



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT

Minutes

November 13, 2025
10:00 am

Location: City Council Chamber

In attendance: Council Members Amaro, Arias, J. Carlucci, Clark-Murray, Peluso, Salem

Also: Carla Lopera and Mary Staffopoulos, OGC; Phillip Peterson, Auditor's Office; Brandon Russell, Council Research; Brittany Norris, Administration

Meeting Convened: 10:00 am

Meeting Call to Order:

CM Salem convened the meeting.

Introductions and Welcome:

CM Salem welcomed the group and called for introductions.

Updates from OGC

Mary Staffopoulos from the Office of General Counsel provided an overview of actions taken at the last meeting, during which the Committee decided to follow a modified Cultural Council model for distributing CBA funds in the Eastside. In the previous meeting, the committee also approved a change to the board structure for the 501(c)(3) that would distribute grants. This modified appointment structure would consist of four appointments, each by the Council President, the Mayor, and one representative from the Jaguars.

She then explained the two handouts to the members. The first was draft legislation following the Cultural Council model, establishing the 501(c)(3) with updates to the appointment structure approved in the last meeting. The second handout contained a list of proposed changes submitted to the Office of General Counsel for discussion at this meeting.

CM Salem noted that references had been made to the Public Service Grant Council (PSG), but clarified that the PSG program is within government. In contrast, the proposed Eastside organization would exist outside of government. Ms. Staffopoulos confirmed, adding that the appointment process for the new organization was modeled after PSG. CM Salem then asked her to provide the position of the Office of General Counsel on an outside organization using City funds. Ms. Staffopoulos explained that the City was under contract with the Jaguars to ensure that dollars are spent on the prescribed categories outlined in the CBA; there is a concern that an outside organization may spend those dollars in a manner that would put the City in violation of that contract.

Chair Arias joined the meeting and indicated that public comment would be taken at the end of the meeting, if time permitted.

CM Peluso inquired about the process for the City to establish its own 501(c)(3) organization, referencing prior conversations on the topic. Ms. Staffopoulos confirmed that the City could create its own 501(c)(3). Still, she expressed concern over a potential loss of momentum, as this would require time to file with the state and to create documentation to establish the entity. She also added that they would need to seek outside counsel, as they did not have an in-house attorney to handle that process. She continued, stating that they would also need to draft articles of incorporation, establish an initial board, and then submit filing documents to the state. CM Peluso asked how much time that would require. Ms. Staffopoulos could not provide an exact estimate of the time needed, as it depended on several factors.

CM Amaro asked if the Office of General Counsel would prefer that the Committee not pursue an outside organization. Ms. Staffopoulos stated the Office did not have an official position but was responsible for advising the Council on the possible risks associated with their policy decisions. CM Amaro noted that the concerns were reason to pause. She added that the Cultural Council model makes sense as an outside entity because it deals with cultural services, which are not a core government function. In this case, the proposed outside organization would provide funds for things more related to core government functions—affordable housing and homelessness, for example. She noted that with the government in control, it is easier to ensure that the contract is not violated.

CM J. Carlucci asked what needed to be decided before discussing amendments. Ms. Staffopoulos reiterated that the Committee agreed to use an outside 501(c)(3) to disperse funds and that they need to determine which one to use. CM J. Carlucci asked whether it matters who creates the organization, since the draft legislation will ultimately govern the organization's bylaws and other guidelines. Ms. Staffopoulos indicated that would be the case with a City-led organization. She stated that Mr. Nunn had been tweaking the bylaws of the Historic Eastside CBA Organization to keep them in line with the Committee's deliberations.

CM J. Carlucci stated that they should use what is before them and asked what they need to do to begin discussing amendments. Ms. Staffopoulos noted that the Historic Eastside CBA Organization was already specified in the legislation and recommended that the Committee reach consensus on proceeding with that organization or with a second organization established by others in the community. CM J. Carlucci stated he wanted to table the idea of a City-led organization and was happy to hear from the two community organizations before ultimately deciding which to use.

CM Salem stated he was ready to debate which organization to use. CM Peluso inquired whether the Committee could provide guidelines for the organization's bylaws to ensure alignment with City priorities. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that the bylaws would be determined by how the Committee dictated the distribution of funds in the ordinance, adding that the bylaws may address other matters not contemplated in the legislation. CM Peluso asked if the prospective organizations had drafted bylaws at

this time. Ms. Staffopoulos confirmed that Mr. Nunn had drafted bylaws for the Historic Eastside CBA Organization, but she could not speak for the second organization. CM Clark-Murray expressed concerns about the organizations and stated that determining which best represented the community was the Committee's task.

