



Affordable Housing Advisory Commission Meeting

March 20, 2019

7:00 PM

Town Hall



Agenda

- I. **Introduction of new member, Betty Curry (7:00-7:10)**
- II. **Consider Approval of January Meeting Minutes (7:10-7:15)**
- III. **Review FY18 budget and FY19 proposed budget (7:15-7:30)**
- IV. **Review housing fund application process (7:30-8:00)**
 - a. **Priorities**
 - b. **Community outreach/engagement strategy**
 - c. **Timeline**
 - d. **Evaluation**
- V. **Oakwood Refugee Day event – June 20th (8:00-8:05)**
- VI. **Guest Presentation: Sherrill Hampton, Director, Orange County Housing and Community Development – Lessons learned in application reviews (8:05-8:25)**
- VII. **Additional comments/questions (8:25-8:30)**
 - a. **Next meeting 4/17/19**

Total Affordable Housing Fund FY 18-19				
Budget Item	Revenues	Commitments	Actual Expenditures	Percent
Fund Allocation as of June 30, 2018	\$ 337,500			
Community Home Trust (CHT) Interlocal Agreement		\$ 74,036	\$ 37,018	41%
Home Consortium		\$ 13,545	\$ -	
OC Partnership to End Homelessness		\$ 23,378	\$ 23,378	
Human Services Grants		\$ 28,950	\$ 24,500	
<i>Deferred Loan Expense</i>		\$ 20,000	\$ -	
Northside Neighborhood Initiative		\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	21%
Center for Community Self-Help		\$ 20,000	\$ -	
Habitat Request: Critical Repair		\$ 7,800	\$ 7,800	18%
Habitat Request: Critical Repair		\$ 4,398	\$ -	
RTT Request: Critical Repair		\$ 17,342	\$ 17,342	
CHT: Maintenance for the Landings		\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	
RTT Request: Critical Repair		\$ 4,712		
CEF: Rental Deposit Assistance		\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	0.7%
CEF: Rental Deposit Assistance		\$ 625	\$ -	
CEF: Rental Deposit Assistance		\$ 600	\$ -	
Total	\$ 337,500	\$ 276,386	\$ 171,038	82%
Total Available for FY 18-19	\$	\$	61,114	18%

Recurring Expenses
Critical Home Repair
Rental Deposit Assistance
Land banking/loan/would come to AHAC as applicant

Total Affordable Housing Fund FY 19-20			
Budget Item	Revenues	Commitments	Percent Budgeted
Fund Allocation as of June 30, 2019	\$ 337,500		
Community Home Trust (CHT) Interlocal Agreement		\$ 73,783	35%
Home Consortium		\$ 13,545	
OC Partnership to End Homelessness		\$ 29,948	
Deferred Loans		\$ 20,000	12%
Center for Community Self-Help		\$ 20,000	
Human Services*	\$ 21,000	\$ 21,000	-
Acquisition/Development		\$ 68,000	20%
Critical Home Repair Requests/Rehab		\$ 90,000	27%
Rental/Utility Deposit Assistance Requests		\$ 6,000	1.8%
Reserves		\$ 16,224	4.8%
Total Available for FY 19-20	\$ 358,500	\$ 358,500	100%

requested
requested
remainder
remainder

Applies to
AHAC

*Empowerment and Rebuilding Together applied for funding under Human Services due to a miscommunication. In order to accommodate their requests, the Town Manager approved transferring funds from the Human Services fund to cover these requests.

AHSRF Application Process Timeline

Application materials and process approved by the Board of Aldermen	March 5, 2019
Email to Housing Partners announcing application process	March 8, 2019
Application materials posted to website	March 8, 2019
Applications due	April 1, 2019
AHAC reviews and recommends applications	April 17, 2019
Board of Alderman considers applications for approval	May 7, 2019
Town Staff sends out contracts to grantees	May 21, 2019
Funds are distributed when Town receives an invoice from the grantee	

Evaluating a Grant Application and Process

Edited excerpts from Mass Cultural Council: https://www.mass-culture.org/evaluating_grants.aspx

Grant evaluation begins well before the first application is submitted. The quality and variety of the grants depends on good dissemination of program information and how well the grant requests are prepared. Here is a summary of the steps of the grant evaluation process:

Step 1: Establish and Review Criteria

Step 2: Council Preparation

Step 3: Review Applications and Make Awards

Step 4: Communicate With Applicants

Step 5: Evaluate the Grant Making Process

Step 1: Establish and Review Criteria

Know and use the criteria outlined in the scoring rubrics and guidelines. Review or establish any priorities to address specific identified needs.

Step 2: Committee Preparation

Preparing for a voting meeting should involve all committee members. Follow these steps to prepare for a voting meeting.

- Ensure basic requirements have been met
- Determine funds available for granting
- Process and distribute materials
- Review criteria and eligibility

Step 3: Review Applications and Make Awards

Review applications before the committee's voting meeting. Look back over last year's grants and note some of the more exemplary projects. With these high-quality grants in mind, turn to reviewing new applicants using all guidelines and priorities. All members should read all of the applications; however, each council member can be responsible for presenting a select group of proposals to the rest of the group at the meeting. In your role as a grant evaluator consider these essential qualities:

- Maintain objectivity; vote with your head, not your heart.
- Listen carefully to other opinions and viewpoints in the grant process, and during the year.
- Be open-minded because you represent your whole community.

Committee members having potential conflicts of interest with certain applications should abstain from voting and/or complete the necessary forms before the voting meeting or else the voting meeting could be considered invalid.

