

SMITHVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMAN

WORK SESSION

November 16, 2021, 6:30 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held via teleconference.

The meeting was streamed live on the city's FaceBook page.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Boley, present via Zoom, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present via Zoom meeting: Steve Sarver, Kelly Kobylski, Dan Ulledahl, John Chevalier, Dan Hartman and Marv Atkins.

Staff present via Zoom: Cynthia Wagner, Anna Mitchell, Chief Jason Lockridge, Matt Denton, Stephen Larson, Chuck Soules, Jack Hendrix and Linda Drummond.

2. Discussion of Neighborhood Grants

Anna Mitchell, Assistant City Administrator, noted that during the FY22 budget discussion the Board directed staff to budget \$25,000 for the Neighborhood Beautification Grant program. Staff work researched different neighborhood grant programs to give the Board options in deciding how they wish to move forward. The purpose of this program is to assist neighborhoods in beautification type projects. These projects are for neighborhood public spaces and not to be used for a small group of individuals or homes.

In the packet is a draft policy which includes details of the proposed program and a list of comparable programs. A couple of those programs are not necessarily beautification programs but are similar programs where the city has given out grants to other organizations. These programs have different types of ranges and different types of match percentages as well as required information forms.

Anna explained that staff requested direction from the Board on the following items for the policy:

- *The range of funds that are eligible to be requested per application (ex. \$50-25,000)*
- *The required match (ex. 25-50%)*
- *Eligible projects*
- *Eligible entities (HOA, non-profits, non-organized neighborhoods)*

Anna asked if they wanted to use the proposed range?

Alderman Atkins said he would not want just one organization to receive the entire grant. He asked how many different organizations, communities and HOA's Smithville has that would be able to apply for the grants?

Anna noted that we currently have nine organized HOA's.

Mayor Boley asked if a date should be set to have the application in by, such as February 1? Then the grant committee could decide the dollar amounts given to the ones that applied. He also said that if only one HOA or organization applied, they should be able to receive the \$25,000 if they qualify.

Anna explained that a deadline of March 31 is in the draft policy, but it could be changed.

Mayor Boley said that the March 31 date is fine for the first round. Then if there is remaining funds, it can be opened back up for other applicants.

Alderman Hartman asked how a neighborhood without an HOA would qualify?

Anna asked the Board how they would like a neighborhood to be able to qualify for a grant? She noted that there are several non-organized neighborhoods in Smithville. She also noted that there are a couple of issues for the non-organized neighborhoods such as; who would be reimbursed, it would be reimbursing one person and not the organization. The other issue is there is not an organized group of the neighborhood to say what project they want done. She suggested if the Board chooses to include non-organized neighborhoods, they require a petition with a percentage of the neighborhood signatures to approve of the improvement.

Alderman Hartman asked that the applications be streamlined and not complicated so not to discourage neighborhoods from applying.

Anna said that it would probably be a two-page application with supplemental attachment approvals from any anyone who owns the property or from the City if it is in the right of way. Also, a volunteer pledge form for the in-kind match. She said possible five to seven pages depending on the project and how in-depth the applicant goes into detail.

Alderman Chevalier noted that if someone turns in an application with a really big project, he would not be opposed to granting them the entire most of the \$25,000. He asked if that would make them ineligible to receive grant money the next year to make sure that other have a chance for grant money?

Mayor Boley said that could definitely be put in the policy. Something like, if you received grant money you are either ranked at the bottom of the list the next year or not able to receive funding the next year?

Anna said that draft policy states one grant application per year but that can be changed. She asked Board direction for a grant dollar amount and length of time before able to apply again?

Mayor Boley suggested an organization can receive a maximum of \$25,000.

Alderman Kobylski agreed and suggested if they were awarded smaller amounts like \$5,000 or \$6,000 then they will be eligible the next year. If they are awarded the full amount it should at least be every other year.

Mayor Boley suggested that any organization is eligible for up to \$25,000 every three years. If they receive the full \$25,000, they would not be eligible for the next two years.

Anna also asked for direction on if an organization request a certain amount, but we received multiple applications would we then give a percentage of the amount requested?

Mayor Boley suggested that if the grant program is successful and the projects are something we would like to see completed the \$25,000 could be revisited and possibly budget more the year.

Anna asked if that would keep the eligible maximum amount at \$25,000?

Mayor Boley said it would.

Alderman Chevalier asked if the in-kind and the financial percent that the organization contribute be based on the amount that they receive. The higher grant dollar amount received the higher percentage the organization contributes.

Alderman Atkins suggested to leave it at 50% across the board.

Alderman Kobylski agreed that it should be 50% across the board. She said it would get to complicated to do different tiers.

Mayor Boley asked if the Board thought 50% would be to much of a financial burden to the HOA's?

Alderman Chevalier said it could, depending upon what their budgets look like.

Alderman Sarver said that the HOA board he served on did not have much money so he would suggest 25%. He noted that most HOA's would not be doing the beautification projects without the grant money.

Alderman Chevalier noted that the organizations can also contribute in-kind donations also it does not have to be all monetary.