Brittany Norris from the Administration noted that there may be some consternation between the two groups and stated that the Administration favored the current legislation because it's a blank slate. She noted that the Committee's determinations regarding other aspects of the bill would need to be accepted for the organization to enter into a contractual agreement with the City. She also said the Administration was willing to hold community meetings following the Committee's action to bring both sides together to discuss topics such as board appointments, procurement, and other aspects of managing City funds. She added that they could request that staff from the Office of General Counsel and the Ethics Commission be present at those meetings.

Chair Arias stated that fair representation from both sides was important and that the board structure would ensure that. He added that he was ready to move forward with the organization that had already been created, provided both sides were represented on the board. CM Peluso invited Mr. Nunn to the podium and asked for the name of the organization, which Mr. Nunn stated was Historic Eastside CBA Organization, Inc. CM Peluso asked whether they had bylaws; Mr. Nunn indicated that they did. CM Peluso then asked whether he would meet with Ms. Jean-Bart to review bylaws and other matters that may change after the Committee takes action, which Mr. Nunn agreed to do. Mr. Nunn added that the organization's structure is where community representation will be reflected.

CM Peluso invited Ms. Jean-Bart to the podium and asked if she would be interested in participating in any summit hosted by the Administration. She stated that her position is consistent with CM Salem and would prefer the organization to be within government, but that they would proceed with whatever the Committee ultimately decides. She also added that they do not have a 501(c)(3) established because they were waiting to see what the Council ultimately decided.

CM J. Carlucci asked if there was only one organization. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that Mr. Nunn had established the Historic Eastside CBA Organization and recalled from a previous meeting that another group had indicated they had filed to establish another 501(c)(3). She added that there may be someone present to address that question. Latavia Harris approached the podium and stated that they did not have an organization established because they thought the Opioid model would be selected.

CM J. Carlucci stated that it ultimately does not matter who created it, and that the bylaws, board, and CEO are what matter. Ms. Staffopoulos concurred that those were matters of primary importance. CM J. Carlucci suggested proceeding with the discussion of the proposed changes.

Action: Chair Arias moved to obtain consensus on keeping Historic Eastside CBA Organization in the draft legislation, which was achieved with CMs Peluso, Amaro, Arias, and J. Carlucci voting yes; CMs Salem and Clark-Murray voting no.

CM Salem asked how they intend to have representation from both groups in Eastside. Ms. Staffopoulos reviewed the language in the draft legislation that prescribes the requirements for those seeking appointments to the board, reiterating that the Eastside connection is a prerequisite, whether the Mayor or the Council President selects the appointee. She added that there could be legal impediments to the appointment structure, as the proposed legislation provides that appointments come entirely from the City and the Jaguars. She suggested allowing Mr. Nunn to give more details on those legal concerns.

CM Peluso stated that he understood the Administration may have legal opinions on appointments and asked Ms. Norris whether she wanted to speak to them. She said she was not aware of any legal opinions but stated that when they hold their summit with the Eastside community, she expected the list of those seeking board membership might be narrowed. CM Peluso said he thought that board members could abstain if their organization sought funds from the board. Ms. Staffopoulos said that board membership may exclude a member or their organization from applying for grant funds. CM Peluso asked if the specific language was “may” or “shall.” Ms. Staffopoulos said it is “may” because an attorney would conduct a specific analysis to assess each scenario. CM Peluso stated that he knew business owners who would be interested in serving on the board. Ms. Staffopoulos suggested that those business owners reach out to Mr. Nunn to conduct a preliminary analysis to identify any potential conflicts. CM Peluso then asked if that applied to members who may serve on a subcommittee created by the board. Ms. Staffopoulos indicated that it would also depend on the specific facts of each scenario.

Ms. Norris reminded the Committee that the board would exist for decades and said people could serve on the board for a few years and then seek funding after their term.

Committee Amendments

Chair Arias asked Ms. Staffopoulos for advice on the best way to proceed with the amendments. She stated that it was at the Chair’s discretion. She suggested that the Committee could either review each proposed change on the list provided to Committee members or review the legislation and discuss potential changes as they review each section. Chair Arias stated they would go through the proposed changes individually.

CM Peluso explained his second amendment to the list provided, clarifying that a “Florida corporation” includes both non-profit and for-profit businesses. He added that he did not think the requirement that a corporation be in existence for at least 3 years and have 3 years of tax returns was necessary and asked whether that was a state requirement. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that the eligibility requirements were derived from internal processes and were also present in the Cultural Council, which served as the model for the current legislation. CM Peluso expressed a desire to remove that portion because he anticipates the creation of new organizations seeking to be eligible for grants. He supported requiring organizations to have some cash on hand, however. He summarized his changes, stating he wanted to specify that non-profit and for-profit organizations are eligible for grants and to remove the three-year requirement.

