

Participatory Budgeting Committee Minutes

5/31/22

Attendees:

Minita Sanghvi (Commissioner of Finance), Heather Crocker (Deputy Commissioner of Finance), Norah Brennan, Mary Estelle Ryckman, Lynn Bachner (Budget Director), Jonathan Jeerapaet, Douglas Gerhardt, Joanne Kiernan, Devin Dal Pos, Jeff Altamari, Hal Rose, Tony Izzo (City Attorney)

Missing: Tim Holmes

Topics

Introductions

Commissioner Sanghvi welcomed the group, shared some background on her interest in participatory budgeting and bringing it to Saratoga Springs.

The committee determined it is subject to Open Meetings laws of the city charter; keeping minutes, publishing meeting schedules in advance. Minutes will be taken by committee members on a rotating basis.

Missing Bios for Community Members

Comm. Sanghvi requested those who had not yet submitted bios to complete this request.

Guidebook – feedback for next meeting

Comm. Sanghvi requested each committee member review the prepared guidebook and provide feedback.

Outreach

Discussed ways to contact community members to increase participation – such as postcards (as was used in Cambridge, MA). Any outreach costs would be taken from the percentage of budget available to the PB process (2% of budget, approx. \$135k).

Mary Estelle – pointed out that we need to review on who we need on outreach to ensure we're expanding the search to engage more participation.

Other

Discussed costs associated with voting process – Dep. Comm. Crocker explained the proposed approach is to use an online voting model. Voting would be on a schedule separate from any other scheduled elections. Joanne asked if there were additional costs to validate people are not voting online multiple times. Comm. Sanghvi indicated that the committee will be responsible for determining the final voting process.

Doug asked if committee is responsible for vetting all projects or voting; Comm. Sanghvi explained the committee responsibility will be to evaluate projects, determine viability, and provide final outcome for voting.

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Lynn explained following the voting process, there will be additional review by Comm. Sanghvi to finalize approach and formally include into budget. There may be alternate avenues for projects that are not voted on.

The committee will be responsible for outreach and work with community to encourage and build additional projects.

Jeff suggested we should include some amount of guidelines for evaluating projects. Comm. Sanghvi confirmed other city resources will be available to help with project development where needed. Dep Comm. Crocker explained there is a preliminary form available.

Comm. Sanghvi explained there are individual and organization proposals – and will be evaluated and voted separately.

Proposals – four submitted, development needed

Next Meeting Date / Next Steps

3 suggested subcommittees: Process, Applications, Outreach: committee will decide on needed subcommittees at next meeting

Proposed schedule – every 2 weeks; 1st, 3rd, 5th Thursday, 5:30pm.

Next meeting: June 16, 5:30pm

Request to Committee: Nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, Review Guidebook, Send Bios, Review Proposals.