

FoCo Creates Special Event Funding Meeting

Meeting Information

Date: September 29, 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.
- Reesa Cornwall, FoCo Creates Grant Program Administrative Assistant, attended and was introduced to the panel.
- Participants present included:
 - Zora Beglarian
 - Julia Cooper-Pelkey
 - Kim Graves
 - Carol Ann Hixon
 - Zoe Parham
 - David Pyle
 - Jessica Roschen

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:**
 - The group expressed appreciation for the shorter grant application format.
 - Reviewers felt they still had enough information to make informed recommendations despite reduced length.
 - Carol Ann Hixon noted the wide diversity of applications and appreciated reviewing familiar organizations along with new applicants.

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; one organization scored below this and was automatically not funded.
- Three funding scenarios were presented:
 - **Option 1 (Base Scenario):** Fund all organizations that scored 75 or higher, resulting in slightly lower individual grant amounts for everyone.
 - **Option 2 (Drop bottom three applications):** Do not fund the bottom three applicants to reallocate more money to the higher-scoring ones.
 - **Option 3 (Drop only lowest-scoring application):** Do not fund only the lowest-scoring applicant to provide a moderate funding increase to others.

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 for new applicants and additional funds due to Canyon Concert Ballet's closure. 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.
 - **Support for Option 3:** Three members felt it was important to keep the grant competitive and had concerns about the Jagged Moves application.

- There was discussion about Poudre School District Foundation's application involving licensing fees as a large portion of budget. It was clarified by a member that such fees are common and that well-known titles help attract larger audiences.
 - Concerns were raised about the Jagged Moves project's complexity versus low projected attendance and logistics while others noted the collaborative nature with farmers and natural areas and that it serves an often-ignored part of the community.
 - Zora Beglarian would like to have the question "What would you do if you were not to get this funding?" added back to the grant application to help understand how this funding would directly affect the applicants.
- **Voting and Conclusion:**
 - An initial straw poll showed a preference for Option 1 with three members being in favor of Option 3.
 - After discussion, members who had initially shown favor for Option 3 were open to supporting Option 1.
 - A final roll-call vote 6-1 confirmed the adoption of **Option 1**, which will be presented to the City Council for approval.

Closing Remarks

- **Administration:** This was the second community panel review for a city grant. Panel members will receive their payment soon. The 2027 grant panel application is open and current panel members must confirm via email whether they wish to return for the 2027 grant panel. Some current members will be rotated off the panel to stagger terms.
- **Gratitude:** Staff expressed gratitude for the panel regarding all the hard work they put into scoring and reviewing applications.