



Participatory Budgeting

Steering Committee's Organizational Kick-off Meeting Notes

Where: City Hall, 203 S. Farwell St., North Conference Room

When: Thursday, July 1, 2021 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Attendance: SC members Cheryl Contant, Karen Petersin, Richard Spindler, Jacksen Wolff, Susan Wolfgram. City staff: Scott Allen, Jeneise Briggs, Taylor Graybehl, Ned Noel

Agenda:

1. Introductions

Members introduced themselves with preferred pronouns, explained their backgrounds, and some of the reasons why they were interested in serving.

2. PB goals, process, and timeline

Staff presented on equity, diversity, inclusion, and sustainability goals, along with the general process, and a proposed timeline for the PB program. Members held conversation that in part included the importance that Participatory Budgeting (PB) be driven by the group/grassroots up and not top down, that all groups are involved especially those who historically and presently face barriers. Specifically, that black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC), and students and individuals that don't feel a part of the conversation or just aren't included. The committee wanted to be deliberate and authentic about engaging diverse audiences.

3. Committee's roles, operating format, function and authority

Staff presented some examples from other cities and the PB recommendations in the Eau Claire consultant report. The committee discussed possible roles and appointed Jacksen Wolff as one of two co-chairs to lead meetings and they expect to appoint a second at the next meeting.

Those present agreed to consensus voting with the need for a strong timeline with deadlines to ensure the PB program is successful. Members stated the importance that everyone feels safe in the consensus decision making process and that constructive conflict will lead to a better outcome.

Lastly, staff asked the Committee if they felt the rulebook had to go before Council for approval. Staff shared that some other communities required Council approval and some did not. The Council already approved the creation of the PB program and the funding. The Committee had brief discussion thinking to only advise the Council after they approve the rulebook, but no final decision was made.

4. Understand funding parameters

Staff explained City Council allocated \$200,000 for this first-year cycle. Half of this was rollover since the program was delayed a year due to the pandemic. Projects will need to meet capital improvement plan (CIP) criteria for eligibility. This includes tangible assets like equipment, buildings, and infrastructure but not programs or services. The money is also city-wide and not broken down for city wards. Any additional funding related to the American Rescue Plan is not in the committee's purview, and if allocated by Council, would not be available until 2022.

5. Set up a regular summer schedule

The Committee discussed the setting of a schedule with some preferring meetings during the week day and for approximately two hours. Every two to three weeks was preferred to get the rulebook done by early September. Staff will send a Doodle poll for the next meeting.

6. Marketing

Staff presented marketing materials prepared by students at UWEC. There was brief discussion as time was limited and no position taken.

7. Next steps: Program design

The Committee discussed items for the next meeting. One item of importance will be the appointment of a second co-chair and the chance to review materials prior to the next meeting. Pre-meeting surveys could help. A folder on Google Drive will be created to share materials and will have the committee's roster. There was need to better understand the scope of the program and what the committee will be doing in the stages. Staff will address this at the next meeting.