



# CITY OF OREGON CITY ENHANCEMENT GRANT PROGRAM COMMITTEE MINUTES

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Virtual Meeting  
Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 5:30 PM

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## VIRTUAL MEETING

This meeting will be held online via Zoom; please contact [mweintraub@orcity.org](mailto:mweintraub@orcity.org) to register to participate.

*The public is strongly encouraged to relay comments to the Committee in one of three ways:*

- *Email comments up until the day before the meeting to [mweintraub@orcity.org](mailto:mweintraub@orcity.org).*
- *Phone call (Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm) to 971-930-7613, all messages will be relayed and/or register for over-the-phone testimony.*
- *Mail to City of Oregon City, Attn: Economic Development Manager, P.O. Box 3040, Oregon City, OR 97045*

## CALL TO ORDER

*Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM*

Present: 7- Rocky Smith Jr, Frank O'Donnell, William Gifford, Denyse McGriff, Rachel Lyles Smith, Cori Ellis, Christine Lewis

Staffers: 3 - James Graham, Matthew Weintraub, Matt Zook

## DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

*There were no public comments*

## GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Community Enhancement Grant Reform Package

James Graham, Economic Development Manager, presented the staff report, by providing his perspective of the previous year's grant process. He provided a set of recommendations that he thought would improve the efficiency/effectiveness of the grant-making process. Further, he suggested that the Enhancement Grant Committee support the idea of utilizing the grant funding to focus on two or three challenges confronting the community instead of accepting grant

applications that fund a plethora of causes. He recommended that funds be used to address childcare issues, and workforce development initiatives because so few resources are available to address these two great challenges hampering the ability of the community to grow and improve its quality of life.

He suggested that instead of projecting what funds would be available for distribution, that the Committee rely on a cash basis approach to determining grant fund availability. Another change includes staff being in contact with grantees on a quarterly basis to assist grantees with program administration challenges and to help mitigate the need for extensions. And finally, targeting the grants for the upcoming grant-making period to fund only initiatives that address workforce development and childcare.

Committee member Gifford generally agreed with the reform package and suggested that the Committee add homelessness as another issue for the group to focus on. He questioned whether workforce development should be considered. Mr. Gifford inquired about the future of the Metro Transfer Station and it possibly moving out of Oregon City. Ms. Christine Lewis stated that the Metro is exploring a new location, but the new location may be for only for some of the services. Metro may not be moving everything. Mr. Gifford agreed to move to a cash basis scenario.

Councilor Lewis expressed concerns about changing the grant criteria from the 10 original criteria to focusing on workforce development and childcare. Councilor Lewis stated that within the existing 10 criteria, one can definitely find their way to economic development, childcare, and to homelessness. There was expressed support for the proposal to move quickly to a cash basis. Ms. Lewis inquired about the \$50,000 figure earmarked for staff administrative support, expressing that the amount seemed too high.

Commissioner Lyles Smith had questions about the program's criteria and whether we were abandoning the goals set by Metro to focus on childcare and workforce development instead. Mr. Graham replied that he had previously consulted with Metro staff as to whether the proposed program focus would be considered in compliance. Metro staff confirmed that the proposed approach would be in alignment with the existing agreement. He stated that the program criteria does not have to be abandoned just as long as one of the existing criteria is met. Commissioner Lyles expressed that she did like Mr. Gifford's idea of adding homelessness as a program focus and further agreed with moving to a cash basis model.

Commissioner McGriff expressed that she was against the proposal. She further stated that if staff wanted to have childcare and workforce development funded at higher than traditional levels, then staff should include their request to address such issues in the City's goals and budget requests rather than utilize the MEC program to fund such initiatives. She strongly suggested that community partners have an opportunity to be involved in a larger process and be consulted before any changes are adopted.

Commissioner O'Donnell shared that there should be discussion around the proposal amongst the Committee. He stated that there were some merits to the proposal from staff and he did not feel that the City was "putting a grab on this money for its own uses." Mr. O'Donnell stated that he had no problem with workforce development being a program focus in that there are jobs to

be had in the community. He further commented that he thought that the existing criteria already allowed organizations that worked with the homeless issue to apply. He agreed with a cash basis approach to determining funding availability. He questioned the \$50,000 administrative fee earmarked for staff support commenting that it was too high.

Chair Rocky Smith stated that he had some of the same concerns as expressed by other committee members. He commented that he understands where staff is going but the childcare and workforce development pieces still fit into the existing 10 criteria, so narrowing it down is unnecessary and supported accepting applications as in the past. He also questioned the \$50,000 administrative cost as being too high. He further stated that if we have departments in the city that have big picture items then those need to be budgeted. He also shared that the proposed changes seemed like general governmental purposes and believed those programs should be in the City budget rather than the MEC program.

Committee member Gifford felt a compromise should be reached on the proposal put forth by staff. Including heavier weighting when evaluating grant applications focusing on homelessness, workforce development and childcare.

Committee Member Ellis introduced herself and shared personal stories around her involvement in the community. She suggested that instead of changing the program's focus, why not promote and market for this year that the Committee is looking to accept applications that accentuate a particular focus rather than only accepting certain applications. She commented that we don't have to change anything.

Multiple committee members shared different opinions and ideas about the potential program priorities.

Staff provided answers to various questions raised by committee members, specifically about program funding uses for staff support and the program timelines.

Committee members continued to express opinions on the proposed changes.

Committee member Gifford proposed a compromise of a do-nothing option to the program criteria. There was discussion around this concept.

**A motion was made by Commissioner McGriff to maintain the existing program qualifications, that the Committee needed a new version of the scoring sheet, that a right-sizing of the administrative costs of the program is needed and the applications would be scored only after hearing applicant presentations. Committee member Gifford Seconded the motion. The motion was carried by the following vote.**

**Aye: 7-** Rocky Smith Jr, Frank O'Donnell, William Gifford, Denyse McGriff, Rachel Lyles Smith, Cori Ellis, Christine Lewis

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM*