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December 29, 2015
5:00 p.m.

FINAL REPORT

TO: Greg Anderson, Council President

FROM: Anna Lopez Brosche, Chair
Special Committee on Public Service Grants

RE: Final Report of the Special Committee on Public Service Grants

CHARGE: 1) Review and assess the 2015-2016 PSG Grant recommendations as presented to the Finance Committee during the budget review. Report your findings and recommendations to the Finance Committee and City Council for inclusion in the 2015-2016 COJ Budget.

2) Review and assess the PSG process and procedures (outlined in Section 118.801). Report your findings and recommendations to the Finance Committee and City Council. If the Special Committee determines that legislative changes are required, work with OGC to prepare the proposed legislation.

MEMBERS: Anna Lopez Brosche, Chair
Lori N. Boyer
Katrina Brown
John R. Crescimbeni
Garrett L. Dennis
Reggie Gaffney
Samuel Newby

CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS:

As Chair of the Special Committee on Public Service Grants, it is my honor to report that the Committee has officially concluded its work on the subject as charged by the Council President. After years of challenges with the public service grants process and outcomes, which often overshadow the great work of the City of Jacksonville through its nonprofit partner agencies, the Committee's main goal was to conduct a comprehensive review of the public service grants process and its governing ordinance. Prior to our discussions and deliberations, the committee members established the following overriding goals against which we could measure our proposed results:

1. To increase the transparency of the public service grants process;
2. To increase the fairness of the public service grants process;
3. To increase trust in the public service grants process;
4. To de-politicize the public service grants process; and
5. To ensure effectiveness of the public service grants process.

The Committee believes the following changes should be made to the ordinance, all of which have been incorporated into legislation being drafted by OGC for introduction in early January 2016:

1. **Align the grant application and grant process with the specific requirements of Chapter 118, Part 8** to allow for streamlining of the grant process and clarity of requirements to obtain a public service grant. With each passing year, the application and scoring sheet have expanded to include items not required by ordinance. While such expansion served the purpose of providing additional information to Public Service Grants Council ("PSG Council") in carrying out their duties, the variation has created unintended challenges.
2. **Adjust the scoring model** to allow for a wider range of scores by PSG Council members, respecting the value of their possible differing experiences and perspectives. The current model drops the highest and lowest scores if such scores are more than 5 points different than the next closest score, which does not allow for variation of scores. The proposed model drops the highest and lowest scores if they are more than 20 points away from the average of all scores.
3. **Increase the number of PSG Council members from 13 members to 15 members** (eight appointed by the Mayor, 7 appointed by the Council President) to allow for better distribution of work and hopefully spreading the significant hours required of PSG Council members in reading and scoring a high number of grant applications. Currently, the scoring results for certain grant applications may only be based on two scores.
4. **Require a minimum of 5 PSG Council members to serve on a scoring committee responsible for scoring grant applications in a priority population/need** to allow for an increased pool of scores for a single application and to allow for continuity of scorers evaluating applications within a priority population/need. Currently and as noted in 3. above, the scoring results for certain grant applications may only be based on two scores. Further, due to PSG Council vacancies and other extenuating circumstances, certain PSG Council members had to "fill in" and score portions of various priority populations/needs.
5. **Incorporate staggered terms for PSG Council members** to allow for continuity and effective operations, including more effective management by the Mayor and Council President in nominating appointments on a staggered basis. Currently, all PSG Council members fulfill terms ending on the same date, which could lead to full scale turnover of the entire PSG Council. In connection with this change, we propose **the establishment of a separate chapter** in the ordinance code in the "boards and commissions section" governing the existence, membership and terms of the PSG Council to allow for the order and structure originally intended when setting up the ordinance chapter numbering system. Currently, such items are in Chapter 118.
6. **Require annual training of PSG Council members** to allow for better understanding of the public service grants process and PSG Council member responsibilities, including the framework of the application and the scoring of such applications. While PSG Council members each have individual orientation meetings, there is no annual training on the public service grants process, which is a large process requiring significant hours of effort and the exercise of judgment. Best practice in other grantmaking operations includes annual training on the process.
7. **Require applicants to participate in training** to allow for better understanding of the public service grants process, the requirements of the ordinance, and the public service grants application. Failure to participate in such training would render an applicant ineligible to receive a public service grant.
8. **Establish an appeals process** to allow for applicants to challenge the PSG Council scoring process. Currently, the ordinance prohibits appeal of PSG Council results. The proposed legislation contains specific criteria on which an applicant can wage an appeal.
9. **Establish a courtesy review of an application** to allow for better understanding of the public service grants process and the requirements of the ordinance and related public service grants application. This courtesy review would be a checklist, ordinance-based activity performed by staff of the Office of Grants

and Compliance based on the objective contents of a proposed application and serve as a tool for effective communication hopefully mitigate the need for potential appeals.

- 10. Shift the timing of grant scoring and resulting allocation of grant funding, as well as the format of budget appropriation** to reduce the politicization of the grant award process, and to strengthen the role of the PSG Council in exercising the duties empowered by the Jacksonville City Council through Chapter 118, Part 8. The allocation of grant funding will take place subsequent to budget appropriation, which will allow for the budget appropriation to take place in a single line, lump-sum amount without regard to which applicants may or may not receive allocation of grant funding.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to chair this Committee and to work with my fellow Council Members who have devoted much time and energy to strengthen the public service grants process. I offer my thanks to the following for their active participation in and significant contributions to this work: the Public Service Grants Council, the Administration, the Council Auditor's Office, the Office of General Counsel, Procurement, Office of Grants and Compliance, members of the nonprofit community, and numerous other public service grants stakeholders. It is my hope that the full City Council will support these proposed changes so that we may realize a more effective process, improve outcomes for those most in need in the community, as well as ensure wise use of taxpayer dollars.

Anna Lopez Brosche
City Council Member
At-Large Group 1

ALB/js

cc: Council Members/Staff
Cheryl L. Brown, Director/Council Secretary
Dana Farris, Chief – Legislative Services Division
Carol Owens, Assistant Chief – Legislative Services Division
Jeff Clements, Chief – Research Division
Kristi Sikes, Chief – Administrative Services Division
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