



GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE: November 3, 2023

AGENDA ITEM: Consider a motion to approve of the updated agreement between the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation and Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission for the Public Utilities Community Caring Fund and authorize the General Manager to sign.

PREPARED BY: Jean Lane, Business Services Manager

BACKGROUND:

GRPU established the Grand Rapids Public Utilities Community Caring Fund on February 2, 2011, within the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation (GRACF). The agreement specified two granting criteria (1) 50% of quarterly distribution shall be used for supporting crisis, basic needs funding for the working poor, using criteria and applications set up as the Itasca County Sharing Fund; (2) 50% of the quarterly contribution from the Agency shall be used to support nonprofit entities that provide services within the geographic area which the Agency serves.

The funding for the program is from GRPU customers who have rounded up their monthly utility bill and given their permission to use the round up money for the Caring Fund. The money rounded up is sent to the GR Area Foundation quarterly is approximately \$250/quarter. The balance in the GRPU Community Caring Fund is approximately \$10,000.

The first grants were paid out in 2012 and then the grants went inactive. After the COVID-19 pandemic the GRACF executive director approached GRPU and asked GRPU to review the funding guidelines established in 2011.

On September 15, 2022 the GRPUC adopted resolution #09-15-22-7 establishing a policy for the Grand Rapids Public Utilities Community Caring Fund and program guidelines. The focus of the policy is for the funds to assist residential GRPU customers in a utility crisis. See attached.

GRPU Customer Service Team working closely with the GRACF in 2023 realized the agreement language between GRACF and GRPUC needed to be updated based on the policy adopted in September 2022.

The attached updated agreement has been reviewed by GRACF and GRPU team members which has been updated to reflect the GRPUC September 2022 policy language and a reduced management fee calculation from 10% to 5%. This updated agreement more closely aligns with GRACF current agreements.

The work of the GRPU Customer Service Team with GRACF resulted in 10 customers who received grants totaling approximately \$1,000 per the adopted policy which is the annual granting limit. There were more customers in utility crisis late summer and GRPU management approved an additional \$2,000 of grants for approximately 20 customers from GRPU annual royalty funds which were deposited in the Caring Fund.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the updated agreement between the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation and Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission for the Public Utilities Community Caring Fund and authorize the General Manager to sign.