

**Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF) Grants Committee**  
**March 17th, 2021 - MEETING MINUTES**

**Committee members present:** Amanda Squiemphen-Yazzie, Shanice Clark, Maria Sipin, Robin Wang, Ranfis Villatoro, Michael Edden Hill, Jeffery Moreland, Faith Graham, Megan Horst

**PCEF staff present:** Sam Baraso, Cady Lister, Janet Hammer, Jaimes Valdez, June Reyes, Wendy Koelfgen, Angela Previdelli, Jay Richmond, David Grandfield, Lokyee Au

**Decisions:** Michael Eden Hill and Maria Sipin confirmed as co-chairs of the Committee

**Program updates:** Recommended package of grants is on Council agenda April 1. Hiring financial manager, and then recruiting one more addition to the team. Have been working to establish High Roads Council and will brief interested Committee members

**Committee reflections on development year:** Committee broke out into small groups to reflect on program development year. Public had ability to enter all breakout rooms. Key themes from breakout rooms included a commitment to charge for justice, tackling barriers and systems, getting to know the community and a desire to get to know each other better. There was also discussion of how serving on Committee can be intimidating because it is so high profile, and everything is recorded. Working with and learning with community as the most joyful aspect coupled with a desire to engage more. Seems like we are just getting started, we've got a bit behind us and more to do.

Committee feedback on how the breakouts worked as a structure

- Maria: Worked well. Craving more interaction. Would like more of it.
- Robin: I'm a bit numb from the virtual format. We're used to it, so it worked, but I long for the informal conversation and in person and seeing emotions when communicating.
- Amanda: I've only known names and not backgrounds so it was good to learn more and connect. Feels more connected just from that little bit of time. Appreciated having that space.
- Ranfis: It is challenging to be doing this in zoom. It won't ever replace personal interaction. Early last year when we were having community events and listening. It was great to be a fly on the wall and bring that back to the committee.
- Michael: Pre-covid I learned a lot in our formal meetings and also before, after, and during breaks. Learned a lot that was not formally presented. That's a thing missing from zoom meetings. Would like us to find a way to get more informal feedback during our meetings.

**Committee participatory** budgeting (of time) exercise and discussion: Committee was asked to allocate 100 hours annual service to: 1) community participation and engagement, 2) committee education, 3) scoring applications (15 equaled 40-50 hours), 4) program evaluation, and 5) RFP development. The outcomes of this exercise indicated interest in spending the greatest amount of time on scoring applications and program evaluation with the least, though still significant, amount of time on committee education.

Committee discussion

- Michael – feels like we need 100 for scoring and 100 for the others. Would rather spend in other areas but also know that it will take 40 to 50 in scoring. Is this aspirational or reality based?
- Maria – if we were thinking of travel across Portland I might redistribute my stickies.

- Faith – appreciate this framing and prioritization. Also, though am struggling with – is that it is a false reality. What we dedicated is not 100 hours and I am happy to revisit that number. Understand with recruitment that might limit who participates if expectation is too high. But if double the applications we aren't likely to have half the time. It doesn't feel to me that the number is going to go down. I put mine where I have a preference but can shift to where needed.
- Ranfis – As a governing committee there are things we can't slide. Like program evaluation. How do we allocate time and delegate some responsibilities? Reviewing multiple applications when in \$40-60 million is a lot of time and effort and we already felt spread thin with \$8.6 million. We need to be honest, frank, and candid. I think we are charged with having a functioning program that works for the community that is thoughtful and meaningful and we are the body to ensure it is transparent and accountable to community. Personally, I love the scoring applications aspects; but I want a bunch of people to experience that. I don't think you have to be a "subject matter expert" to be scoring applications. It has me thinking not just how do we reallocate our time but challenge ourselves that we don't have to do it all and staff maybe doesn't have to do it all. Maybe there is a whole new model of engagement. What are the bottom-line things we as a governing committee need to do and do well?
- Megan - What if there are things we think should be there? Maybe they fit in these buckets – e.g., recruit new members.
- Amanda – since I started to now, I think about community first, through every meeting I try to boost community, and this is a very Eurocentric space. We are government, by the book. Community participation – sometimes we have to push back on the laws written for these spaces. Part of our diligence is including the community. This is their fund too. Inviting them into this space and preparing them for to serve in the future. I understand there were opportunities for involvement but how to do that. Some of it is me coming in late but to know the people that are here.

