



Richland County
Coronavirus Ad Hoc Committee
November 16, 2021, 2021 – 2:00 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

Yvonne McBride District 3	Paul Livingston District 4	Gretchen Barron, Chair District 7	Joe Walker District 6	Chakisse Newton District 10
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Committee Members Present: Gretchen Barron, Chair; Paul Livingston, and Chakisse Newton

Others Present: Michelle Onley, Tamar Black, Leonardo Brown, Aric Jenson, John Thompson, Lori Thomas, Patrick Wright, Ashiya Myers, Beverly Harris, Randy Pruitt, Stacey Hamm, Michael Byrd, Sara Scheier, Shane Kitchen, Erica Wade, Christine Keefer, Pam Green, Zachary Cavanaugh, Dwight Hanna, Steven Gaither, and Dante Roberts

1. **Call to Order** – Ms. Barron called the meeting to order at approximately 2:06 PM.
2. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. **October 20, 2021** – Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to approve the minutes as distributed.

In favor: Livingston, Barron and Newton

Not Present: McBride and J. Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **Adoption of Agenda** – Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to adopt the agenda as published.

In favor: Livingston, Barron and Newton

Not Present: McBride and J. Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. **Mental Health Check In Program - RCSD** – Mr. Brown noted the agenda stated “One of the benefits of our Sheriff being the National Sheriff of the Year, and on the board of the Major County Sheriff’s Association is that he has an inside view of proposed legislation at the Federal level related to police reform. He believes Federal legislation is forthcoming, and in an effort to be on the forefront of health and wellness for our deputies, he would like to proactively implement this new annual program.” The cost of the program is \$16,250 annually. We look to utilize American Rescue Plan dollars to cover the costs until 2026. Staff

would recommends utilizing ARP funds in the total of \$81,250 to support this program. After 2026, there would need to be a different funding source to address this program.

Mr. Livingston stated he supports the program, but stated staff should be careful using ARP funds for recurring costs, as it could cause long-term problems.

Ms. Barron agreed with Mr. Livingston and stated they need to start prioritizing the funding based upon the categories we set forth to the US Treasury to ensure they get some of the citizens' requests addressed.

Ms. Newton stated she would like for us to vet the requests and clarify how the projects get on the agenda.

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the Mental Health Check-In Program.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron and Newton

Not Present: McBride and J. Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

5. **COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Relief Grant Program** – Mr. Brown stated, for clarification, the funding they will be discussing is Community Development Block Grant Program dollars, specifically allocated to Coronavirus response. Early in the pandemic, Richland County was able to receive an allotment of CDBG-CV dollars and utilize those funds to deal with the pandemic. ***“Through the CDBG-CV program, HUD provides grants to states, insular areas, and local governments to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the spread of COVID-19. At least 70% of every grant must be expended for activities that benefit low-to-moderate-income (LMI) persons by providing housing, a permanent job, a public service, or access to new or significantly improved infrastructure. The remaining 10% may be used to eliminate slum or blighted conditions, or to address an urgent need for which the grantee certifies it has no other funding... The County’s FY21 CDBG-CV budget totals \$2,197,908, of which \$300,000 was allocated to economic development grants to small businesses to provide pandemic relief”*** Council approved the CDBG-CV Action Plan on July 13, 2021. Staff previously did not specify they would utilize the program. The grant program would help direct CDBG-CV funds to low-to-moderate income persons in Richland County, in compliance with HUD guidelines. Through this program, Richland County will be investing \$300,000 to help sustain at 20 small businesses over the next year. Businesses will be able to get up to \$15,000 in eligible expenses from the program. He noted this is time-sensitive as they have three (3) years to draw down 80% of the funding, and we are currently in the second year.

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Relief Grant Program.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, and Newton

Not Present: McBride and J. Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

6. **CDBG-CV Public Service Grants** – Mr. Brown noted this item does not involve ARP funds and is related to CDBG-CV funds. He stated “***HUD gave Richland County \$500,000 to prevent, prepare for and respond to Coronavirus and meet our community’s immediate needs. The Richland County Community Development Office will request proposals from local non-profit organizations and government entities to reimburse for as well as carry out Public Services in the County through CDBG-CV. This funding supports the activities in unincorporated Richland County or activities serving residents in unincorporated areas Richland County. Federal law requires that these grant funds primarily benefit low- and-moderate income persons (80% of area median income or below). CDBG-CV grantees must have policies and procedures in place to prevent duplication of benefits with Stafford Act and other CARES Act programs. This means that grantees may not use CDBG-CV funds for costs already fully covered by other programs. CDBG-CV funds may only be used for those Public Service activities that are new or that represent a quantifiable increase above the level of an existing service before March 1, 2020. Funding is for reimbursable expenses incurred March 1, 2020 through the present, as well as future reimbursable expenses. There is a 25% match requirement of either cash, in-kind contributions, or both. The match must be secured prior to award.***” He noted “in kind” is the equivalent to work that is performed that would be equivalent to the amount of cash. If this program is approved, it would allow the entities to request funding from this particular pot of money.

Ms. Barron inquired if the individuals referenced are the ones who were actually receiving services from the non-profit that would be awarded funds.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative. Whoever the funds are provided to would have to ensure the applicants do not receive funds from another program.

Ms. Barron inquired if the criteria of individuals meeting the low-to-moderate income does not apply to the non-profit, but it applies to the applicants applying for the funds.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative. The non-profit could also be a beneficiary of the funds.

Ms. Barron inquired if a non –profit applied for the funds, on their behalf, the funds would be for the organization to continue to do the good they are doing or to give funds back to the community.

Mr. Brown responded both of those scenarios could apply.

Mr. Livingston inquired how much funding will be left out of the \$2.1M.

Mr. Brown responded there will be no more funding.

Ms. Newton inquired if the applicants would follow the usual Zoom grant procedures.

Ms. Scheirer responded they will be utilizing a software similar to Zoom Grants called Neighborly. Zoom Grants is an online application process, whereas this software allows us to take the approved application and transfer it into the applicant's portal. This will allow them to enter their draw requests, demographics and all the information we report back to HUD.

Ms. Newton inquired if the vetting system would be similar to the Zoom Grants process.

Ms. Scheirer responded there will still be a mandatory pre-application workshop in order to educate the non-profits on the requirements, as well as the scoring guidelines and rubrics.

Ms. Newton inquired if applications will come back to the committee/Council for approval.

Ms. Scheirer responded once an application is submitted, it goes through a threshold review to verify all documentation is correct. After that they would go before a committee, which takes the scoring rubrics and the applications will be scored based on different weights.

Ms. Newton inquired if it is a first-come-first served.

Ms. Scheirer responded there is an "application window" and then it depends on the strength of the applicant's program and the amount of funding they are requesting. The committee will make the decision on who to fund, and who gets what amount.

Ms. Barron inquired if the rubric threshold where an applicant would not be considered for funding.

Ms. Scheirer responded the total amount is \$500,000. There is a chance we may not get enough applications to exhaust those funds, or we may get enough applications to exceed the funding. At that point, funding amounts will be based on scoring. Therefore, the applicant may not get the amount they requested, as we want to allocate as many organizations as possible.

Ms. Barron inquired if there is a cap on the amount an applicant can apply for.

Ms. Scheirer responded there is not a cap on the amount applied for.

Ms. Barron inquired about who is on the application review panel.

Ms. Scheirer responded the panel is compiled of Richland County employees. They are looking to incorporate some public individuals that would not be eligible for the funding to provide a different perspective.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to approve the CDBG-CV Public Service Grants.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron and Newton

Not Present: McBride and J. Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

7. **Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:35PM.