Anna said that was correct, volunteer hours are valued at \$20 an hour. Organizations would need to fill out the volunteer pledge form so we could calculate how many hours and multiply it by \$20 and that would be their in-kind and they could combine it with cash.

Mayor Boley said with that stipulation he feels the 50% is reasonable.

Cynthia asked to clarify that 50% of the total project cost is the language that the Board wanted for the policy. That it would be 50% grant match, 50% of the amount requested for the project?

The Board all agreed.

Mayor Boley explained it for simple math, if a HOA has a project that is \$10,000, the grant would be for \$5,000 and the in-kind could be up to \$2,500 and the HOA would come up with \$2,500.

Anna noted that the draft policy currently reads;
All funds awarded are required to have a matching fund contributed from the neighborhood. Matching funds can come in the form of actual funds or in-kind donations such as volunteer hours or equipment. The required match must be equal to (25-50%) of the total project cost. Volunteer hours is calculated at the rate of \$20/hour and must be confirmed at the completion of the project.
Anna explained if a project costs \$10,000, then the HOA request a grant of 50% match which would equal \$5,000 and the HOA would contribute \$5,000.

Mayor Boley added that of the \$5,000 the HOA contributes \$2,500 could be in-kind.

Alderman Atkins said he understood the grant amount would be for most of the project cost.

Alderman Chevalier explained that was how he understood it. The grant amount awarded would be \$10,000 and the organization would be required to contribute \$5,000 in-kind and monetary. So, the organization could do a \$15,000 project.

Cynthia explained that typically grants have a total amount and your percentage is a percentage of the total. If the project amount is \$15,000 a 50% match would be \$7,500.

Mayor Boley explained that the HOA's would have to contribute 50% with either cash or in-kind labor or it could be a combination of both.

Alderman Atkins suggested that we specify the grant money must be used for only the projects the requested the funds for.

Mayor Boley asked the Board if they were in agreement with the 50% match? He asked if the Board all agreed with not putting a maximum amount that could be requested up to the \$25,000, then once the applications are in grant amounts could be decided depending on the applications received?

The Board agreed with both.

Anna asked the Board about eligibility requirements for HOA and neighborhoods. The draft policy is worded that funds can only be given to an organized neighborhood. Smithville does have several non-organized neighborhoods. She asked if they Board wanted to include non-organized neighborhoods in the policy, if so, it will require some additional paperwork that would different than what an HOA has to do. Anna asked for direction from the Board.

Alderman Hartman said that he did not want to make this a burdensome process but does think that since it is not an organized HOA's there would have to be some kind of consensus but not sure what that would be.

Alderman Sarver asked who would contribute if it were a non-organized neighborhood?

Mayor Boley asked the same question and also who would the City grant the money to? How would we define the neighborhood? He noted that Smithville has a lot of small, subdivided areas especially downtown. Mayor Boley asked what percentage rates HOA's generally have to have for project approvals in the neighborhood?

Alderman Sarver said some had to have 80%.

Alderman Chevalier said some have to have 50% plus one of the people that vote, depending on the project.

Mayor Boley noted that we would have to figure out who would be paying and who would be getting the grant funds. He suggested doing more research and seeing what kind of interest the neighborhoods would have.

Alderman Chevalier asked if the non-organized neighborhoods could start their own neighborhood beautification group and raise the funds for the projects? Maybe not for the first years grants but maybe they could have something in place for next year.

Mayor Boley suggested maybe they could partner with a non-profit group.

Anna noted that posed another question for the Board, did they want to include non-profit groups in the policy for the grants?

Alderman Atkins suggested that a non-organized neighborhood could be requested to have a minimum fifty houses in the neighborhood on board in order to apply for the grant.

Mayor Boley asked how many homes were in Diamond Crest and Wildfire subdivisions?

Jack Hendrix, Development Director said he believed Diamond Crest was probably around 145-150 homes and Wildfire was close to 200 homes.

Alderman Atkins asked if the Board could just recognize those type of neighborhoods as eligible?

Alderman Chevalier said they would need to create some type of organized group that they can present their project and detail who will be paying and who will be getting the grant funds.

Mayor Boley said that direction from the Board for eligibility at this time is leave it as HOA's and neighborhood groups for now. It can be revisited if we have neighborhood groups come forward that are not organized neighborhoods.

Anna asked for Board direction on the list of eligible projects.

Examples of eligible projects:

-Landscaping/trees

-Signage

-improvements that benefit the neighborhood

-Community gardens

-Neighborhood clean-ups

-Curb Appeal Enhancements for Existing property (Parking areas, trash receptacles, enclosures, fencing, etc.)

Examples of ineligible projects:

-Ongoing operating budgets

-Routine City Maintenance (street paving, mowing rights-of-way, etc.)

-Projects that benefit an individual more than the entire neighborhood.

The Board all agreed to use the examples of eligible projects.

Anna asked for Board direction on the selection process, disbursement of funds and the application deadlines.

Selection Process:

A selection committee of City staff will judge applications, based on availability of funds and the following criteria.

