



Coronavirus Ad Hoc Committee
 April 16, 2020 – 3:00 PM
 Council Chambers
 2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

Yvonne McBride	Paul Livingston	Joe Walker	Dalhi Myers	Chakisse Newton
District 3	District 4	District 6	District 10	District 11

Committee Members Present: Paul Livingston, Chair; Yvonne McBride, Joe Walker, Dalhi Myers and Chakisse Newton

Others Present: Jim Manning, Joyce Dickerson, Calvin Jackson, Bill Malinowski, Allison Terracio, Ashiya Myers, Ashley Powell, John Thompson, Leonardo Brown, James Hayes, Michael Byrd, Kimberly Williams-Roberts, Michelle Onley, Dale Welch, Clayton Voignier, Brad Farrar, Bryant Davis, Erica Wade, Kimberly Humphrey, Trina Walker, and Dwight Hanna

1. **Call to Order** – Ms. Myers called the meeting to order at approximately 3:06 PM.
2. **Adoption of Agenda** – Ms. McBride moved, seconded by Mr. Walker, to adopt the agenda as published.
 In Favor: McBride, Walker, Myers and Newton
 The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. **March 28, 2020** – Mr. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the minutes as corrected.
 In Favor: Walker and Newton
 Abstain: Myers and McBride
 The vote in favor was unanimous with Ms. Myers and Ms. McBride abstaining from the vote.
 - b. **April 6, 2020** – Mr. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the minutes as submitted.
 In Favor: Walker and Newton
 Abstain: Myers and McBride
 The vote in favor was unanimous with Ms. Myers and Ms. McBride abstaining from the vote.
4. **COVID-19 Relief Grant Program(s)** – Mr. Brown stated we are going to start with the grant documents related to our relief efforts from a non-profit and a business standpoint. We have spoken with our local

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partners, United Way, City of Columbia and Community Fund. Our documents are similar in nature, in terms of the application and requirements process, so we can collaborate and be as efficient as possible. The documents staff has presented for review, and accept, includes a process by which individuals, in terms of organizations for non-profit businesses would apply to Richland County for funds. Those non-profit entities would provide direct to assistance to residents in need. The residents would use those non-profits to get what they need, but the non-profits would be vetted by the process included in the documentation. What we need from the committee is a group of members that would vet those non-profits who apply for funding, so that the non-profits could then provide direct assistance to those residents. Again, the non-profit process will require a vetting committee. The vetting committee would determine non-profits eligibility and awarding of funds. Those funds would be awarded to those non-profits. The non-profits would then award individual assistance to residents directly.

The business side would be a little bit different. The business side would require a vetting process, by which, once the businesses are determined to be eligible they would receive an award of funds to provide for their business needs (i.e. rent, utilities).

Ms. A. Myers stated, Attachment R is the “Non-Profit COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Grant Guidelines”. As Mr. Brown laid out, this is for our non-profit partners to apply, and to individually be vetted. We envision a 14-day turnaround process beginning with the acceptance of the application from the non-profit applicant. With that process, we would have internal deadlines, then review deadlines. In the packet, there was a list of dates, which would be our review deadlines. The first day of review would be May 5th. The application process would be until May 3. On May 4, Grants staff would review the documentation; May 5 – May 8 the committee would vet the documents; and, May 9 – 13 would be processing by Accounts Payable to issue checks to anyone awarded funding. Provided that they meet the guidelines, as outlined in the documentation, and submit the documentation, as required in their application.

Ms. McBride inquired as to which funding we are speaking of (i.e. small business or the community fund).

Ms. A. Myers responded this is for the non-profits or community partners. Attachments R, S and T are specific to the non-profits.

Ms. McBride stated there was an allocation of \$150,000 for the Pandemic General Funds. Her concern is the original amount was \$250,000. It has been reduced by \$100,000, and now the \$150,000 will include operational costs for non-profits. This amount is unacceptable. We initially stated \$250,000, which primarily helped those individuals who longer have the income, and who need assistance with their rent and utilities. These individuals are primarily women with children. She requested the funding amount to be returned to \$250,000, and to potentially increase it to \$300,000.

Mr. Livingston asked for clarification on which funds Ms. McBride was referring and their intended use.

Ms. McBride stated, for clarification, these are the funds that would assist citizens that cannot afford to pay their rent and/or utilities. She stated she knows people have received their stimulus funds, but they will not last long and we will end up with more homeless children and families. There are other funds, within the stimulus package, which assists businesses. These funds are directly for our citizens who are in need. Most of which are living underserved areas, and they cannot afford to pay their utilities or rent.

