnan said information about how long an applicant had been located at a particular property might be more relevant than a statement of future intentions.

Rhoads reviewed the application materials for the committee. She said she added a checklist to the materials to help ensure agencies were submitting complete applications. She asked whether the committee wanted staff to inform applicants if their applications were incomplete. Sandberg thought that agencies should be responsible for submitting complete applications. Krishnan asked whether an applicant could amend an incomplete application up to the application deadline. The committee agreed that amendments prior to the application deadline would be allowed.

Piedmont-Smith moved and it was seconded to approve the application materials as amended. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Rhoads discussed the technical assistance meeting process and asked if the committee wanted to make any changes to the process. The committee made no changes to the process.

Rhoads discussed the initial review of applications meeting. She asked if the committee wanted to make any changes to the meeting. The committee made no changes to the meeting.

Rhoads discussed the agency presentation meeting, pre-allocation meeting, and allocation hearing. She asked if the committee wanted to make any changes to the meetings. The committee made no changes to the meetings.

Granger moved and it was seconded to approve the proposed schedule. The motion was approved by voice vote.

V. Other

There was no other business.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.