1. *Preparedness*

- a. *Meets the minimum required match and proposed match is well documented and available to be expensed.*
- b. *Budget is realistic and clearly organized*
- c. *Well-planned project Design, ready for implementation.*
- 2. *Project Impact*
 - a. *Provides long term benefit to the neighborhood*
 - b. *Addresses a recognized problem or need within the neighborhood*
- 3. *Participation*
 - a. *Approval of the project by the HOA or NA Board*
 - b. *Broad-based neighborhood participation in the project*

Disbursement of Funds:

Projects may begin only after application has been selected to receive the funds. Grant funds are not awarded in advance of the project. Funds are released for reimbursement through the submission of receipts of completed work and/or a completed volunteer hour form at the completion of your project.

Application Deadlines:

Application submission timeline starts January 1 of with the deadline of March 31 on an annual basis. Grants are limited to one application per year per organization. Applications can be submitted in person at Smithville City Hall (107 W Main St.) or through email.

The Board directed staff to proceed with the wording in the draft policy.

3. Discussion of COVID Response

Cynthia provided an update on items we continue to implement and follow-up on some direction from the Board from a prior meeting. At the meeting on October 19 the Board approved a policy that change COVID leave time to reinstate covered sick leave for those employees who are vaccinated beginning October 22. This provides a total of 14 days paid leave for employees who have been vaccinated or who have begun the vaccination process by receiving at least one shot or previously been granted a reasonable accommodation.

We do follow CDC guidelines, if an employee is exposed and is vaccinated but not showing symptoms so long as they are masked, they may remain at work. An unvaccinated employee who has been exposed is required to quarantine for 14 days. This time is reduced to 10 days if tested between days five and seven. An unvaccinated employee will have a minimum of 10 days out a maximum of 14 days out. A vaccinated employee, if they become symptomatic would need to quarantine. Per CDC guidelines we require vaccinated employees and unvaccinated employees both to be tested.

Last week, we had an exposure in one of our divisions. It is a division of seven employees. Three of those employees are vaccinated, four are not. One vaccinated employee tested positive is home on leave and is applying for use of

this policy. They are eligible for up to 14 days. They may return to work once they are non-symptomatic or past the 14 days per CDC guidelines. The other two employees that are vaccinated remain at work, wearing masks. The others did have to stay home in quarantine. All employees were tested between days five and seven of exposure. A total of four employees in that division have tested positive, two vaccinated and two unvaccinated.

As noted in the memo, we are requiring masks, this was not always a procedure that was followed in that division. This is why they were all asked to quarantine because they all had exposure of more than 15 minutes cumulative over 24-hour period of the positive individual.

Cynthia noted that she double-checked again on the CDC website today and Clay County is still listed as an area of substantial transmission. We will continue to follow the CDC guidelines as we have been and require masks indoors when employees are not able to keep at least six feet apart. If an employee is sitting at their own workstation and not moving around, they are not required to wear their mask.

We do not have it posted currently that the public is required to wear masks when entering the building but depending upon the meetings situations we have asked people to wear masks. We currently are limiting the number of meetings we have in person, when we do have meetings in person, we do try to ask people to mask. We do strongly urge virtual meetings and as you all are aware we have been doing virtual Board meetings since the beginning of the pandemic.

Staff has indicated that the next meeting for the Economic Development Committee would be held in person and anticipate some discussion with regard to this meeting.

Mayor Boley noted that if the Economic Development Committee wanted to meet in person, he did not see a reason why they could not. He does believe we should make sure we are offering the Zoom option for those that do not want to or cannot be in person.

Mayor Boley stated that the Board of Alderman meetings will remain Zoom meetings until the end of the year. He said if the Board would want to discuss meeting in person again after the first of the year, he is open to that. With getting into the holiday season, family time and travel, the last thing he wants is for someone to feel like they need to be in person and get exposed and then we have to quarantine and be away from family for the holidays. Mayor Boley believes we still need to continue to keep an eye on the Clay County numbers. He noted that in January and February we can begin in-person if we have a few people in the room, maintain distance and have a hybrid option available. He said he would like to know the Board's thoughts on having in-person meetings.

Mayor Boley asked the Board if they would want staff look into making changes to the COVID policy for employees or if they were good with the way it is written?

Alderman Hartman said that he stands with the way the policy is written. His question was for the ones who have tested positive through a PCR test through an authorized test through their doctor. He wondered if that changes anything for them, he said it is his understanding if they have the antibodies, they should be able to be treated the same as those who have been vaccinated.

Cynthia clarified that the CDC guidelines does not outline anything with regard to antibody information so that would make it very hard to be able to deal with.

Mayor Boley directed staff to keep the employee COVID policy as is. He asked the Board if they have any objections to the Economic Development Committee or Parks and Recreation Committee meeting in-person and having a hybrid option? He also asked if the Board was opposed to beginning in-person Board of Alderman meetings with the hybrid option in January?

The Board all agreed that the committee could meet in-person with the hybrid option and also in January to begin in-person Board of Alderman meetings with the hybrid option.

4. Adjourn

Alderman Hartman moved to adjourn. Alderman Atkins seconded the motion.

Ayes – 6, Noes – 0, motion carries. Mayor Boley declared the Work Session adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Linda Drummond, City Clerk

Damien Boley, Mayor