Ms. Staffopoulos stated that “Florida corporation” contemplates both types of organizations, making the clarification moot. Moving on to his third proposed amendment, he said that organizations should have some cash on hand, but there should not be a requirement for a dollar match. He suggested a 50-cent-per-dollar match.

He then explained his fifth proposed amendment, which would remove Kids Hope Alliance from the list of organizations in Section 118.903 of the draft legislation. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that the list is in the Code for the City’s other grant programs. She added that there have been instances where organizations have sought funding from different sources for different programs. She continued, noting that there are instances in which organizations have sought funding from multiple sources for the same program through a City Council-approved waiver.

CM Peluso stated that his sixth proposed amendment—prohibiting disbursal of funds to individuals—was addressed in an earlier amendment. He also proposed an amendment to authorize the Board of Directors to establish its own procurement process but asked Ms. Staffopoulos if that was already inherent in the legislation. With regard to his sixth amendment, she stated that it could be added to clarify that individuals cannot receive funds. She noted that the seventh amendment relates to language in the bill that

suggests organizations follow city procurement processes where possible, but that this is not obligatory. CM Peluso added that he did not want the procurement process for organizations to be as onerous as the City's. Ms. Staffopoulos reiterated that following the City's procurement process is not obligatory unless the funding were to go toward capital projects. CM Peluso asked if preference for Eastside businesses in the grant scoring process was permissible. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that it was permissible and that the board would be able to account for that when creating their processes.

CM Salem did not think removing the three-year requirement for businesses was a good idea, especially given that the Historic Eastside CBA Organization exists outside of government. CM Clark-Murray suggested adding that corporations seeking grants be active and in good standing. She then asked why the bill does not limit businesses to the Eastside. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that the bill's language was drawn from other programs that are not focused on a specific neighborhood. She added that though businesses themselves may not be in the Eastside, the intent was that the Eastside would be the focus of their work if they were seeking grant funding. She suggested adding language requiring programs or projects to focus on the Eastside. CM Clark-Murray stated she would be more comfortable with that piece of the legislation if such language were added and suggested the scoring process should provide an advantage to businesses located in the Eastside. Ms. Staffopoulos also highlighted Section 118.907(g), which states that an organization shall provide services focused within the Eastside community.

CM Clark-Murray then asked CM Peluso about his desire to eliminate or reduce the cash match. CM Peluso stated he wanted at least a 50-cent-per-dollar match and reiterated his desire to remove the requirement that organizations be in operation for at least three years. CM Clark-Murray expressed her support for removing the cash match requirement entirely but thought the three-year requirement made sense, especially since the board would operate for 30 years. She also reiterated that she would like to add the requirement to Section 118.907(b) that businesses be active and in good standing.

CM J. Carlucci stated that he agreed with those amendments to Section 118.907(b).

Action: CM J. Carlucci moved to add the requirement that businesses be active and in good standing, and to specify that Florida corporations include non-profit and for-profit organizations, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

CM J. Carlucci asked if CM Peluso's amendment to preclude individuals from receiving grant dollars applied to capital projects as well as programs. It was determined that this amendment was no longer needed.

Action: CM Clark-Murray moved to eliminate Section 118.907(k), which required a one-dollar cash match, which was seconded.

CM Peluso expressed concern with no match being required, noting that it would include larger capital projects. CM Clark-Murray indicated that she was mostly considering smaller organizations and suggested adding language that distinguishes capital projects from other projects or creates tiers for organizations of different profit amounts.

CM Salem highlighted that funds are designated for initiatives in affordable housing, workforce housing, economic development, and homelessness mitigation, and noted that larger organizations would do this work. He said it seemed that the Committee was focused on funding small businesses that would not yield the large-scale change that they wanted to see in the area.

CM Peluso stated he was on board with CM Salem's statements but asked if he was okay with a hypothetical owner of a vacant lot seeking funding for development of a mixed-use building with no match. CM Salem stated it would depend on the person's ability to do so and the board's desire to fund it.

CM J. Carlucci also agreed with eliminating the cash match requirement, citing other provisions in the bill that require those seeking funding to have a track record of relevant work.

