



Empower Eau Claire: Participatory Budgeting

Steering Committee Workshop #8 Notes

Where: Virtual meeting

When: Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 10 a.m. to 12:45 a.m.

Attendance: Susan Wolgram, Karen Petersin, Pakou Thao, Kenny Tubwell, Jacksen Wolff (SC members); Scott Allen, Jenise Briggs, Taylor Graybeh, Billie Hufford and Ned Noel (City Staff). Karen Mumford and Maddie Loeffler (UWEC)

Agenda:

1) Idea Collection Results & Reflection

There were 94 total submitted ideas, then staff use them to form three topical issue committees. There is a good amount of project advocates to help in each committee. An internal staff tech team is being organized to help the issue committees vet projects.

2) Project Advocates & Idea Collection Committees

Intentional outreach was done to include underserved communities to volunteer as project advocates. No one signed up so the committee saw this as a need for improvement. It was reiterated, that in moving forward, there needs to be an equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI), and sustainability lens applied to projects. Staff shared examples of ranking tools that will be used and a EDI training can be set up at the first meeting. During the proposal development process, project advocate volunteers will need to give an account for what happens to each project and why. This will ensure transparency.

3) Rest of Process & Voting Methods

A timeline was reviewed where things are in the process. Issue committees will elevate ideas to the steering committee and they will finalize the ballot in early April. The goal is to have a final 9-15 project list to the committee by March 25th. The vote is being planned for last week of April and 1st and/or 2nd week in May, before college students have finals.

An online voting platform from Stanford University was reviewed and various methods of collecting the vote. Staff reviewed the program and are working to meet with Stanford representatives to learn more. Reviewed were different types of voting options such as approval, ranking, and knapsack. The committee leaned to use a combination of ranking style for hard copy purposes and knapsack for online.

The committee emphasized voting means must include going to where underserved populations may be and have translations available. Staff will explore the various opportunities and present a menu-type plan at the next meeting. Some ideas expressed were faith-based communities, Power of Perception events, Boys and Girls Club, and other groups for intentional outreach. Also, to connect with school counselors and faculty that works with families and the district's equity steering committee. All agreed to continue to build authentic relationships.

There was discussion over testing the ballot. Due to time constraints and possible confusion to various test audiences, it was decided to use the committee for testing.

There was discussion about poll workers and canvassing volunteers. A need was expressed to target underserved audiences for outreach as it can be hard to get community members to come to a large event that is general. Canvassing would offer best outreach to Hmong community. Online tends to be ignored.

Staff expressed the need to adequately train the poll workers so they can clearly explain what is expected of voters. Instructions often are not read and may impact equity. City election booths can be used and will check if library iPads can be used for collecting votes. Roleplaying with poll workers could be useful. Staff explained 18 people are interested in helping, but need to confirm and do more outreach.

Visual storyboards will be helpful for unhoused, as can't assume all are literate. Once the ballot is determined, project advocates will make these boards. Expectations on what is on the boards should be made clear so one doesn't stand out over another.

4) Outside Advice (consultant and other communities)

There is still a contract with PBP consulting. The committee thought it may be useful to receive their advice as needed or when designing cycle two.

Staff presented info from discussions with Vallejo, CA, Cambridge, Mass., Nashua, NH, Greensboro, NC, and Durham, NC. All had dedicated staff and had operating budgets, except for Nashua. They focus efforts on one neighborhood however. Multiple cities used the Stanford voting platform and staff will continue to stay connected with these communities.

5) Next Cycle & Budgeting Planning

The committee reviewed the program Gantt chart timeline. They discussed the merits of a 1-year or 2-year cycle. Pros and cons were reviewed. The second year for some other communities usually deals with project implementation because it can take time. Elongating the cycle could hamper consistency in enthusiasm and relationships formed with diverse groups. No decisions were made, but if going to a 2-year cycle how would the program keep people engaged while projects were building built?

The committee was interested in increasing the funding for cycle #2 above \$100,000. The past operating budget request of \$20,000 was reviewed. There was interest in providing as-need stipends for various

volunteer roles and to ensure underserved populations are represented throughout the cycle. Staff will be look at Durham's budget and will present a draft to the committee later for discussion.

6) Evaluation & Communication to Council

Karen Mumford with UWEC stated during this pilot cycle it would be best to follow perhaps the Durham/Cambridge models. Both communities however had college and student resources that helped write the reports and do the research. A research grant may help. She was open to doing some surveying with the help of students. The easiest approach might be to ask questions at the end of the online vote and/or have another survey form to fill out. It won't capture everyone's input though since it is volunteer driven.

The committee expressed gratitude for UWEC being interested in the evaluation.

Staff will set up calendar searches for the next two committee meetings.