

Participatory Budget Committee
June 30, 2022, 5:30pm
Minutes

Committee Attendees: Mary Estelle Ryckman (Chair), Norah Brennan (Vice Chair), Jeff Altamari, Jonathan Jeerapaet, Tim Holmes

Not attending: JoAnne Kiernan, Hal Rose, Douglas Gerhardt, and Devin Del Pos

Other Attendees: Heather Crocker (Deputy Commissioner of Finance), and Lynn Bachner (Director of Budget) via phone

Approval of Minutes: Minutes for the June 16 meeting will be considered at the July 7 meeting along with minutes from the June 30 meeting.

Discussion about Metrics: Jonathan prepared, as requested, a draft set of metrics the Committee members could use to uniformly evaluate proposals received. Jonathan explained that he looked to other localities that have participatory budgeting processes as all agreed we did not need to “reinvent the wheel”.

Generally, committee members liked the suggested metrics. They agreed general evaluation guidance was better than trying to precisely define benchmarks (i.e., “large number” of people vs a specific number). It was suggested that a summary sheet of all the projects, a dashboard, be added. This would help in tracking the proposals through the participatory budget process. Jonathan will revise the document based on the various comments received.

Discussion of what additional information is needed from the city: Committee members have many questions about city processes, included wanting more information on its budget process, procurement and grant processes, and capital expenditure planning. It was agreed City experts would join a meeting, likely on July 21, for a more detailed discussion of these issues.

Outreach: Norah reported that a press release about the deadline for proposals went out and that a Participatory Budget Facebook page has been set up. Norah asked all Committee members to please reach out to groups they know to encourage submissions.

Other Items: Jeff emphasized the importance of beginning work on designing the voting process. Mary asked for volunteers to be point on this issue. Mary handed out a draft timeline for the 2022 and 2023 participatory budget process and asked Committee members to consider it and suggest revisions. (Process timelines will be discussed in more detail at a later meeting.)

Assignments: Norah and Mary will work on the voting process. Jonathan will revise the metrics document. Committee members were asked to send in questions they have for city experts in preparation of the discussion on July 21.

Next meeting will be on Thursday, July 7, at 5:30 pm, same location.