



MEMO TO CITY COUNCIL

Request to Include Topic on the City Council Agenda

From:	Jacob Cluff	Meeting Date:	TBD
Presenter:	Jacob Cluff	Estimated Time:	20 mins
Topic:	Neighborhood Grants Program		

Recommended Council Action:

Provide approval for allocation of FY2023 budgeted funds for top-scoring, recommended Neighborhood Grant applications.

Background:

The City Council allocated \$50,000 in the FY2023 budget for the Neighborhood Grants Program (NGP), with the intent to expand citizen input into developing projects that highlight neighborhood identity and pride and further Meridian's vision to be a premier community in which to live, work and raise a family. The program's goals seek to create opportunities for long-term civic engagement by community members, build stronger relationships between elected officials, city staff, the community, and other agencies, and inspire projects that leave lasting impacts across Meridian's community.

As originally presented in May of 2021, the NGP proposed to award up to \$25,000 per project for up to two projects, and the program is anticipated to grow over time, presuming successful execution in prior years and community and budgetary support for such projects.

While staffing change-over impacted the execution timeline during the first and second years of the program, the process continues. Based on the application flow, the program is successful thus far and a sought-after resource for the community.

During the FY23 application process, the City received 14 applications. Five of the 14 did not meet the minimum requirements to be considered, and staff followed up with these applicants to attempt to obtain information that could deem the applications complete. The nine complete applications include a range of requests for amenities, beautification and clean-up efforts, and community events. Applicants varied whether individuals, businesses, non-profits, homeowners' associations, or service groups.

Scoring of applications was performed individually by a panel consisting of City Council members as defined during program development and roll-out. The scoring matrix allocated points across six categories, including project description, the inclusion of volunteer assistance to execute, timeline efficacy, project impact, project budget, and outside recommendations or support. The total points available per application were 100 points, plus five bonus points for outside recommendations or support.

Below is a table depicting the type of project, the group who submitted the request, a summary, and the estimated cost of each. The projects requested nearly \$100,000 in total funding, with an average funding request of approximately \$11,000.

Proj No.	Project Type	Group	Brief Summary	Funding Request
2023-01	Event	Connection is the Cure	Connection is the Cure - Battle of the Bands July 29, 2023	\$9900
2023-02	Maintenance	Senior Center	Repairs to the Senior Center facility	\$5982.88
2023-04	Clean-up	I Heart Treasure Valley	Locate and clean up underserved locations in Meridian	\$3000
2023-05	Beautification	Boise-Meridian RV Resort	Clean up of the southwest corner of the intersection of Meridian and Franklin Rd	\$48224.84
2023-06	Beautification	Golfview Estates HOA	Improvement and beautification of Golfview Estates neighborhood pathway route.	\$17000
2023-07	Beautification	Golfview Estates HOA	Improvement and beautification of drainage common use area.	\$3000
2023-08	Beautification	Golfview Estates HOA	Improvement, beautification, and reinforcement of Safford Sub lateral canal bank.	\$10000
2023-09	Beautification	Golfview Estates HOA	Improvement and beautification through the replacement of the footbridge.	\$5000
2023-10	Event	Connection is the Cure	Community event held at a local high school to educate parents on mental health issues	\$827.67

Discussion:

The NGP was presented initially (in 2021) to award up to \$25,000 per project for a maximum of two projects. Based on applications received, the program goals, and the scoring results (provided below), Council should consider the best funding allocation. The original program sideboards were established as a starting point when considering staff impacts of project management, paperwork, and invoicing required for awarded projects.

This program is in its second year, lessons are being learned, and changes and adjustments will need to be made in future years. These will include adjustments in application information required, redefining the scoring panel composition, considerations for various project types not currently considered, and the potential legal agreement needs.

For example, various applications in this cycle-year were from HOAs and required coordination and ongoing operational & maintenance efforts from the City (Parks) Departments and the HOA. Some projects defined themselves as one-time uses of funds with no ongoing cost. How this gets factored into the review and execution of projects will need to be refined over time.

Recommendation:

Staff is seeking approval to award funds for up to the top three scored projects, as listed in the scoring table below. This recommendation is based on a few factors discussed below the scoring table.

Proj No.	<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Brief Summary</u>	<u>Funding Request</u>	<u>Average Score</u>
2023-10	Event	Connection is the Cure	Community event held at a local high school to educate parents on mental health issues	\$827.67	65.00

2023-04	Clean-up	I Heart Treasure Valley	Locate and clean up underserved locations in Meridian	\$3,000.00	62.33
2023-02	Maintenance	Senior Center	Repairs on the Senior Center	\$5,982.88	61.33
2023-05	Beautification	Boise-Meridian RV Resort	Clean up of the Southwest Corner of the intersection of Meridian and Franklin Rd	\$48,224.84	57.67
2023-06	Beautification	Golfview Estates HOA	Improvement and beautification of Golfview Estates neighborhood pathway route.	\$17,000.00	57.50
2023-08	Beautification	Golfview Estates HOA	Improvement, beautification, and reinforcement of Safford Sub lateral canal bank.	\$10,000.00	55.00
2023-09	Beautification	Golfview Estates HOA	Improvement and beautification through replacement of footbridge.	\$5,000.00	52.50
2023-01	Event	Connection is the Cure	Connection is the Cure - Battle of the Bands July 29, 2023	\$9,900.00	46.00
2023-07	Beautification	Golfview Estates HOA	Improvement and beautification of drainage common use area.	\$3,000.00	45.00

The panel scoring ranked these projects, with some using average points on the scoring criteria through a simple aggregate ranking of the applications.

Additionally, each of the three recommended projects has some elements of agency partnership, whether with the City or non-profit. This will aid in the execution of projects. Original program guidelines recommended two projects to ensure staff had adequate ability to manage each project. Based on the applications and discussions with leadership and management, the three projects are manageable from a resourcing and project management perspective.

As a note, the RV Resort clean-up project was placed fourth in the evaluation. While the project scored well, it does present some challenges. The project funding request exceeds the program-recommended \$25,000 cap. Additionally, due to the projected breadth and stakeholder partnerships needed with ACHD, and additional private landholders, it does present significant complexity. That said, the project's impact, ranking, and partnership opportunities make this a worthwhile project. Future consideration of this project is recommended.

The total funding of the top three projects is \$9,810.55, which is \$40,189 less than the budgeted program allocation. Staff is beginning to see requests for funds exceed program capacity and will monitor as program updates are considered. While funds remain in this program year, staff feel the three recommended projects will serve the community well. Additionally, they do not have the administrative challenges presented in other projects (multi-agency partnerships, timing, private property improvements, etc.), and staff recommend that these three projects move forward in the contract process.

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