



DISCRETIONARY FUND COMMITTEE
PRELIMINARY MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 8, 2022, 12:00 P.M.
HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE AND AT
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



The Discretionary Fund Committee convened at 11:59 p.m. on the above date to conduct a Preliminary Meeting at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, and via teleconference with Chair Lonny Marney (Seat F) presiding and with the following members in attendance:

Members Present: Karen Blackburn, Seat A (remotely, arrived at 12:14 p.m.)
Samantha Kirstein, Seat C
Traci Gatewood, Seat D (remotely)
Rachel Kvapil, Seat E

Members Absent: Diane Borgeson

Also Present: Diana Hebel, Deputy City Clerk I
Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a) Wrap-up Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2022

Ms. Kirstein, seconded by **Ms. Gatewood**, moved to APPROVE the minutes of January 19, 2022.

There being no objection, the minutes were APPROVED.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Introduction of Committee Members

Ms. Kvapil introduced herself as the owner of Pagesculptor Studios. She stated she had previously been a Fairbanks Arts Association board member, and they had their own grant application based on the City's Discretionary Fund Grant program.

Ms. Kirstein expressed that this is her third year on the Committee. She stated that she has not applied for this particular grant, but she has written many grants in her work at the Fairbanks Food Bank.

Ms. Gatewood introduced herself as the owner of G2 Diversified Services and stated that this is the beginning of her third year on the Committee.

Chair Marney stated he is a City Council member, and, as such, is appointed as the Chair of the Discretionary Fund Committee. He stated that this will be his third and final year on the Committee unless he runs for reelection. **Chair Marney** stated that he finds the Committee to be fun and interesting, and he tries to mingle with applicants and get the word out whenever possible.

b) Report from Chair Marney

Chair Marney reported that there was much disappointment the previous year due to having 31 applicants, with only 21 accepted and 10 being denied for having paperwork issues. He shared that because of this, the Committee decided to hold a Q&A session as developed by Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Margarita Bell on October 12. He stated that the Q&A session did not have a large turnout and, according to CFO Bell, it did not prevent last-minute calls.

Chair Marney shared that over the summer he met with Scott McCrea from Explore Fairbanks, Jomo Stewart from the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation (FEDC), Jessica Peña from the Fairbanks Arts Association, and Julie Jones from Festival Fairbanks. He stated the discussion surrounded the room rental tax formula, which has been the same since 2003. He explained that the formula allocates 22.5% to the City of Fairbanks; \$400,000 is divided between the FEDC, Festival Fairbanks, and the Discretionary Grant; and the remainder of the money goes to Explore Fairbanks. **Chair Marney** stated that he will introduce an ordinance to the City Council on Monday, November 14, 2022, that proposes changing the room rental tax distribution formula by increasing the \$400,000 amount to \$500,000, which would provide increased funding for the Discretionary Fund Grant and Festival Fairbanks. He expressed that he had wanted to see a greater increase, but he believes the negotiation went well. He added that the ordinance would also require that the City Council review the formula every 5 years.

Ms. Kirstein asked whether the ordinance would be effective this year if it passed. **Chair Marney** replied that it would require a budget amendment and asked CFO Bell to speak more about that. CFO Bell stated that an immediate change to the amount could be possible, depending upon the timing of the adoption of the ordinance.

c) Financial Report by CFO Margarita Bell

CFO Bell confirmed that there were 29 applicants in total, and she needed feedback on only three of the applications:

1. An applicant used the old logo instead of the newly adopted logo.

Ms. Kirstein asked for clarification as to the language of the application instructions in regard to the logo. CFO Bell clarified that the application did not state which logo was to be used and only stated that the logo must be used. All members agreed to allow the applicant to remain eligible.

2. An applicant did not include their State or City Business license numbers on their application before the deadline, and the application states that all questions must be addressed.

After some discussion regarding the date the additional information was provided by the applicant, the consensus was that there would be no problem had the information been provided before the due date. However, since the license information was provided after the due date of October 31, 2022, the Committee decided that the applicant would be disqualified.

3. An applicant was awarded grant funds the prior year and, due to staff changes at the City of Fairbanks and at the applying organization, both entities overlooked the grant award, so funds were not issued nor used. The question was posed on whether to allow the applicant to use the award this year or let the award lapse and accept the new application.

Ms. Kvapil asked if there were any foreseen complications with letting the award lapse. CFO Bell clarified that there would be no complication and that it would be notated that on that particular year, the total awards would be less than \$270,000. The Committee decided to let the funds lapse and allow the applicant to apply for the current year.

CFO Bell announced that the one disqualified applicant is the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks because they did not address all the questions on the application by the deadline.

- d) Format of Presentation – to Zoom or not to Zoom

The Committee decided that it would be best to maintain a hybrid meeting format. **Chair Marney** asked members whether they would like to keep the order of presentations in the order the applications were received. Members agreed that it would be best to keep the presentations in order of application, whether or not the presentation was in person or via Zoom. Members also discussed that applicants should provide notification to the City if they plan to present remotely.

- e) Committee Policies and Procedures (tardiness, absences, presentation format, etc.)

After a brief discussion, the Committee decided to make no changes to the policies and procedures.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

All members expressed their excitement to be part of the Committee.

Ms. Kvapil thanked Chair Marney for his efforts to increase the total amount of the Discretionary Grant.

Ms. Kirstein noticed there had been an improvement in grant writing this year and expected to have a more difficult time in scoring as a result of the improvement.

Chair Marney thanked CFO Bell for setting up the Q&A session and thought it may be good to post a record of the session on the City's website under the heading of the Discretionary Fund.

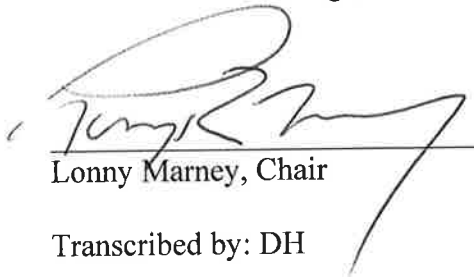
DATE OF NEXT MEETING – PRESENTATION AND DISTRIBUTION MEETING

The Committee scheduled the Presentation Meeting for December 14 at 5:30 p.m. and the Distribution Meeting for December 15 at noon.


ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Kirstein, seconded by **Ms. Kvapil**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

Chair Marney called for objection and, hearing none, declared the meeting ADJOURNED at 12:34 p.m.



Lonny Marney, Chair



Diana Hebel, Deputy City Clerk I

Transcribed by: DH