CM Amaro asked about the intention of the cash match requirement. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that this provision was born of experience with other grant programs and a desire to ensure that award recipients are invested in completing their projects. She added that it also deters organizations from being reliant on City funds to complete their services or programs. Phillip Peterson from the Council Auditor's Office stated that City funds are distributed quarterly, which can impede the work of organizations that rely solely on the City for funding. He then said he hoped that payment for large capital projects would not be disbursed until the projects are complete. CM Amaro said he did not think the cash match should be removed.

Ms. Norris stated that the Administration was uncomfortable with completely removing the cash match requirement, especially for capital projects by organizations with a track record and the ability to provide a cash match. She would like to see a delineation between programmatic and capital projects. She also suggested reviewing the JSEB program's tier system for businesses if the committee decides to establish one in the proposed legislation.

Chair Arias stated he agreed with CM Clark-Murray and CM Salem. He noted that there were already guardrails in place and that, for capital projects, the money would not be distributed until the project was completed.

Action: The amendment to eliminate Section 118.907(k), which required a one-dollar cash match, was approved; CMs Peluso, Arias, Salem, J. Carlucci, and Clark-Murray voted yes; CM Amaro voted no.

Ms. Staffopoulos summarized the action for the Committee and indicated that the second sentence of that subsection would remain, as it does not pertain to the cash match requirement.

CM Clark-Murray asked whether there would be a substantial completion requirement as part of any agreement between the Historic Eastside CBA Organization and a prospective developer, or whether that needed to be added to the bill. Mr. Peterson said there should be language in the bill requiring that; otherwise, agreements could be structured without that requirement. CM Clark-Murray suggested adding a requirement that agreements for capital projects include a substantial completion clause. Mr. Peterson highlighted language on page 11 of the draft legislation and suggested adding that requirement to Section 118.907(i).

Action: CM Clark-Murray moved to add language to Section 118.907(i) requiring substantial completion requirements to be part of awards for capital projects, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

CM Peluso asked to define capital projects as anything over \$1 million. Mr. Peterson stated that capital projects are not defined by their cost and defined a capital project as anything that is not programmatic. Chair Arias provided replacing a roof as an example of a capital project that would cost much less than \$1 million.

Chair Arias asked if there was discussion on reducing the three-year requirement to one year. Ms. Staffopoulos stated no motion had been made and added background information on that provision of the bill. She noted that the provision was in the Code for other grant programs because some younger

organizations lacked the infrastructure to carry out their work after receiving grants. She added that when City dollars are advertised without the requirement, organizations are formed solely to apply for them. She said this has led to a trend of requiring organizations to have a track record when applying for City grants.

Action: CM Salem moved to reduce the three-year requirement to two years; the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

CM J. Carlucci requested more information on the quarterly disbursement of funds. Mr. Peterson cited Section 118.910(a), which states funds will be distributed on a quarterly basis. He stated that this was how the Cultural Council distributed funds. He said that it would begin in October, with the start of the new fiscal year, and that organizations must provide documentation throughout the year to secure each quarterly distribution.

CM J. Carlucci explained his amendment, which included the Public Service Grants program, to the list in Section 118.903.

Action: CM J. Carlucci moved his amendment, which was seconded and approved 5-1. CMs Amaro, Arias, Salem, J. Carlucci, and Clark-Murray voted yes; CM Peluso voted no.

CM Salem explained that his changes were intended to create guardrails, and Ms. Staffopoulos provided a synopsis of his proposed changes. The first change would be to require applicants to submit eligibility documents with their grant applications, such as those required for Opioid or PSG grants. She provided a list of documents that are required by other grant programs.

The second change would be a requirement that agencies attend a Mandatory Application Workshop, coupled with a requirement that the Board provide at least two such workshops. The third would be the submission of an original Affidavit by the requesting agency's executive director, CEO, or COO, President, Vice President, or Board Chairman, certifying that the agency complies with the requirements necessary to receive grants.

CM Salem asked to pause and asked Mr. Nunn if any of the changes covered thus far were unreasonable. Mr. Nunn said he did not and suggested that they add a requirement that organizations certify that they have effective internal controls around their grants program. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that these first three proposed changes would be requirements for agencies seeking funding, not requirements for the Historic Eastside CBA Organization.

CM Peluso then asked for the rationale behind the requirement that the requesting agency's appropriation requests not exceed the aggregate of 24 or 50 percent of the requesting agency's annual revenue averaged over the previous three tax years. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that 50 percent was already specified in the legislation and that 24 percent is found in other parts of the Code. She stated that if they land on another number, it will need to be changed on the bill. Mr. Peterson said that the provision was looking at the entity itself, not at the proportion of total dollars that could be awarded to a particular entity.