Mr. Brown stated Ms. McBride did raise a good point. In their initial conversations with the City of Columbia, United Way and the Community Fund, they had not included operational costs in their considerations. They did mention that going forward that was something they were going to be looking at. The staff information, for your consideration right now, was direct assistance driven, and we were not including operational costs.



Ms. McBride stated she included the operational support costs because that is what is in the package she received from staff.

Mr. Brown stated whatever Council decides we would apply the funding toward that. In the grant submission information, we would put whether it is direct assistance or if it includes operational expense assistance.

Ms. Newton emphasized, a part from operational costs that Ms. McBride requested the original amount of \$250,000 direct assistance was restored. We may have called it critical needs, but it covers the things Ms. McBride outlined.

Ms. D. Myers noted we have the eligibility requirements, based on low-to-moderate income families. In this particular downturn, families may not be low-to-moderate income, but may have a demonstrable need. She is concerned that we not exclude people. A lot of people who would not ordinarily meet that criteria may now have a demonstrated need for assistance. She is concerned when we say low-to-moderate income that weeds people out rather than making sure that we are accounting for Richland County citizens that may have a demonstrated need. She would prefer if the language were something more closely aligned with a demonstrative or stated need, so we do not weed families out because they may have an income that has evaporated.

Ms. McBride stated she agreed with that to a certain extent, but we need to primarily target the low-to-moderate income.

Ms. D. Myers stated she is not just speaking of low-to-moderate families. She is speaking of families in need. In this crisis, where people have been told not to go to work, and they may not normally be low-to-moderate, but they may not have work. If you consider, for example, if you own a barber shop, and your entire income is dependent on running that barber shop, you may not be ordinarily low-to-moderate income, but you may be zero income now. She does not want to weed out folks who can demonstrate a need.

Ms. McBride stated she thinks we were assuming that the moderate income would include those people. By all means, we are not to exclude anyone in need, but we want to make sure that we address our most vulnerable citizens that have been in need for years, and are usually excluded.

Mr. Malinowski noted the documentation provided states grants will not be awarded to individuals. Yet, Mr. Brown stated funds would be given to individuals directly from the non-profit. He suggested changing the language to make it clearer that funds will be going to individuals, but it will be through a non-profit. Additionally, it states the activity must meet the service type activities, as outlined by the non-profit. It seems the activity should have to be in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic; otherwise, we are saying, "as long as you use the funds for an already existing activity, you are okay." It was his understanding, we want the funds to be used to assist with the pandemic.

Ms. A. Myers responded, under the program criteria, it states, "The activity provides solutions by way of systems or approaches that can prevent, mitigate or resolve individual, family, or community problems caused by COVID-19 and government responses thereto." Therefore, it is specific to COVID-19.

Mr. Malinowski stated the examples used do not seem to be COVID-19 related examples.

Ms. A. Myers responded rent/lease and utility assistance were noted by members of the committee, but we can update the documents, as directed by the committee.

Attachment U - Small Business COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Grant Guidelines: As outlined by the County Administrator, this will go directly to businesses in need of assistance. They also follow a similar 14-day



turnaround process. We have provided eligible applicant, by industry type and business, which aligns with the three categories that were referred to earlier in the document. We used the small business definition, as outlined by the County's ordinance. We also made sure to note that we are giving priority to businesses with 50 or fewer employees, and they have to demonstrate certain criteria (i.e. plans for recovery; retention of employees; and payroll, rent/mortgage or utility expenses, etc.).

Ms. D. Myers stated for clarification, in this process, we will be vetting whether or not they are a viable Richland County business, demonstrable need for rent or payroll assistance, as well as, if we think they have a strategically sound plan for recovery.

Ms. A. Myers responded we are requesting their use for the funds. We are not asking them to submit a plan for recovery, per se, but the application itself does ask what they are using the funds toward.

Ms. D. Myers suggested we could remove that from the criteria. What we are looking for is their use of the funds, supported by documentation.

Mr. Livingston stated he saw that in the Federal language. They wanted to make sure the business did not take the money and do something else, and did not continue the business.

Ms. D. Myers stated she does not want us to slow the business down by having them draft a strategic plan for the next 20 – 30 weeks.

Mr. Livingston stated, in addition, to have them detail how the receipt of these funds will help them stay in business because we do not want to give them the funds and have the business use them for something not related to the business.

Ms. A. Myers stated they will update the documents.