During the voting meeting, give sufficient time to each application so that all committee members can express opinions about them. Evaluation comments, both positive and negative, should be clear and related to the criteria. Be specific about why you choose certain proposals over others. Before the review meeting is over, set a reconsideration meeting date in case one is needed.

Handling Incomplete Applications

Because the demand for funding far exceeds what is available, there can be the temptation to use "technical disapprovals" to disapprove incomplete applications (missing information, no signature, missing copies), or to deny an application as a way to reduce the number of applications to be reviewed. While this may make the process easier for the grant reviewer, it can be a disservice to well-meaning applicants and could eliminate promising projects.

Ideally, committees will work with applicants to get missing information or materials in before their voting meeting. Many committees may want to use the first few days after a deadline to review applications to ensure they are complete, and give applicants a chance to resolve minor omissions.

Evaluating Proposals

With strong demand for funds, it is critical to articulate the relative strengths of each proposal. How does the application compare with others? Which proposals provide the best public benefit? The Score Sheet or Rubric includes questions to help members consider and compare proposals. Consider sharing the score sheet with applicants so they know exactly what criteria the council uses to evaluate applications.

Reviewing the Budget

Incomplete or poorly prepared budgets can reflect poor project planning. An adequately prepared budget should include budget figures that result from researching costs (printing costs, artist teaching or performing fees, facility rental costs, administrative expenses, etc.). They should also reflect the dollar value of "in-kind" products or services, if any. "In-kind" refers to the approximate dollar value of anything that is donated to a project, such as art materials, a free space which normally charges rent or an individual's time, to name a few. Such donations help demonstrate community support for a project. Finally, and most importantly, a budget should be balanced so that projected income will cover projected expenses.

Partial vs. Full Funding

Many committees receive an abundance of good proposals and try to fund as many as possible by awarding a portion of the original request. Although this is a reasonable way to spread limited funds, there is a danger in making the award so small that the project cannot go forward at all. This results in the council repeating their efforts to reallocate the unspent funds in the next cycle and also discourages those applicants from applying again. Some committees call the applicant to discuss the feasibility of supporting the proposal with a partial award and also request a modified budget.

Other Funding Dilemmas

Many committees face some combination of the following dilemmas. They should discuss these scenarios before the grant review to develop their own local policies or requirements. It is very difficult to do this in the middle of the review process when time is short and members are overwhelmed with applications. Making changes about policies or criteria during the review process is also unfair to applicants and could be grounds for reconsideration.

Too many applications, too few dollars: Even though funds are very limited, committees always need to encourage applications especially from new applicants to ensure that funding is accessible to everyone. Committees should not discourage applications, but should evaluate which best serve their community, or a segment of it. When making decisions, members should be aware of why some proposals are

chosen over others and subsequently properly convey any strengths or weaknesses to the denied applicants. "Limited funds" is not by itself an appropriate reason for denial.

Repeat applicants: Committees have the autonomy to limit how often applicants can apply or how many proposals can come from one organization, individual, or school. Some ask applicants with multiple projects to identify which project is the priority for them. Some projects are funded repeatedly because a committee feels they are valuable. However, they need to ensure opportunities for newcomers to compete for funding and avoid the perception that the committee may be showing favoritism.

Step 4: Communicate with Applicants

Communicate decisions in writing or email, beginning with denied applicants. Unsuccessful applicants may request reconsideration if they can demonstrate that the committee did not follow published guidelines and priorities. If a decision is changed and the reconsidered grant is given an award, most likely the amounts awarded to other approved grants will need to be adjusted. Therefore it is important to delay notification to approved applicants.

Step 5: Evaluate the Grant Making Process

An effective committee reflects on its process, including how well it educates applicants and addresses community needs and interests. Reflection is most productive when done soon after the review meeting while the experience is still fresh for all participants. New policies and priorities can be developed at this time and shared with future applicants next year.

Many committees make a point to attend projects when possible. This is a great chance to evaluate a project from the participant's perspective. Members can split up the projects between members so that at least one member is able to attend each event. Members can take notes or fill out an evaluation form afterwards. It is good to keep these notes with the grant materials so that the committee can refer to it if the applicant applies again.

Committees are committed to supporting high quality projects within the community. Examining the success and impact of approved grants allows them to better evaluate similar projects or returning grantees in the future. Including an evaluation component as part of the reimbursement process can also help determine that a project has been completed as promised.

World Refugee Day 2019 is on June 20th. This is an annual event, held on the same date each year, and 2019 is the 19th year of the event, run by the United Nations Refugee Agency, to state that the world supports and stands with refugees. The event is about raising global awareness of global responsibility for refugees.

World Refugee Day honors the strength and courage of refugees and encourages public awareness and support of the refugees, people who have had to flee their home lands because of conflict or natural disaster.

Refugees are vulnerable and in need, and are often misunderstood and maligned, and often have very little or nothing of their possessions and little food, they often have to leave their homes with nothing or with what they can carry. They suffer cold, hunger, trauma, despair, disease, violence and loss. The awareness day is to help public understanding of refugees as well as raising support and help.

Across the world, agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, work tirelessly to help refugees, but with people being made refugees daily, more help and awareness is constantly needed, to ensure that refugees are treated fairly and provided for, rather than being neglected or shunned, and there are projects to re-settle and provide for refugees. So **World Refugee Day** highlights all of this. And now it also marks the launch of the 'With Refugees' petition, which will state the needs and potential rights of refugees.