

Whittier Alliance Board Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
May 28th, 2020 6-8:30 PM
Zoom Meeting

Present: Cyndi Hovey, Nate Rastetter, Michael Perez, Justin Kader, Brigid Higgins, Aldona Martinka, Abbie Speller, Christine Popowski, Stephanie Brown, Nate Broadbridge, Erin Sjoquist, Katie Heimer, Shinjan Sengupta, Daniel Perez, Jen Kader

Absent: Sam Pree-Stinson

Late:

Staff: Kaley Brown

Guests: Nitin Savant, Guin Keith.

Call to Order at 6:05 pm by Jen Kader

Standard of conduct and conflict of interest policies were reviewed.
Board Community Agreements are reviewed.

Motion to approve agenda. **Seconded.** Motion **Carries.**

Special welcome to the new board members.
Introductions.

George Floyd Murder

-Board members open a conversation to establish a safe space to openly talk about how we're doing. A recommendation is put forth about the idea to establish an anti-racism task force in Whittier and to coordinate a firm message on Whittier's stance on this event and the systemic issues our neighborhood faces

-The "Whittier 5" guiding principles are referenced as a way to help guide decision-making and the idea that Whittier Alliance should say something publicly about the neighborhood alliance's stance is added upon

-WA has not previously created a joint statement on police-involved killings

-A document is shared that outlines ways to avoid calling the police in times of conflict

-Nate Rastetter shared that there's a memorial now at the Cup Foods building for the public to view as a way to aid in the healing process

-Whittier Alliance Web Page now has a donation link live to help Whittier businesses who have been impacted in recent days

-More opportunities for board members to aid in response work and shape next steps will be communicated out

Secretary's Report

Abbie Speller

Attendance: 16-0, 0-1, 0-2, 0-3, 0-4, 0-5, Reinstated-0, Resigned- 0, Terminated-0, Vacancies-7, Board Seats: 23

Motion to approve the April meeting minutes. Motion **seconded.** Motion **carries 14 - 0 - 2.**

Next Board Meeting: June 25th, 2020 6:00-8:30 pm on Zoom

Finance Report: Michael Perez

-Overall the financials this month looked good and there's nothing irregular to report.

-The Great Street Grant was reimbursed, so that line item will be zeroed out on the June financials.

-The different cash funds we have were reviewed to bring new members up to speed.

Motion to accept February financials. **Seconded.** Motion passes.

Grant updates:

-Ukasha and Kaley are working on a grant through the MN Dept of Health on the community-level reduction of COVID spread. Karmel Mall is seeing misinformation and lack of resources being a big problem for re-opening shops safely. This grant would allow more ability to put barriers, signs, sanitation stations, general learning and coaching, etc. Ukasha has a team of people lined up and ready to go with the execution (with help from Fartun and Marcus).

-Grant writers have been helping to finish the remaining work on 2019 grant reports yet to be submitted.

Neighborhoods 2020:

-For the moment the Neighborhoods 2020 position letter has been deprioritized for the moment given the state of world and local events.

-A call was made for more help from the new board members, if they'd like, and the folks who have previously offered to help on this subject in the past were recounted.

-A brief overview of Neighborhoods 2020 process was given for new board members.

-Kaley shared she participated in a meeting where a coalition of neighborhoods discussed a coordinated approach to the city with regards to the 2020 plan (and also for the entire pot of money); the key issue being that the city has asked neighborhood groups to build more equity into programming and operations; more money should be allocated to that end, not less. Kaley will be meeting with that group next week and will relay the info back to the group next month (as well as the small group).

-Aldona and Michael indicated interest in assisting with this effort.

Budget reallocation and COVID Response proposal:

-Given the push/pull of efforts and events Whittier will see during the COVID crisis, Whittier Alliance will have revenue impacts as well as funds in need of reallocation.

-Task Force members did a line-by-line analysis of the financial plan and determined that approximately \$33K could be reassigned if the board chooses so.

-An overview was given of the process used to create the prioritization and considerations of possible future fund allocations. Essentially the guiding principles for how the board should approach fund reallocation. A big component of this is the time availability of the Whittier Staff. Ideally, this is meant to help the community and NOT add significantly to their workload.

-Category 1: Public Health - we elected to propose that this be one of the lower-funded tiers. It's not our primary role as an organization to support and lead the public health efforts in the community.

-Category 2: Small Business support could be focused on helping Whittier business with COVID-related changes to their businesses and helping them navigate the new rules/regulations as well as signage or other atypical business items that are now needed because of COVID.

-Category 3: Emergency Relief could include rent assistance and food assistance. Publicizing the fact that we have these extra funds and if anyone has proposals for how to help and how we can partner.