Ms. Newton stated, in the "Program Description", the 3 major sectors of the retail trade: accommodations and foodservice; and arts, entertainment, and recreation are noted. She knows we have used lots of different businesses as examples of small businesses that might be missed other places. For example, barber shops, nail salon, and other service industries. She inquired if those "services" would be included in retail trade. If not, she requested guidance on amending the language to make sure those "mom and pop" shops, which have had to close are included.

Ms. Powell responded we view retail trade as any business that offers goods or services directly to individuals.

Mr. Malinowski requested it be noted that the list is not all inclusive. If someone is looking at the list and they do not see their business, or type of business, they may think they cannot apply. He noted, in one section, it lists accommodations, but, in another section, it says hotels and motels are ineligible, which seems contradictory to him. He inquired why franchises are not eligible, since franchises are individually-owned, and not necessarily owned by the corporation.

Ms. McBride stated, in previous discussions, regarding the small businesses, we realized that a business with 50 employees can seem pretty large to a business that only has 1 – 2 employees. Those businesses, such as the barber shops/beauty salons, which only have 1 – 5 employees are at a disadvantage, in terms of applying for funds and being able to fill out all the forms. The Federal government has funds set aside for small businesses, but she is not sure those "mom and pop" businesses are taken care of. We discussed having funding available for these really small businesses. She thinks it is important that we set aside those funds for those small businesses that will not be able to apply for the Federal funds, and do not have experience in applying for funding, to assist with their utilities or rent until the economy recovers.



Mr. Malinowski stated the definition for small business needs to be changed in the beginning of the document.

Ms. Dickerson stated, for clarification, beauty/barber shops do not really employ anybody. Most of the people rent space from the salon. You would have to revisit this because it affects all of the independent contractors of the salons/shops.

Mr. Livingston stated one of the questions may need to be, “how do the funds given impact the employees?”

Ms. McBride stated there may be small businesses where they are actually the owners, so we cannot forget them either. We need to look at a whole different category for these businesses.

Ms. D. Myers suggested we have a micro-business category with businesses that have 1 – 10 employees. Technically, if you are renting a booth at a salon, you are an independent contractor, and are essentially employing yourself. Therefore, the question may be, “how does this impact your employees, if you have employees, but, if you do not have employees, how does this support the continued operation of “X” or “Y” business.” She also suggested looking at the allocations in pots of money because, as of today, the SBA no longer has money to lend. Small businesses that have not come in already, and gotten to a bank, there is nothing left. She noted the Federal government has given out trillion of dollars, and we are still working on a couple of million. Time is of the essence if we are going to help any of these businesses. She would like the breakdown of the categories to be as follows: 1 – 10 owner/employees, 11 – 25 employees, and 26 – 50 employees. As to the language on the form, if the language specifically said, “the retail sector includes service industry” that may get at what we are talking about.

Mr. Malinowski stated he heard the CARES Act is providing additional funds for local governments. He wanted to make sure staff was aware, and looks into any receiving these additional funds.

Ms. A. Myers stated, in an attempt to address your concerns, relative to the number of employees that businesses have, there is a question under the “business fiscal impact” portion of the application (Attachment V) where we ask for the number of employees, both part-time and full-time. Additionally, under “what expenses or activities will be paid with the funds?” There are several categories, to include payroll costs, which would show that they are using a portion of it to pay their employees. She inquired if this addresses the concerns as to the number of people employed by the business, as well as, ensuring that they are using funds for payroll costs, or would you like other questions added to address those concerns.

Ms. D. Myers stated she would like for it to specifically say, “If you do not have employees, how does your receiving this grant sustain or buttress the business you work in?” She wants to ensure that we do not exclude people without employees.

Ms. McBride stated her concern is with the allocation of funding for the different categories. She noted that 50 employees seems huge for someone that only has 1 – 2 employees. The employer with 50 employees probably have more experience in getting funding. Her concern was making sure there was an allocation set aside for the small businesses with 5 or less employees.

Ms. D. Myers inquired if Ms. McBride disagreed with the 3 categories she proposed earlier.

Ms. McBride stated she believes the categories are too big.

Ms. D. Myers suggested breaking down the categories as follows: 1 – 5 employees, 6-15 employees, and 16 – 50 employees.

Ms. McBride stated she would agree with those categories.



Ms. Myers inquired as to how much money should be allocated for each person.

Ms. McBride responded that is needed to be based on some kind of logical process, which she has not thought through.

Mr. Livingston stated, for clarification, the committee is saying they are okay with the 3 categories for number of employees (1 – 5; 6 – 15; and 16 – 50).

