

Human Services Review Committee – Meeting September 25, 2020 1:00 PM

Committee Members present: Ann Fielder, Sue Graff, Juanita Lane, John Kennedy, Ain Thompson, Kipton Tewksbury, Gary Stroud, David Miner, Kathryn Turnas.

Committee Members not present: Emmanuel Keppel

Guest: David Levenbach

Ann called meeting in order at 1:04. The meeting was being held remotely via teleconference. Kathryn and Gary unfortunately had technical difficulties throughout.

The committee consists of 5 hold overs from the previous year and 5 new members. Each committee member introduced themselves.

Ann suggested that David and Ann serve as co-chairpersons, as they did last year. John proposed it. Sue seconded. Passed unanimously.

Ann spoke about the requirement of committee members to disclose any conflict of interest that they may have with applicants. Members who have conflicts cannot be involved in the decision process of that application. She asked that members to note applicants that have affiliation or conflict with. Sue noted that we do not know who will be applying. Accordingly it is important that any conflict be acknowledged when the final list of applicants is available.

The following members stated that they have association/affiliation with area organizations that have applied in the past:

Ann – Ground Works

Kip – Brattleboro Time Trade

Ain – Out in the Open

Sue – HCRS

David – Brattleboro Area Hospice

Next - Gary noted an article in this morning's Reformer. It discussed fundings that were provided last year. He thought that it was a good, positive article about the Committee and its purpose.

Juanita noted a concern that more funding was provided than what the Committee recommended. Ann noted that we are a committee of the Representative Town Meeting. As such, a motion for the increase was made and passed from the floor of the RTM.

The Committee's Policies and Procedures were reviewed. Ain mentioned that there was no reference to social justice included in the paragraph relative to the Committee's focus on community issues of note.

Motion to add Social Justice to list of concerns that are included.

Discussion: Sue felt that the list was not intended to be all inclusive. Ann felt that it was an omission that she desired to include. Gary asked whether it was a change that should be put out by the Committee or need it come from the RTM? David – the P&P was put together as a guideline. He asked whether it was voted on by the RTM. John noted that it was not presented to the RTM for a vote. Ann agreed with Sue that it was not necessary. John rescinded his motion. Sue suggested that a vote be held on the rescission of John's motion. Passed unanimously.

Ain suggested that it should be expanded to include racial justice. Ain made motion to include 'Racial Justice' in the Policies and Procedures. Kip seconded motion. No discussion. Passed unanimously.

Committee time line

David walked through process.

- Application available to public 10/5
- Open forum meeting for discussion of the application and process 10/20. 5:00 – 6:30.
- Application Due Date 11/9
- Review Meetings to be held over ensuing weeks with a target to complete and submit a recommendation by the first week of December.

Tentative schedule:

- First meeting week of 11/16
- Second meeting week of 11/23
- Third meeting week of 11/30

A Doodle Poll will be sent out to determine dates and times.

Sue Graff discussed application. She brought up the importance of understanding how the pandemic has impacted the applicant.

It was suggested that the application include questions pertinent to Covid-19.

Accordingly, we should ask about how the organization has been impacted by Covid-19 and how they handled it. For example, were services expanded or adjusted.

Also, how did Covid-19 impact an applicant's finances.

A final application will be accepted and forwarded to Jan. Sue asked that she be emailed Covid questions by Tuesday, September 29th. She will forward to Ann, Ain and David. Once finalized it will be sent to the Committee for review. Final Committee member recommendations must be submitted to Ann or David by Friday, 10/2. Any delay may result in a delay of the application being made available.

Application process – it was suggested that applications and supporting documents be submitted electronically. We will work with Jan to determine best way to distribute them.

Public discussion – David Levenbach. Member of RTM and Town Finance Committee. He expects to participate in the Committee to learn and better understand the process. He asked if the Rubric is shared with the applicant. Sue said that it is used by the Committee to gauge the application and is not part of the application package. Is special consideration given to organizations that support for racial injustice and under served residents of Brattleboro? Sue said that our process is open to all needs of the residents of Town. Sue noted that these are certainly considerations in the review.

Ain noted motions from the RTM about social injustice and expansion of the grant budget

Ann noted that we had run over the allotted meeting time. No further discussion was held.

The meeting adjourned at 2:18.

Minutes submitted by David Miner