

## PORTLAND CLEAN ENERGY COMMUNITY BENEFITS FUND (PCEF)

### GRANTS COMMITTEE RETREAT SUMMARY

June 2, 2023 • 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Hybrid Meeting—Zoom Call & Louiza

Committee Members	Position	Affiliation	Present
Dr. Megan Horst	Co-Chair	Associate Professor, School of Urban Studies & Planning at Portland State University	Yes
Ranfis Villatoro	Co-Chair	Oregon State Policy Manager, BlueGreen Alliance	Yes
Faith Graham	Member-at-Large	Elevate Energy	Yes
Maria Gabrielle Sipin	Member-at-Large	Technical Assistance Manager, Safe Routes Partnership	Yes
Michael Edden Hill	Member-at-Large	Community Member	Yes
Robin Wang	Member-at-Large	Vibrant Future LLC	Yes
June Reyes	Community Engagement Coordinator	PCEF Staff	Yes
Sam Baraso	Program Manager	PCEF	Yes
Cady Lister	Deputy Program Director	PCEF	Yes
Jaimes Valdez	Org. Development & Policy Manger	PCEF	Yes
Kris Grube	Project Manager	PCEF	No
Wendy Koelfgen	Project Manager	PCEF	No
Rachel Gilmore	Administrative Specialist	PCEF	Yes
Elizabeth Stover	Senior Communications Strategist	PCEF	Yes
Tracy M. Smith	Facilitator	Inhance LLC	No
Camerina Galván	Notetaker	Galvan Consulting LLC	Yes
Ciara Pressler	Consultant	Pregame	Yes

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** None.

#### INTRODUCTIONS

- Ciara Pressler called the meeting to order at 9:29 AM.
- The quorum was met.

**CLIMATE INVESTMENT PLAN (CIP) PROCESS CHECK-IN:** CIARA PRESSLER, PREGAME

- Ciara Pressler reviewed the CIP timeline.

**SHOUTOUTS:** CIARA PRESSLER, PREGAME

- Committee members shared their appreciation for PCEF staff.

**CIP DRAFT DISCUSSION:** CIARA PRESSLER, PREGAME

- The committee members discussed the second CIP draft in pairs and then had a group discussion.
- Committee member comments regarding CIP as a whole:
  - CIP needs a robust plan for accountability and oversight.
  - Will a third party conduct the audit? Will CIP be audit friendly? Would it be better to start with existing programs?
  - Each program should be evaluated and audited by a third party. It might be worth considering bringing in an academic from PSU to conduct an in-depth review each year since some of the program areas are new to the committee, and the committee doesn't have expertise in each area.
  - The main question from the Council will be regarding accountability and oversight.
  - More details are needed on Page 12. We need to allocate funding specifically for oversight and evaluation costs.
    - Response: Staff and committee members need to think about the timeline for the strategic programs to know when enough information will be available to conduct a full evaluation.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Staff will be specific about when the committee can expect evaluations.
  - A financial audit of the Community Responsive Grant will be completed soon. The program evaluation needs to be conducted by someone that understands PCEF and uses that lens to evaluate the grant program, instead of being compared with traditional grantmakers that as don't equitably support PCEF priority populations.
  - A committee member would like to be able to explain the rationale for the funding amounts for each strategic program. What is the methodology for the allocations? It would be helpful for committee members to be able to articulate it.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Staff will explain the amounts in generalities.
  - There needs to be an update regarding what PCEF staff has done and is doing to engage workers and contractors in developing the plan.
  - Regarding Table 1, is the Community Responsive Grant part of the other strategic programs? It needs to be clarified if it is different or the same. A statement is necessary, or the information needs to be presented differently. It's important to highlight the persistence of community-responsive grants. An infographic could solve the issue.
  - How does CIP fit into the city's carbon reduction programs? How does it align, fit in, contradict, and support other existing plans? CIP should acknowledge that other plans exist and comment on how it fits into other carbon reduction and climate plans. It's an opportunity to advocate that PCEF is the most important plan.
    - Response: This is a question that is being asked. The Climate Emergency Workplan is mentioned briefly but can be elaborated on.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Staff will elaborate on the relationship of CIP to other climate plans and explain how policy can support PCEF's work.
- Is there a way to explain how PCEF will coordinate with bureaus and agencies? There should be a table with a list of the coordinating partners. There are questions about whether other agencies, such as Fire & Rescue, can apply.
- People want to know how PCEF relates to the city budget.
  - Response: Staff has heard Council ask how PCEF will support other climate programs within the city and how it will support the budget crisis.
- People want to know where PCEF stands and fits in.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Staff will add language to explain where the connections are.
- Youth should be acknowledged earlier in the plan. They are not named as a priority population.
- CIP needs stronger language about unions, contractors, and the workforce.
- A committee member wants to see race and gender called out under the anti-harassment language for Contract and Workforce Equity.
- CIP must explain how it will increase access for new contractors to work with the city. There is a need to create opportunities for contractors that don't have successful bids or projects completed with the city yet. This is a priority since so much of the work will not be funneled through nonprofits.
- Committee member comments about the programs:
  - The draft needs to explain why some strategic programs have different levels of specificity. It needs to be named as a nonissue.
    - Response: The varying specificity is due to some programs needing applicant detail, additional community engagement, data, etc. Some programs have a lot of detail.
  - The lack of specificity in some programs should be framed as an attribute of the plan. We want the community to fill in the details in most cases.
  - Strategic Program 9 has a small allocation of funds compared to other programs. The current budget will be used quickly. A committee member still has questions about land acquisition. Another roundtable is needed.
  - Strategic programs 5 and 9 don't have baseline data. A committee member would like to see more of that.
  - As written now, it is likely unions will not apply for PCEF. Lower performance programs and unions' competitors will be funded. This is a gap.
  - Pre-apprenticeship programs connected with unions are working well. As people retire, the makeup of unions will change. There is an opportunity here.
  - Even if the intent is to create a new program, PCEF staff must coordinate with the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI) to get approval for a new construction program. BOLI is unlikely to approve another apprenticeship program. It will require additional work outside the purview of PCEF, unlike weatherization and solar.
  - The way the draft reads, it appears that solar will be declassified.