### **Election of Committee Co-Chairs and Next Steps**

Co-chairs will meet with Cady and Sam for 60-90 minutes every other week to go over agendas and workplans and flagging issues. Maria and Michael expressed interest in serving as co-chairs

#### Committee discussion

- Maria shared their interest in being co-chair: interested in finding more ways to build partnership within committee and continue education and improve our capacity to participate. Find ways to develop a better program together. Governance and relationships between committee, community, and staff. Agency for committee members, elevate our values and self-direct ourselves wherever possible. Model new leadership ways.
- Michael shared their interest in being co-chair: I think it is a challenge I am looking forward to taking on. I've learned so much already but one thing I've been passionate about is that we don't continue to evaluate, judge, assign responsibilities and blame in all the traditional white colonial ways. We have an opportunity to shift the narrative of how communities are resourced. For me, watching the news today – once again terrible murders and police say a white man was having a bad day. Not the story of skin in the game, history of doing – it's built on lies. Rethink how resources are allocated as a government organization pushed by people that have been left out of government and financial underpinnings of America. Continue as staff and committee to make sure we are not falling back in that. I hear it in the language. I'm not a technocrat. When I hear things like metrics – these are the things to keep people oppressed.

- Maria – All these structures work with scarcity mindset model. And make communities compete against each other. Want to do that differently. Create abundance. A different vision.
- Robin - Respect your opinions and am excited about your nominations. There are nine of us with different backgrounds. As chairs, how do you plan to ensure our various views, our collective voices are at the table with staff, press, or council?
- Maria – that is part of my commitment to education and communication. I think that 1-1s will be helpful, more than just talking heads on mute/unmute. To get a shared readiness. I'm going to want to solicit that input. Would like to be an open door and be a platform that works for you.
- Michael – for me I think that it will be a learning curve. But I want to be held to account to make space to listen, understand, digest. I am only me. I have my opinions and knowledge. Constantly learning. Not sure I will be perfect or good; hope to make everybody proud. But mostly it's that I want to hear and make sure I am representing the entire Committee and that we are continuing to provide space, accessibility, openness for people to speak their minds and share their points.
- Amanda – yes we need to structure for broad participation. People would need some sort of privilege to serve. Other government groups are thinking of that. How to address these barriers. Can we have more stipends for the co-chairs? Stipends for traveling and additional meetings they will have to attend. And dealing with media is stressful, maybe some are considering and don't want to because of that barrier.
  - Sam – We hit an early wall around stipends when seating the committee. We are happy to open that back up. Travel reimbursement, food, etc. are eligible for reimbursement. There's more you are getting to that speaks to making the Committee accessible – and this is a conversation that is happening in the city as a whole. Maybe bring someone from Civic life to share an update.
- Megan – Grateful and excited that you two are interested. One important role you'll play as co-chairs, to push and bring different perspectives to staff. Hope you feel emboldened and empowered to do that.
- Maria – I think we know how to communicate things to staff but with shared power.
- Ranfis – Appreciate the responses and that you'll both be great. And Amanda's question – I fear co-chairs burn out – hope you'll see what you have to do and not go beyond. Shouldn't be the expectation that you have to do it all. Utilize strength and experience of full Committee.
- Robin made the proposal to elect Michael and Maria to be co-chairs. Faith seconded.
  - Shanice, Amanda, Megan, Ranfis, Jeffrey, Maria, and Michael all voted to support the proposal.

9:00

**Meeting close**