

City of Muskegon
Special Commission Meeting
Re: ARPA Community Grant Program
Minutes

August 2, 2023, 1:00 pm
Muskegon City Hall
933 Terrace Street, Muskegon, MI 49440

Present: Mayor Ken Johnson
Commissioner Rachel Gorman
Commissioner Rebecca St.Clair
Commissioner Eric Hood
Vice Mayor Willie German, Jr.
Commissioner Michael Ramsey
Commissioner Teresa Emory

Staff Present: City Manager Jonathan Seyferth
City Clerk Ann Meisch
City Attorney John Schrier
Director of Government Relations Peter Wills
Community Engagement Manager Deborah Sweet

2023-85

1. Call to Order

Mayor Johnson called the Special Meeting of the City Commission to order at 1:05 p.m.

2. New Business

2.a City ARPA Community Grant Proposals

To review and consider eligible grant proposals, as presented by the ARPA Community Grant Review Committee.

2/14: City Commission authorized \$1.6M from the City's remaining allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal stimulus funds for the creation of a city-sponsored ARPA Community Grant program. Eligible applicants included

non-profit organizations, small businesses and each neighborhood association in the city. Grant requested amounts in the range of \$25,000 - \$250,000.

3/1 - 3/31: Grant application period; 60 applications received.

April / May: Review of applications and established ARPA Community Grant Review Committee.

- (6) members: Lawrence Baker (Ward 1), Leon Howard (Ward 2), Jennifer Sanocki (Ward 3), Nina Leask (Ward 4), Jonathan Seyferth (City Manager), and Sharonda Carson (Director, Community and Neighborhood Services). Two additional representative(s) were included, as advisors to the committee, from local Community Based Organizations.

June: Review Committee held four public meetings at City Hall on 6/5, 6/7, 6/22 and 6/29.

Applications were to be consistent with the City Commission's 2022-2027 Long Term Goals. <https://muskegon-mi.gov/cresources/ARP-001-Grant-Application-Program-Guidelines.2.16.pdf>

The Committee used a multi-step process to review and evaluate all applications. The committee referred to the following questions, as part of the evaluation criteria, on which to base their selected scores. Projects were ranked by the cumulative average of each members scores.

- Is the project description and budget clear and well-defined?
- Does the project include a capital expenditure?
- Does the project provide a description of structure and objectives of the assistance program(s), including public health or negative economic impacts experienced?
- Does the project identify service outcomes for residents disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., communities of color, people with disabilities, low-to-moderate income residents or elders)
- Brief description of recipient's approach to ensuring that the response is reasonable and proportional to a public health or negative economic impact of COVID-19?
- What is the project's sustainability (e.g., one-time v. recurring cost)?

- Is the project capable of being completed within the ARPA timeline requirements services?
- Has applicant previously partnered with or assisted other community organizations to provide needed services?
- Is the project aligned with Commission's 2022-2027 [Long Term Goals](#)?

The Committee recommends (22) project proposals for the Commission's consideration -

- (4) neighborhood associations, (5) small businesses and (13) non-profit organizations.
- (12) recommended Women- and Minority-Owned Businesses/Organization proposals.
- (8) proposals to provide funds for the direct benefit of community youth.
- (3) proposals to provide funds to expand access to new housing options for area residents.
- (12) proposals recommended to receive the full amount of their project request.

Staff was directed to conduct an initial review and assessment of all 60 applications to ensure completeness and eligibility. The Review Committee deliberated on a first set of project proposals which fulfilled the requirements of the application and were rated accordingly. The group reviewed a second set of applications which minimally met the grant program's criteria but either lacked clarity, specificity, or did not meet the impactful expectations of the grant program guidelines. The committee chose three proposals from this second group to review and rate.

- Is the project aligned with Commission's 2022-2027 [Long Term Goals](#)? Applicants approved for funding will enter into a contractual agreement with the City which outlines general obligations and federal reporting requirements. Approved applicants will be required to complete a Beneficiary Agreement with the City to adhere to these requirements.

City Manager, Jonathan Seyferth, gave an overview of the process used by the ARPA Community Grant Review Committee to rate/score applications submitted for grant funds. Discussion took place. Staff is directed to consult with applicants with award recommendations below 50% of their ask to ensure the recommended funds are sufficient to move their project forward. This item will be placed on the agenda for consideration at the August 7, 2023 meeting.

3. Public Comment

Public comment was received.

4. Adjournment

The Work Session meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Motion by: Commissioner Ramsey

Second by: Commissioner St.Clair

To adjourn.

MOTION PASSES

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Marie Meisch, MMC - City Clerk