



OFFICE OF
**Community
& Civic Life**

Promote the common good

Bureau Advisory Committee Meeting



VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING



Tuesday, January 19th, 2021



5:30 – 7:30pm

2020-2021 Civic Life BAC Members:

ATTENDED: Leina Gonzalez Baird, Katherine Couch, Daniel Franco-Nunez, Jose Gomez,
Manijeh Mehrnoosh, Kimberléa Ruffu, Meron Semere

ABSENT: Christina Weinholz (excused), Stan Penkin (excused)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. REVIEW MEETING AGENDA
3. PUBLIC COMMENT (None)

NOTES:

QUESTION: *The Budget Equity tool clarified a lot of things; what they are asking for—different from past, but missing something. To better understand it, how did this start? What are the results/outcomes we have already gotten, what are we looking for? Does this sketch out the situation we are in, or one we are aspiring to? Could a couple lines of narrative be added to Address what situations we are leaving, what situation are we leading to?*

Yes—a baseline of information would be helpful to better understand. Equity Goals—how does the Requested Budget advance the achievement of equity goals as outlined in the bureau's racial equity plan? How the equity tool is used: OEHR reviews it and provides bureaus feedback as well as being at the table during Council work sessions to help to discuss and understand the tool. It is usually drafted for “internal” audience, so for BAC members and more general audience, some context and a few lines on narrative make sense.

QUESTION: *Read the forecast and proposed budget. When the equity lens doesn't seem totally compatible with forced budgets cuts, is there a section to do a rebuttal? Having these cuts will not support equity itself. Is the tool is used internally mostly, how do we make sure that BIOPOC communities are supported?*



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The Mayor's budget guidance requires a submitted budget with 5% general fund reduction, but also offers the opportunity to request "add-back" packages. Any add-back packages are required to make the case for why the funds are needed, specifically using the lens of the Budget Equity Tool.

The CBO (City Budget Office) has an overview perspective and weighs city-wide budget trade offs. They look at all of the reduction packages to weigh the tradeoffs to come up with a balanced package. Based on the CBO general forecast, which is pretty close to the Mayor's guidance of the 5% reductions, but they think there might be some flexibility and opportunities for add-backs.

QUESTION: *Add-back packages--when does that take place? When can the request be made? Can we do it in the most strategic way?*

Those requests would happen at the same time—reduction and add backs at the same time. January 29th is deadline for proposed budget submission.

QUESTION: *The CBO's forecast is for 5 years, how does this figure into what we are doing now?*

Forecast helped determine the budget gap for the City—that is where the 5% reduction guidance came from. BAC recommendations, thoughts, suggestions, concerns come from you. All of this is included in the BAC letter (BAC Summary), we send with the budget. If you do or don't support the recommended cuts, please continue to voice your opinion in regard to the proposed budget.

Note that the process for determining the reduction guidance was based on the FTE of the bureau. If a bureau has 30 FTE or less, there were no cuts required. Civic Life is at 54.8 FTE, so part of the *next* tier of bureau size. Civic Life's budget represents just 0.3% of the *entire* City budget. Questioning if the employee size is the best tool for determining the guidance.

Civic Life also gets discretionary funding, so there are a lot of considerations. It's not just what Civic Life cuts--when looking at the distribution of oldest and biggest investments, we see those have been to the Neighborhood Services program. Over the last three years, we see only incremental additional



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investments to communities/residents that are in the Core City Value lens of anti-racism and equity. It is not just what Civic Life cuts and adds back—what are the opportunities to make a case for more dollars to communities more aligned with the Core City Values?

Summary of proposed budget decisions:

- Per what we have heard from BAC members in previous meetings, there are no cuts to the Youth, Disability, and Immigrant and Refugee, because we can't cut anymore from these small programs without doing further harm.
- Choices and new potential required the bureau to transform into the 21 century, and a bureau capable of serving an increasingly diverse population.
- No small grants next year distributed through district coalitions.