Mr. Brown stated there has been discussion about what may be good going forward, but we would like to have that captured in a motion so we know we are doing what the committee wants us to do. He knows there has not been an allocation decided. If, in fact, this program is approved by Council on Tuesday, and go into effect on Wednesday, we want to have those allocations aligned, so when we get the applications in from the groups we can know what funding they immediately available to them, based on the sizes discussed. Please keep in mind, as we go you can come back and change the pot of money, but we need to put something in place so we can move forward.

Mr. Livingston stated the committee wants to add “service” to retail trade; an allocation of \$500,000; the 3 categories for number of employees should be, 1 – 5; 6 -15; and 16 – 50; and to ensure that the businesses tell us how the funds will be used to assist them with continued operations.

Ms. McBride moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to approve the addition of “service” to retail trade; an allocation of \$500,000; to set the categories for number of employees as follows: 1 – 5, 6 – 15, and 16 – 50; and to ensure businesses detail how the funds will be utilized to continue their operations.

In Favor: McBride, Livingston, Myers and Newton

Abstain: Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous with Mr. Walker abstaining from the vote because of a potential direct financial impact.

Mr. Brown stated the motion does not breakdown and address Ms. McBride’s concern about allocations for the specific groups.

Mr. Livingston requested that staff research this matter and bring it back to the committee.

Ms. McBride inquired if it was clear that the amount of funding to assist the citizens was \$250,000, and not \$100,000.

Mr. Brown responded that it was clear.

Ms. Newton stated, for clarification, the motion we just made was in terms of the categories. We have been talking about amounts of allocations, the categories of those who can apply, and the guidelines and criteria we are going to use to determine who is eligible in those categories for that amount of funds. She inquired if we are going to separately be discussing the application process.

Mr. Livingston responded if there are questions about the application process we need to discuss those now.

Mr. Jackson inquired if any thought has been given to the process that is used by the Grants Office when they are distributing the hospitality funds. His impression is that receive applications where individuals make a request, then based upon the amount of money they have, and the number of applications they receive, they



make a determination and go as far as they can. Thereby awarding less than the applicant may have requested, but at least making an award to the majority that apply. We do not know how many people may apply, or what their needs might be. He inquired if the committee might consider opening up the process, receiving the applications. The applicants would indicate what one-time amount they are interested in receiving, and then let the committee and/or staff make the determination upon the amount of money, and the number of applications.

Mr. Livingston inquired if we agreed to do this in phases.

Mr. Brown stated the process Mr. Jackson described is the process we were attempting to communicate to the committee. The only thing difference is that instead of one deadline for all applications, we are going to have a continual process, which will allow people to continue to apply over a period of time. That way we can turn around funds more immediately instead of having people delayed waiting for the end of a period before everyone is considered. Some of our partners are doing it bi-weekly, weekly, etc. We were trying to figure out to get needed funds into the hands of those that needed, as soon as possible, while allowing for an appropriate process to take place.

Ms. Newton stated, at this moment, she just wants to make sure we are moving, and allowing our staff to move, as expeditiously as possible.

Ms. McBride stated she thought she read somewhere there was training, public information and education for the small businesses.

Ms. Newton inquired if Ms. McBride is referring to one of the documents that talked about a staff led task force that was going to provide small business training and information on resources.

Ms. McBride responded she cannot recall where exactly she read it. She knows staff is going to do some training, but in the application is there an area regarding training.

Ms. A. Myers there is not an area for training, unless you are referring to ineligible expenses on one of the applications. There is nothing specific to training.

Ms. D. Myers stated Ms. McBride may be referring to the Federal guidelines that allow CDBG funds to be reapportioned for training in some context.

Ms. Newton stated the part she was referring to was in the COVID Response Plan under recommendations.

Ms. McBride inquired as to what kind of data we are requesting to analyze for planning purposes. She inquired if we will be able to determine later which businesses received funds, how many employees, the gender and race of the employees.

Mr. Brown stated some of our applications will address some of those, but to the nature of race or gender, the application does not capture that. Those were not questions that either the County or our partners discussed. We are capturing general demographics, but not specifics.

Ms. McBride stated she was wondering how we could use this information later as we move forward in recovery, to look at the different the different programs we have assisted with, and the needs in various areas/zip codes.

Ms. D. Myers inquired what Mr. Brown defined as “general demographics”.



Mr. Brown responded the nature of the organization's business, operating location, service industry, but the more personal information will not be requested. The general information we are requesting is: What type of business (sole proprietor, partnership, corporation, minority, veteran, non-minority woman, disable veteran).

Ms. McBride stated we need it with the other grant, in terms of services being provided to the constituents.

