

# **Oakridge RTMP Committee**

**Thursday, November 7, 2019 | 11:00 - 12:00 PM**

City Hall Conference Room

48318 E 1st St, Oakridge, OR 97463

## **Present:**

Bryan Cutchen - City Administrator

Bill Jones - Finance Director

Kathy Holston - Mayor

Trisha Maxfield - Councilor - Admin Committee Chair

Bobbie Whitney - Councilor - Community Services Chair

Michael Garvin - Citizen Member

Brock Butterfield - Community Member - Event Organizer

## **1. Welcome & Introductions**

Informal welcome and introductions.

## **2. Review of Past Process**

Kathy described the process in the past. One pool of money and it's divided up and everybody gets awarded a percentage so there wasn't subjectiveness, the only subjectiveness that could be applied was "do we think they meet the criteria for applying for funds or not". Once applications were put in and the deadline came everybody was just waiting to see how much they would get. There have also been conversations in council for as long as I've been on council that maybe we should use the funds perhaps in a different way but never went very far. So there's a huge conversation when we met last time we saw some other ideas so that's why we're sitting here doing this.

Bryan feels we need to carefully craft this criteria in order to avoid any major upsets within the community. Bill asks if we have any criteria currently. Kathy says we do within the application, which is what we use to determine eligibility. The question posed, what do we want to use these funds for? Heritage events? Or specifically larger events like the bus fair? Bobbie asks where RTMP funds come from? Trisha says it comes from the transient room tax. Bill says we got the funds recently. Trish says this is why we are having this conversation now, in hopes to help organizers on the front end with planning. She mentions looking at the City of Lowell and their process from these funds, they call it a Community Grant Program. This is how we should be looking at our program, because when you apply for a grant, it is very subjective in their criteria. So as we're looking at process 1. We need to be looking at how other cities are doing this, 2. Looking at it in a way that aligns with our strategic goals. Brock asks what the city's goals are with these events, are we just trying to support events regardless if they bring tourism, or are we trying to support events that bring new people in? Bryan read the state overarching guidance on the program: RTMP should be reinvested in a way that enhances visitor appeal, encourage

overnight stays, projects. Trisha says she has food for thought surrounding events like tree planting, we need to make sure we are thinking about events like this, that bring in families that probably already have connections within the community which doesn't bring in lodging. We can challenge those events to start thinking more dynamically and strategically, while also helping them with resources. It may be a good idea to do a case study on events like the Bus Fair. As we think through the process we need to think about evaluations as well.

Bill suggests maybe having separate tiers, one for heritage and one for tourism, with separate criterias. Can raise from a tier two to a tier one by doing what Trish is talking about, moving from a strictly heritage event to an event that includes more tourism. Brock loves the idea, but feels we should just do categories, vs. tiers. Heritage and tourism. Bobbie mentions there is a parks fund, but could use RTMP funds for projects such as the disc golf course. She wants to make sure we don't exclude projects like these. Bill reminds all of us that we do get TRT funds that can be used towards these types of projects. Trisha mentions looking at how Lowell has their fund setup and believes they lump TRT and RTMP funds together. Kathy mentions they use TRT for projects and RTMP for events. Events who use these funds year after year forget they need to be fundraising, rather than always leaning on the city - not all events do this, but some do. Bill mentions tree planting isn't just an event, but also a part of city beautification - so maybe they just get funded from a different pot.

Bryan mentions we could let events know we are only going to fund a certain percentage of the costs. Trish mentions this is how grant programs work in asking for a match. Kathy says we have an RTMP questionnaire that asks how much they're asking for vs. how much they are putting into it, but there is no verification on the back end as receipts come in. It's difficult for us to analyze the success of an event. Bobbie mentions we don't want to make it difficult for people to apply. Trish mentions this is why it's important for us to provide resources.

Kathy mentions we could set a flat rate for heritage events i.e. \$500 each year. Bobbie says we can't guarantee a certain percentage year-after-year because we don't know how much is in the pot. Brock shared his experience getting the funds a month before the event, complicates planning and wasted money on express shipping that could have been used elsewhere. If there was a way to open up the grant process this time of year with an award in mid-january would be extremely helpful to know what reimbursement is coming to him. Had to max out his own credit cards without knowing how much help he would get. Bill says we should start the application process soon, RTMP funds come in this time of year. Bobbie feels we won't have enough time to change the whole process before this year. Kathy mentions we can open up the application process much earlier since we have the funds. Reach out to individuals and let them know the process is changing and would like to have a master list of all the events we do have and who is in charge of them so we can help craft the process better.

Trisha says we cannot just meet one time a year and asks that we meet a standard meeting time for once a month. We also need to be very realistic about our timeline this year because we do need to hash out this process. We need to be thinking about what our next steps are, would

offer the suggestion that we look at what other communities are doing and reconvene in two weeks. We can also research grant foundations and the process they use. We also need to designate a chair and fly the open vacancy. Kathy says she agrees, but feels we could change the timeline this year because we would still need to get it through the council, but we should meet more regularly. We can agree today to get the application posted soon and keep it open through a set date. Trisha mentions staff can update the application and meet the first week in January. Bobbie mentions wanting the application to go out sooner than later. Kathy states we could have the application on November 15th and close January 17th.

Conversation on funds being set aside in case pop up events appear in late spring. Could use TRT funds to address these onesie-twosies in order to not convolute the process for RTMP funds.

Trisha asks averages for TRT and RTMP. Bill says \$18,850 funds available this year for RTMP. TRT comes in quarterly, unsure on numbers right now. Kathy asks if we are all in agreement on changing the timeline Nov. 15 - Jan. 17th, while using the same application. Kathy will send out emails to all past applicants over the last two years to ensure they are away of the process.

Trisha mentions she likes momentum and would like to set a meeting time in December to discuss findings from researching other city and grant foundation processes, bringing in all the resources, that way when we do go to review the applications we can start thinking about how we want to do it differently. Kathy says she doesn't disagree, but suggests we set a deadline on recommended changes in writing by x date, then we have to take it to council, then push it out to the community - would like to see this done by March. Trisha feels it's going to take longer than that, could set the deadline to the fall - if we want to meet the March deadline, would need to be realistic and meet two times a month, with longer meetings. We can go with the understanding that this is a pilot program and make adaptations in the process if we find it's too complex. We as a committee could also host a workshop, walking all event organizers through the process so they understand the changes and feel confident in the process. Michael asks when these events are required to come back and report on their events. Trisha says they are not required to right now, which is why we need to be thinking about the evaluation process, it's just like a grant process where you report out/final report. Brock mentions having events report out, helps the city understand the impact of the event. Bryan says this will also help us decide on future events. Brock offered to share the tools and resources he used for the Bus Fair.

Trisha mentions we need to vote on a Chair. Kathy asks if this can just be a consensus thing. Bryan mentions the resolution does indicate a chair is mentioned in the resolution. Bill nominated Trisha as Chair. Kathy states Trisha has a lot on her plate. Trisha said she has a lot on her plate, but this is important work and knows she is an organized person and has experience working with grant foundations. Bill said he would be interested, but has a lot on his plate. The group agrees they will wait to see who fills the seat. Trisha asks if we can set a December meeting time.

The group agrees upon Monday December 9, from 12-1PM for the next meeting.

Bryan asks about meetings and agenda. Trisha offered to do minutes for this meeting, but suggested we designate a chair, secretary, and co-Chair at the next meeting.

### **3. Next Steps**

- Research other cities and grant foundation processes - All
- Email out descriptions of TRT and RTMP - Bill or Bryan
- Conduct case study on Bus Fair - Trish
- Develop list of resources for event organizers - Trish