



Richland County Council  
Community Impacts Grants Committee  
**MINUTES**  
July 14, 2023 – 9:30 AM  
Council Chambers  
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

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COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Jesica Mackey, Chair, Gretchen Barron, and Cheryl English

NOT PRESENT: Jason Branham and Paul Livingston

OTHERS PRESENT: Allison Terracio, Michelle Onley, Chelsea Bennett, Anette Kirylo, Kyle Holsclaw, Lori Thomas, Stacey Hamm, Leonardo Brown, Patrick Wright, Sarah Harris, Abhijit Deshpande, John Thompson, Aric Jensen, and Thomas Gilbert

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chairwoman Jesica Mackey called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - a. May 15, 2023 – Ms. Barron moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. English  
In Favor: Barron, Mackey, and English  
Not Present: Branham and Livingston  
The vote in favor was unanimous.
  - b. June 13, 2023 – Ms. Barron moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. English.  
In Favor: Barron, Mackey, and English  
Not Present: Branham and Livingston  
The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. English moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. Barron.  
In Favor: Barron, Mackey, and English  
Not Present: Branham and Livingston  
The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. **ITEM FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**
  - a. Fiscal Year 2024 Grant Application Review – Ms. Mackey stated the committee previously met and reviewed the grant application guidelines and the application, which Council ultimately approved. The application process is currently open. She noted staff hosted several training sessions.  
  
At the last committee meeting, there was a discussion about the review process. The committee did not clarify how we would review the applications once received. The intent of today’s meeting is to have further dialogue and solidify the process before the application period closes so we do not delay the awarding of the grants. One option for consideration is to utilize a third-party source, similar to what the Coronavirus Ad Hoc Committee has done. Another option is for the committee members to review the applications and make recommendations.

Ms. Barron recommended having a third-party review the applications, especially since ARPA funds are a part of this bucket of funds. In addition, since this is our first round, this allows us to get our footing to see if this is something we want to do and to implement a process for the grant applications to be reviewed.

Ms. English noted she agreed with Ms. Barron and will send a message that funds without accountability are no longer an option with Richland County.

Ms. Barron inquired if we move forward with a third party, would we be able to utilize the existing third party we are currently using to review the ARPA grants?

The County Administrator, Leonardo Brown, indicated he does not know if this was officially a part of their scope of work. If the scope is not broad enough, we would have to go through another process of acquiring a third party to assist us.

Ms. Lori Thomas, Assistant County Administrator, stated for the pot of money in these grants, which is \$400,000, we could utilize some of the originally contracted dollars. She does believe there will be a cost for reviewing those in excess of the \$400,000. We would likely have to reduce the amount of funding available to be able to pay for the review.

Ms. Barron inquired if we would be reducing the amount of ARPA funds or the overall balance of \$1.78M.

Ms. Thomas responded it would be the overall balance of \$1.78M.

Ms. Barron inquired if that would create a challenge; as we have advertised, we have \$1.78M.

Ms. Thomas replied that it was not an issue from an accounting perspective.

The County Attorney, Patrick Wright, responded his primary concern is with the contract and ensuring the procurement rules are followed.

Ms. Barron stated because we already have someone we are working with, that would ideally be her first go-to.

Ms. Mackey pointed out that you do not want to give this package to someone else who may not utilize the same mindset and not judge the programs the same way. She thinks the third party would be the best option, particularly since we are behind schedule.

Mr. Brown noted the motion should potentially establish the constraints, so if we have to go out and address this differently, we can. Then whoever is interested in the work understands the timelines associated with what the Council needs so the recipients of the funds are not hindered.

Ms. English moved to have a third party review the grant applications. If allowable by contract, utilize the current vendor reviewing the ARPA applications.

Mr. Brown indicated that for the community of individuals interested in applying for this work, they need to know Council has a timeframe they want this to happen.

Ms. Mackey inquired if we could take this up in two separate motions.

Mr. Brown acknowledged the current third party, Guidehouse, is on the State Co-op; therefore, they have already gone through the procurement process and are eligible for the County to contract with them.

Ms. Barron moved to authorize the Administrator to use a third-party vendor to review grants within the current timeline. If the present contract with Guidehouse allows, use Guidehouse as the third-party vendor. Ms. English seconded the motion.

Ms. Mackey made a friendly amendment to utilize funds currently in the Community Impact Grant line item to pay for the services of the third-party vendor.

Ms. Terracio inquired if we established the financial impact of hiring a third party would be to the bottom line we can distribute.

Ms. Mackey indicated it is estimated, based on previous experience it will be approximately \$200,000.

In Favor: Barron, Mackey, and English

Not Present: Branham and Livingston

The vote in favor was unanimous.

For the record, the application deadline is July 31<sup>st</sup> at 11:59 PM. Applications are available on the County's Zoom Grant platform. If you need assistance, you may contact County staff.

To date, Mr. Brown noted that there have only been two (2) completed applications submitted.

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

In Favor: Barron, Mackey, and English

Not Present: Branham and Livingston

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:54 AM.