5. **COVID-19 Recovery Consultant** – Mr. Brown stated we were looking to have services provided to assist us with capturing available funds to help support the County's efforts. Basically, we are requesting the committee to approve staff's recommendation to allow us to utilize TetraTech. There were some questions about whether it would be in the best interest of the County to utilize TetraTech. Based on timing, availability and familiarity with Richland County Government, we believe this process will allow us to move forward expeditiously in acquiring resources and assistance with COVID-19.

Ms. Powell stated she submitted a written response to the committee and full Council. She and Mr. Voignier are available to answer any questions, at this time.

Ms. D. Myers inquired if this is meant to be an exclusive group. She understands the need to move quickly, but she takes to heart Mr. Manning's comments from the last meeting as to whether or not there are additional groups that are specifically trained in attacking the Federal process, in so far as financial downturns and disasters such as this. She inquired if this is an exclusive contract or time limited.

Ms. Powell responded the proposal is to move forward with disaster recovery, relative to COVID-19 and pandemic response, with TetraTech exclusively. The process, in and of itself, she would not call exclusive because we did research to identify other partners. We were not able to quickly do that. We could issue a solicitation, if that is the will of the body.

Ms. D. Myers stated, for clarification, if we approve TetraTech what we are saying is that is the company.

Ms. Powell responded, if you approve TetraTech, as she recommended, that is what you are saying. If you modify my recommendation to something more agreeable, we could execute a contract according to the terms set forth.

Mr. Voignier stated Ms. D. Myers asked a question about time limited. The current proposed task order is time limited, in the respect that it will end on December 31, with an option to renew, if necessary.

Ms. D. Myers stated, between now and then, we could conceivably be exploring other options, and on December 31st we could decide that TetraTech has done a great job, and now we are moving to another group who can do other things, which are equally as important.

Mr. Voignier responded that is a possibility.

Mr. Livingston stated he is fine with moving forward with TetraTech, but in the meantime, we need to be looking into whether or not there are certain things they are not addressing, and bring it back to be addressed.

Ms. D. Myers moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to adopt the recommendation to engage TetraTech, as described, until December 31, while also being mindful that there may be other options that may need to be explored.

In Favor: Livingston, Myers, McBride, Newton and Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

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6. **Updated CDBG Allocation** – Mr. Voignier stated they have discovered, through the request of Council, we have received an additional allocation of \$957,993, specifically for COVID-19, through CDBG. In addition to uncommitted balances for the County’s CDBG 2019 and 2020 funding, through the County’s regular CDBG allocation, we are recommending to utilize \$2.8M, of CDBG funding, to include those allocations to aid in the County’s response to COVID-19.

Mr. Livingston stated, for clarification, you adding that to the current available amount to get the \$2.8M.

Mr. Voignier responded the \$2.8M includes the CDBG-CV allocation, as well as uncommitted balances.

Ms. Powell stated we have clawed back the previous recommendation to reallocate funds that were assigned to two (2) Council projects. Since we have the additional CDBG-CV funds, we do not see a need to do that, at this time, unless Council’s will is otherwise.

Mr. Livingston stated, for clarification, that is the project on Broad River and a project in Ms. D. Myers’ district.

Ms. Powell responded it is a park for Atlas Road.

Ms. D. Myers moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to accept staff’s recommendation to increase the CDBG COVID-19 funding by \$957,919, as outlined by staff, for a total of \$2.8M.

In Favor: Livingston, McBride, Newton, Myers and Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. D. Myers requested a standard meeting time be set for the Coronavirus Ad Hoc Committee.

Mr. Livingston stated he would have the Clerk to send something out to garner the committee members’ availability.

Ms. McBride stated in the document there were allowable uses the CDBG funds, and then there were usages that were not allowable. She noted that the only area we are likely using is to provide capital assistance for jobs and food services. There is an area for diagnostic testing and treatment, but we have not addressed those issues, as a committee, and she is sure they are already coming up, in terms of what we are going to do about that. As we move forward, we need to begin to move into another state, in terms of how Richland County will address these areas of testing, and the availability of funds.

Mr. Livingston read an excerpt from the letter stating the County would be getting additional funds.

“As you develop your plan for the use of these grant funds, we encourage you to consider approaches that prioritize the unique needs of low and moderate income persons, and the development of partnerships between all levels of government, including private non-profits.”

She noted that Richland County was not included for immediate testing, and we have the highest number of coronavirus cases in the State, yet we were excluded.

Mr. Jackson noted the area with the highest number of positive cases, based on zip code, is the area that he resides in.

7. **Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:25 PM.

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