



Empower Eau Claire: Participatory Budgeting

Steering Committee Workshop #7 Notes

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

When: Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Attendance: Susan Wolfgram, Karen Petersin, Mia Xiong, Pakou Thao (SC members); Jenise Briggs, Taylor Graybehl, Billie Hufford and Ned Noel (City Staff).

Agenda:

1) Idea Collections & Outreach Results

Informational sessions for Latino and Hmong audiences were successful. Unfortunately, the in-person events at the public schools were poorly attended, although some good ideas came forth. Outreach to the unhoused and low-income was successful.

2) Final Push – collection ends Dec 31st midnight!

The online form has not been used a lot but will push it out again on social media. Staff have been working with the County jail to set up idea collection via a kiosk interface.

The final list of ideas will be shared with the committee. Groups of ideas will form the basis of the issue committees. Staff will lead these without having stipends for facilitators.

It was suggested a Leadership Eau Claire project team could possibly help in the future to meet various needs.

3) Committee recruitment

Pakou Thao was recommended to join and she accepted. A few more members would be good to add and the committee was asked to help recruit more diverse perspectives.

4) Next phase: Budget delegates & recruitment – training planned on Jan. 13th

Staff will train budget delegates/project advocates after the idea collection phase. Issue committees will then begin to meet towards the end of January. They will vet projects with other staff help. This will conclude about mid-March so the committee has time to plan the ballot and get word out on voting.

5) Begin to sketch out Voting events & methods

The committee expressed desires to hold at least one large community event, but then targeted outreach to diverse communities like the unhoused. Online and hard copy ballots were also recommended. It was suggested for Hmong and Latino populations, outreach to churches may be good. Collaborating with the schools was also desired.

There were concerns about how to ensure voter residency and one vote per person. Most participatory budgeting cities use the honor system and don't have the means to verify, although some can via online computer IP checks.

6) Outside Advice (consultant and other communities)

Staff will reach to the PB consultant again and other established PB communities to learn about their programs. This will help the committee start planning for cycle #2.

The committee expressed a desire to spend about 4 hours over a lunch for the next workshop. A Doodle Poll will be sent to find a good meeting date/time.