

FoCo Creates Program Support Funding Meeting

Meeting Information

Date: April 6, 2026. 3:00 PM
Location: Online Public Teams Meeting

Meeting Notes

Opening and Introductions

- Solara Clark, FoCo Creates Grant Program Administrator, facilitated the funding meeting.
- The meeting began with a brief roll call. Participants present included:
 - Zora Beglarian
 - Julia Cooper-Pelkey
 - Kim Graves
 - Carol Ann Hixon
 - Zoe Parham
 - David Pyle
 - Jessica Roschen
- Cheryl Donaldson-Moses, co-executive director at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery and a supervisor of the Community Arts Workgroup, introduced herself to observe the first community panel funding meeting.

Purpose and Formalities of the Meeting

- The purpose of the meeting is to conduct a required public review of funding results for the City of Fort Collins, FoCo Creates Grant Program.
- The panel will review scores and discuss potential funding shifts, which could involve dropping applications below a certain score threshold to reallocate money.
- The panel's decision will form the basis of a staff recommendation to the City Council.
- The meeting is recorded for official minutes, and panel members with recusals (conflicts of interest) must not participate in discussions about those specific organizations.

Feedback on the Grant Scoring Process

- Panel members shared initial thoughts on the grant review process. Several found the applications to be of high quality and enjoyed learning about new projects in Fort Collins.
- **Process Feedback:**
 - David noted difficulty correcting an error in the ZoomGrants platform after recusing himself, and this feedback was passed on.
 - Several members found the application questions led to repetitive answers, particularly regarding data collection and usage, making the process time-consuming.
 - Zoe discussed the challenge of comparing organizations with vastly different operating budgets and project scopes.

Review of Grant Funding Options and Scenarios

- The panel reviewed a spreadsheet detailing funding results, where scores determine the percentage of requested funding an organization receives. Due to budget limitations, the final funding amount is adjusted downward.
- A score of 75 or higher is required to be considered for funding; two organizations scored below this and were automatically not funded.
- Three funding scenarios were presented:
 - **Option 1 (Base Scenario):** Fund all organizations that scored 75 or higher.
 - **Option 2 (Drop scores under 80):** Fund all organizations that scored 80 or higher, which would drop three additional applicants.
 - **Option 3 (Drop 5):** Drop the five lowest-scoring organizations in addition to the two applicants scoring below 75.

Discussion and Voting on Funding Scenarios

- The group debated the options.
 - **Support for Option 1:** Advocates argued for funding as many organizations as possible to support the community, especially emerging and amateur groups. They noted the funding increase for top-tier organizations in other scenarios was relatively small.
 - **Support for Option 2:** Others emphasized the competitive nature of the grant, arguing that maintaining a high standard would encourage stronger future applications.
 - **Option 3 was not widely considered.**

- It was clarified that the score reflects alignment with the grant's specific goals (Foco Creates), not the overall quality of an organization. The financial difference between funding 65% (Option 1) vs. 68% (Option 2) of the total ask was noted.
- **Voting and Conclusion:**
 - An initial vote was very close but resulted in a slight majority for Option 1.
 - After discussion, members who had initially voted for the other options agreed to support the majority decision.
 - A final, unanimous roll-call vote confirmed the adoption of **Option 1**, which will be presented to the City Council for approval.

Closing Remarks

- **Administration:** This was the first-ever community panel review for a city grant. Panel members will receive their payment soon. The next review cycle will be for the Special Event Grant, with a deadline in September.
- **Gratitude:** Staff expressed gratitude for the panel regarding all the hard work they put into scoring and reviewing applications.