



ARPA Advisory Committee

1315 S. Washington Avenue
Council Chambers – Room 205
989.399.1311
May 12, 2022
MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

ARPA Advisory Committee Chair, Renee Johnston, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Christina Jones, Renee Johnston, James Doane, Calvin Talley, Grady Holmes, Jr., Fenobia Dallas, Sharon Leamon-Case, Tina Swanton, Amy Spadafore, Kevin Albosta

Excused: none

Absent: James Hernandez, Hurley Coleman, Jr., Jeffrey Bulls, Veronica Horn, Valerie Toney

Committee member Valerie Toney entered the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Ms. Spadafore moved to approve the minutes from the April 27 meeting. Mr. Talley seconded. Motion passed.

CHAIR REPORT:

Ms. Johnston asked the committee about how they are feeling about the community engagement process at a high-level. The committee members expressed the following: Positive, concern about the portal deadline, encouraged, excited, good/inspired, inspired/ready to go.

Chair Johnston gave an update to City Council on Monday on the committee's process. Chair Johnston praised the group and the process.

GUIDEHOUSE:

Mr. Sernick walked over the community engagement process, and asked the committee to speak on their community engagement meetings thus far.

Mr. Albosta met with MiHIA. They were excited about the process and share their thoughts. Mr. Albosta mentioned that they would like more direct mentions of ways to reduce poverty in the city – could call that out directly.

Chair Johnston met with NAAG. Her concerns are mainly for the city: how is the city going to communicate and be transparent about unselected proposals/ideas?

Mr. Sernick had a meeting with the city recently. The report to City Council will be public and will include every idea – explaining what choices were made and why. The ARPA Advisory Committee will review the report prepared by Guidehouse, which will then be sent to the City right before it goes public. The report will then be presented to City Council.

Ms. Swanton mentioned that the committee needs to make it clear that ideas and proposals need to be submitted in the portal by the public. Ms. Swanton also shared concerns from people who ask why they need to keep submitting ideas when the city should know to fix the streets, for example.

Ms. Spadafore asked the following questions that she collected from her meetings, which Mr. Sernick answered:

- Is the committee weighing proposals based on details and depth?
 - Everything is considered, but fully fleshed proposal will take more weight.
- Once money is allocated, who will distribute it further?
 - From the city itself.
- Where does Guidehouse get their money from?
 - ARPA.
- When someone gets money from the city, who will be responsible for reporting?
 - The organization getting a grant will be responsible for reporting to the city.
- When funds are awarded, will they be distributed gradually or at once?
 - The city has flexibility to do whatever they want.
- Does the city have the same timeline to spend revenue loss funds?
 - Yes.
- What happens to the proposals we don't fund?
 - We will compile them for city and say these are things we could fund elsewhere or in the future. A community engagement process like this doesn't happen all the time – we will compile all this information for the city.

Ms. Spadafore also encouraged the committee to stop talking about the funds available as \$52 million because not all of it will be available for community ideas.

Ms. Toney mentioned that the biggest concern she heard from her meetings is the question on grant/federal funds experience. Mr. Sernick said that people answering these questions should firstly be honest about their experience. He emphasized that these questions are not disqualifying – we can have someone help with that process if one is awarded funds. Mr. Sernick also emphasized collaboration among organizations/individuals who may have different experiences and resources.

Ms. Dallas mentioned that she's been working with those members who are re-submitting proposals, making sure that everyone is heard.

Mr. Doane met with the Downtown Saginaw Association and mentioned that it may be a good idea to start each presentation with a question: "How many of you know about this program?"

Mr. Sernick briefly mentioned how many submissions in the portal are about small businesses looking for grants. The city already has a grant program for things people are asking for. It is a good to direct people to other funds, if available.

Mr. Sernick then went into a high-level overview of the portal submissions (as of May 8th). Moving forward, Guidehouse will also add a metric on re-submission from those who previously submitted proposals.

Because some committee members expressed concern about the portal submission deadline, Mr. Sernick went over the trade-off that exists: extend the deadline and the funds will take longer to go out or do we move forward as is? Mr. Talley proposed extending the deadline for two weeks since community engagement goes through the last week of May. Mr. Sernick said that he will talk to the city about extending the portal submission deadline to June 13th, and if okay with the city, the Committee would take a vote at the next meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Mr. Sernick moved on to the next steps. There will be a meeting on May 19th at 5:00 p.m. where city officials will talk about their priorities. The committee also asked that city officials also submit their ideas and priorities to the portal for transparency.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Monique Lamar Silvia

In regard to not referring to the funds as \$52 million when engaging with the city, you can still mention the \$52 million but also let them know where it went. Maybe don't reference "ARPA" too much as it can be confusing.

Regarding people being missed in the process, what other assurances, besides online or word of mouth, can you [the committee] provide to make sure we don't miss anybody?

Ralph Martin (African American Cultural Festival)

I submitted in November, and I encourage everyone to spread the word to those that previously submitted.

We have our next festival meeting next Sunday at the First Ward Community Center at 4:00 p.m. – any of you [committee] are welcome to come.

Gil Guevara

I submitted proposal online and it went wrong so I had to re-submit again. Is it a plus or minus if you have worked with federal funds? Not many people have worked with such funds.

- Mr. Sernick answered by saying that this question is there so that we know whether we step in to help or not – it is not meant to be disqualifying.

In terms of the budget, can I hold off or do I have to submit a detailed budget. Also, should I include adjustments for inflation as that is a concern?

- Mr. Sernick answered saying that we need a scale and scope of what we're working with so it would be helpful to include as much information that you have.

ADJOURN:

Moved by Ms. Jones to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Talley. Motion passes. Chair Johnston adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Recorded by,

Walter Aguilar
Guidehouse Consultant