Action: CM Salem moved the first three of his proposed changes:

- Adding a requirement for submittal of eligibility documents with a grant application such as those required to apply for Opioid or PSG grants from the City
- Requiring agencies to attend a Mandatory Application Workshop, coupled with a requirement that the Board provide at least two such Workshops.

- Requiring submittal of an Affidavit by the requesting agency certifying that the agency meets specified criteria to receive grants.

The motion was seconded.

CM Clark-Murray asked if there were any conflicts between what was already in the legislation. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that the cap for an agency's appropriation request at 50 percent of the requesting agency's annual revenue, averaged over the previous three tax years, would remain as is. She stated that any mention of the three-year requirement in CM Salem's proposed changes would be changed to two years, reflecting prior action taken in the meeting.

Action: CM Salem's motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Staffopoulos continued to explain the remainder of CM Salem's changes. His fourth change would add a requirement that the Grant Application would elicit specific information and noted that there would also need to be a uniform process for scoring those applications. The fifth proposed change would include requirements pertaining to the scoring and ranking of applications. She pointed out that Section 118.908 already contained a list of criteria for scoring grant applications, but told the Committee they could add or remove items from that list and specify that certain criteria be weighted more than others. The final change would place limits on grant awards, whether on the amount awarded or the number of grants.

CM Peluso stated that this was the area where the Board should have the most freedom, but that at least 60 percent of the Board should score each application to promote participation. He added that he didn't want to impose too many limitations on the number of awards an organization may receive. CM Salem wondered why all Board members would not score every grant. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that other programs have different categories, as do the Eastside CBA dollars. She said that other organizations have certain members score applications in specific categories, and that there could be several ways to structure the scoring requirement. Mr. Peterson stated that PSG has three categories, and the Chair assigns members to each; those members must score every application in their assigned category.

CM Peluso anticipated more grant applications throughout the year and did not want to be too strict with requirements that might lead to applications not being approved. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that the legislation currently contemplates one grant cycle per year.

Action: CM Salem moved to add a requirement that at least five people score each assigned grant category, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

Ms. Staffopoulos stated that it counted as an amendment to CM Salem's fifth amendment, and suggested moving CM Salem's amendment as amended.

Action: The amendment as amended was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Ms. Staffopoulos stated that they had not taken up CM Salem's sixth proposed change. CM Amaro asked if they had discussed CM Salem's fourth proposed change. Chair Arias stated they had heard from Ms. Staffopoulos on each point, and if anyone on the committee wanted to offer specific changes, they could. Ms. Staffopoulos noted that the fourth proposed change was merely an opportunity to specify the information that should be elicited; if not, it would be up to the Board to determine which questions to ask.

CM J. Carlucci requested an explanation of the differences between Sections 118.908(b) and 118.908(e). Ms. Staffopoulos stated that subsection (b) deals with the impact on the particular areas of focus, while

subsection (e) speaks to the impact on the Eastside community more broadly. CM J. Carlucci asked if there was a way to incorporate Eastside community input into the scoring of applications. Ms. Staffopoulos wondered how one would measure community impact, especially when grant processes exist in a closed system.

Chair Arias wanted to take action on CM Salem's final proposed change, but Ms. Staffopoulos stated that an actual determination of specific limitations on grant awards would be needed. CM Peluso stated that he wanted the board to make this determination. CM Amaro asked what safeguards would prevent any one organization from getting the bulk of the money. Ms. Staffopoulos explained that the Board will not say how many agencies they intend to fund during the Mayor's Budget Review process, but instead requests an amount of money that will be awarded as grants to organizations that apply. She added that they will outline how much will go into each category. She suggested they revisit this item at a future meeting. CM Salem requested a chart outlining how the other grant programs deal with this issue.

CM Clark-Murray agreed that they would need more information. CM J. Carlucci wanted to know the maximum amount to be allocated to the Historic Eastside CBA Organization so the Committee could work back from that amount.

Ms. Staffopoulos recapped the meeting and said they would provide a modified version of the bill with the changes redlined for easy identification. She also stated that she would create the chart requested by CMs Salem and Clark-Murray. She also said they could take up CM Salem's final amendment and any other items they desired at the next meeting.

CM Salem requested that copies be provided to the audience members. Ms. Staffopoulos agreed to fulfill that request.

CM Peluso stated that they still needed to discuss tax increment financing and the amount allowed for administrative services versus contracted administrative services. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that the bill intends for no more than 10 percent of the dollars awarded to be spent on administrative costs, contracted or otherwise. CM Peluso also reiterated the Administration's promise to meet with the community and offered to meet with them as well.

Chair Arias adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 12:02 p.m.

Minutes: Brandon Russell, Council Research
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