

MINUTES

Committee Members Present

Leslie Anderson, Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Philip Belcher, Christy Cheek, Kit Cramer, Jane Hatley, Rich Johnston, Himanshu Karvir, Chavaun Letman, Robert Pressley, Mistie Reising-Cogbill, Al Whitesides, Kidada Wynn

County Staff Present

Kimberly Fullerton, Rasheeda McDaniels, Rachael Nygaard, Max Taintor, Burnett Walz

Minutes

A move was made and seconded to approve the April 23 minutes, and the minutes were accepted with unanimous approval.

Discussion

- Staff reviewed the grant software process and grant scoring methodology.
- Committee voiced some concern on the amount of scoring / applications. Discussion followed, and there was consensus on scoring criteria / methodology and complete scoring for all proposals.
- Several committee members had questions on the proposals. Staff defined the platform and timelines for which questions will be posed, addressed and shared with committee.
- Several committee members indicated that they were having difficulty opening the budget attachment document for Montessori Learning Community of Asheville. Staff agreed to investigate and follow up.
- Commissioner Beach-Ferrara provided some comments on the intended direction / objectives of the fund:
 - There's a crisis of need for new slots for children and corresponding teachers.
 - We need to do a better job of retaining current teachers in the profession.
 - Enhanced early childhood development can help to increase development, contribute to kindergarten readiness, and mitigate/reduce achievement gaps.
 - The committee will need to leverage a mix of strategies focused on new classrooms and workforce development as well as supportive services.
- There was discussion and clarification on timelines around funding decisions.
 - There is not a requirement that all funding has to be recommended for allocation by the June 4 committee meeting. The committee may decide to fund in waves if it can't come to agreement on allocating all funding at the June meeting.
 - \$3.6M of funding will be allocated in the 2020 FY budget by commissioners during June meeting, but all grants don't need to be awarded prior to budget approval
 - There is consensus from the committee that the funding process doesn't need to be perfect the first time around. There will be follow up cycles and additional years to enhance and refine.
- There was some discussion regarding conflicts of interest. All agreed that the process is to contact staff to discuss any potential conflict – likely solution is that committee member will not score the grant application when a conflict or perceived conflict is identified. Staff will maintain a listing of conflicts of interest.

- There was a question regarding overlap of organizations receiving funding in FY2020 and ones that have submitted applications. These have been identified in the Summary of Proposals document.
- There was committee consensus not to score Forrest School because it was submitted late.
- There was some discussion regarding focus on grammar/written quality of application in the grant scoring criteria and potential bias towards groups with experience and/or professional grant writers. Committee members were invited to be aware of this potential bias in completing their own scoring and to make a note of this as a potential area for improvement in future funding cycles.

Next Steps

- Committee members will score grant applications in the online software by May 28.
- Any questions that committee members have for specific grant applicants should be submitted to Rachael by May 14, or noted in the general/last notes section of the evaluation.
- Staff will follow up with Montessori Learning Community of Asheville and attach an updated copy of the budget to the application for consideration by the committee.

Public Comment

- Jessica Bryant (Irene Wortham Center) spoke on grant writing and her experiences with the process.
- Beth Maczka (YWCA) provided comment on funding for voucher slots and the need for a rate that more adequately reimburses providers for subsidy services and maximizes the federal and state funding in the community.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Meeting Materials

The following documents are included as attachments to these minutes:

- Meeting Agenda
- Grant Evaluation Criteria
- Early Childhood Fund Summary of Proposals

Next meeting

June 4th, 2019

2:30 – 4:00 pm

200 College Street, Ground Floor Conference Room