-Category 4: Advocacy buckets - the need for community members to understand the new laws that apply to them when it comes to rent and their ability to pay; workers rights; census outreach is also a big one, because many Whittier Neighbors were already going to be hard to reach and COVID will make it that much harder.

-**Group Discussion:** suggestion to allocate about half for COVID funds, and save the other half; suggestion to save as much as we can, given that there's a lot of uncertainty; a word of support for the idea of saving some, but not pigeon-holing us into funds for COVID-only relief; idea to establish a general fund for having a fund and allowing flexibility; it was noted that more discussion will be needed for processing payments to individuals; suggested we act quickly and make decisions this meeting so we can commit and fulfill our commitment to being responsive;

-A question is posed a question about the spending limits already imposed on the executive director position in the existing fiscal procedures policy; research determined that there is currently not an individual transaction spending limit.

-An explanation is given that since this is only a reallocation of budgeted funds for this year's internal budget, we do not need to hold a community vote to approve this decision as we would if we needed to move NRP strategy funds.

-A reminder is given that we are not able to fund certain things with the funds on the city contracts. Staff requests that the board share some guidance on the process she should employ for disseminating funds if worthy causes come around (i.e. how much autonomy does she have cutting checks with the accountant).

Further group discussion: a recap is provided of the buckets of money we have available and suggested we take a straw poll on how we feel about the general total value of funds to allocate; specific questions were raised about the motion and how we want to phrase it so the Executive Director has the ability to act quickly;

A **motion is made** to reallocate \$33,000 of now unactivated funds to COVID and other emergency relief funds for the Whittier Community. **Motion seconded. Motion approved** unanimously. No opposition, no abstention.

Group Discussion on process for funds disbursement:

-Suggestion for a \$1,000 limit for the ED to fund opportunities that arise, without board approval, anything larger would need to be reviewed by the board for 36 hours; proposal that a high level of discretionary spending be available to the ED, but that we have predetermined criteria for how the funds should be considered and distributed; support given for a higher number than \$1,000 but with predetermined criteria and also a timeframe for disbursement; suggestion that \$2,500 could be a good limit; suggestion given to use a percentage of the available funds to be the limit rather than a hard dollar value; suggestion made for 10-15% of the total value; idea that maybe we state caps on applicants for each program that is developed

-A straw poll is taken about \$2,500 being the limit per transaction with many indications of support

-A **motion** is made that the Whittier Alliance Board gives the Executive Director the authority to spend up to \$2,500 per transaction from the emergency fund until the August board meeting. **Seconded**

-**Motion discussion:** proposal to having a shared spreadsheet with the emergency fund distribution "actuals" that the board can view at any time.

-An **amended motion is made:** The board gives the WA Executive Director the authority to spend up to \$2,500 from the emergency fund per transaction on non-direct assistance until July 23, 2020. Direct-assistance funds also have an authority of up to \$2,500 but publicized criteria that aligns with WA principles for the awarding of those funds must be established first. **Motion seconded. Motion passes 14-0-1.**

Community Issues Update:

Justin, Kaley and Fartun are meeting next week to discuss the new census outreach plans.

Business update:

Still working on the structure with coalition partners for disbursing donations to businesses in need of financial aid in the wake of recent damage.

Housing Issues update:

-Had a good meeting this month which was preceded by a few one-off meetings with the developers who presented.

-There are two motions to put in front of the board from the community as it relates to the encampment at 28th and Stevens.

-The Chair reported on the letter crafted based on the community feedback on the CommonBond Communities project at Blaisdell and 26th.

-**Motion** is made to approve the letter of support as written. **Motion seconded. Motion passed 13-0-1.**

-An additional motion that the housing issues committee created around the sanitary condition is discussed. Board members debated what the purpose of passing the motion is and what we need to do in support of it.

-It is determined that it's not an issue for now that the motion is broadly stated, and that it can be used as a guiding principle for future organization actions.

-A **motion is made** to approve the committee's position statement for Whittier Alliance to advocate for sanitary conditions and public hygiene infrastructure at unsheltered encampments and does not advocate for the clearing of camps without adequate accommodations made for the individuals in those camps. **Motion is seconded. Motion passes 11-0-3.**

Board Resolution on Operations Changes due to COVID-19

-Kaley reviewed the board resolution prepared from a template prepared by our attorney about the canceling of the annual meeting, adjustments to voting and meeting procedure to accommodate for digital meetings, and the appointment of board candidates to the vacant seats they would have been elected to by acclamation, as the election was not contested this year.

-A **motion is made** to approve the resolution. **Motion is seconded. Motion passes** unanimously.

Announcements /Next Steps.

-New board member onboarding coming soon.

Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Motion carries.

Adjourn 8:51PM | Minutes respectfully submitted by Nate Broadbridge.