4. REVIEW PROPOSED BUDGET CHANGES (5% GENERAL FUND REDUCTION)

SUGGESTED REDCUTIONS to General Fund "Discretionary":

- 2 vacant Community Safety staff and admin
- Repurpose a vacant Supervisor I position to an Analyst II to apply to census, community demographics, etc.
- Overtime reduction, manage staff time more affectively
- External small grants disturbed through nonprofit, not city staff DCO (District Coalition Office)
- 5% reduction to nonprofit DCO
- 5% reduction of city-staffed DCO
- Elimination of special projects line item
- Reduction of CSA (Community Service Aide) in Livability
- Reduction of mailing/postage in Liquor licensing program
- Eliminating second phone line for 13 staff



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SUGGESTED REDCUTIONS to General Fund “Overhead” (a different type of general fund resources):

- Reduction of CSA from 1050 hours, to 370. If there is salary or other savings, Civic Life can make an add-back package with the CSA hours.
- Existing staff capacity for the Immigrant and Refugee program

OTHER INFORMATION related to cannabis tax allocation:

- Partnership with Reimagine Oregon, City Budget Office and Office of Equity and Human Rights.

QUESTION: *If there are cuts, like cutting a second phone line, are things like this going to be reinstated if/when we have better financial forecast?*

These savings are ongoing reductions not just for this year. Some years we cut, some years we get the opportunity to add. Civic Life’s entire Immigrant and Refugee program budget is approx. \$250,000 total, and clearly not enough to fully serve the community. How do we get to investing the level we need to serve the population? How do we ever get there? How do we direct resources to different places, usually when there are ongoing, additional dollars, or if the bureau can make a compelling case. If there are no new dollars, we add to the equity-focused work by examining existing practices.

QUESTION: *BAC member notes strategic management of the budget in regard to quality/quantity, and asks-What happens when we take them back or get more funds? Quantity doesn’t affect quality; it is what it comes down to. Quality programs we could distribute strategically. So if we have to choose, I support those quality budget items.*

Opportunities to re-invest, per the Mayor’s follow up guidance, includes one-time funding request for urgent intervention to revitalize our neighborhoods and commercial corridors for the Graffiti removal program.

- An additional \$100K for proactive graffiti removal by MWESB contractors
- An additional \$400K for responsive graffiti, removal by MWESB contacts



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- Add a full CSA in the Graffiti program that would enable the Coordinator to continue city-wide graffiti-removal convening efforts and lead a process for exploring additional services models with other city leaders.
- An open competitive bid for MWESB contracts conducted in FY 20-21

Per the Mayor's guidance, the Cannabis program is requesting one time Recreational Cannabis Fund resources to provide stabilization support for small business and /or other critical services for historically disenfranchised Portlanders through a Cannabis Emergency Relief Fund, for small/medium sized cannabis businesses. BIPOC, Women, Veterans focused businesses with total annual revenue less than \$2M, net income less than \$250K.

The Cannabis industry is very successful overall, but smaller businesses within the industry are not fairing well--small or minority owned as opposed to the big/corporate companies. In asking for add-backs, our guidance is that what is prioritized by the Mayor and bureaus are allowed to ask for funds in these categories.

5. BAC SUMMARY REVIEW

After this review, again, Civic Life is asking for your feedback, support or strong objections. It is a back and forth: Civic Life heard your initial inclinations, and that was used to help determine what we proposed to cut. The BAC is advising Civic Life and this overview is offering you options that best meets the advice you have already given us, your specific BAC perspective. Again—Civic Life has heard the BAC members in prior meetings and there are no cuts to I&R, Youth, and Disability programs—Civic Life is not inclined to reduce program budgets that affect youth, BIOPOC communities.

BAC Member suggestion: *Two things: I think we've been talking about some interesting topics, interesting to talk about Equity or inequality, but tomorrow things are going to change in the US. There will be an attitude change—you as public figures would understand, as far as equity and inequality. It will be interesting to see how Civic Life is going to react in these new*



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governmental changes that are coming. Suggestion of an official letter of thanks from Civic Life to BAC members for participating to upon this year's completion.

AGENDA ITEMS/TOPICS FOR MARCH/MAY BAC MEETINGS:

BAC MEMBER SUGGESTIONS:

- Equity Budget Tool, Equity in general
- Learn more about programs focused on Civic Engagement
- How to better support budget guidelines in the future?
- Getting expertise from Council--how we go through this process, their input and insights will better inform our decisions as well.
- Understand the effect on our community partners--how the grants affect them, and more understand from our community organizations.

Suggestion to perhaps have a member of council to join the BAC meeting? Please continue to send us your suggestions, Civic Life will come back to you so we can flesh it out some more. Many BAC members have also lead discussions/conversations, if members want to moderate or facilitate, please let Civic Life know.

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo/article/780287>