- A committee member would like to see increased participatory budgeting in schools.
  - Response: Staff will meet with the participatory budget leads to learn about their objective and think about how to make room for participatory budgeting in CIP.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Committee members will email staff additional feedback by Monday, June 5, 2023.

**COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:** CIARA PRESSLER, PREGAME

- Committee members discussed communication strategies and storytelling approaches for Council briefings.
- PCEF staff anticipate receiving letters from bureaus and agencies today.

**CIP IMPLEMENTATION:** CIARA PRESSLER, PREGAME

- In pairs, committee members discussed their roles during CIP implementation and then had a group discussion.
- Committee member comments and questions:
  - What is a culture of productive accountability? Is it fiscal? Is it a feeling?
  - How do we create a culture of accountability, knowing committee and staff capacity?
  - We need to define the role of the committee and staff and where they overlap.
  - The committee's primary role after the recommendations phase is oversight and accountability.
  - We need a culture that is honest, open to learning, and admitting when mistakes happen.
  - A possible structure is subcommittee meetings between quarterly committee meetings. Subcommittees would be a suitable method for learning and in-depth conversations.
  - Another committee member said their role is to be on the same team as staff. We are accountable and provide oversight for learning and improving. We have to create a culture where we are not advisories.
  - We need to move away from giving the perception that things are going perfectly. We want staff to feel comfortable sharing when things are not going well in the spirit of learning and growth.
  - Can we define accountability in this context?
    - Response: Staff will build trust in the program and ensure they do what we set out to do.
  - There must be systems throughout so the reports made to the committee are accurate. Staff must share when things are going wrong.
    - Response: Staff is accountable to the Council, the committee, the city manager, and others. Accountability for each of these will look different. For instance, PCEF won't have a commissioner-in-charge in a year and a half.
  - Are committee members a part of the accountability? Is our role symbolic accountability?
  - Are we responsible for fiscal accountability?
    - Response: PCEF has financial auditors.
  - Are we accountable to financial auditors?

- Response: The audit will be posted. The city budget office and the commissioner have a check and balance system. There is an example of public accountability.
- Who is accountable to the legislation? Commissioner, Council, or the Committee?
  - Response: All three groups are accountable.
- A committee member feels the committee is accountable for keeping the community involved and that the intent of the legislation is being fulfilled productively.
- The committee intended to be a mechanism for community accountability.
- The committee holds PCEF accountable for community needs, desires, and objectives. Are we doing what the community said we are supposed to do?
- A committee member shared that they need guidance regarding other things they are responsible for. Each strategic program will be a large body of work. The committee's role at a high level will be to ensure that the guiding principles are implemented. Some things will need oversight, like intergovernmental funding and contracts. The fear is that the committee won't have control or influence moving forward.
- A committee member feels the committee should remain in the details during implementation. Once the implementation is done, their focus shifts to high-level oversight.
- A committee member suggested going into the details of subcommittees.
  - Response: Staff does not envision subcommittees focused on strategic programs. Some strategic programs have opportunities for committee members to participate in projects. It is not advantageous for committee members to get into the details in subcommittees because there are too many strategic programs, and staff needs to move quickly.
  - Response: Each committee member has an area of expertise, and staff will call on committee members when their expertise is needed. Staff will call on individuals, not a subcommittee. Committee members share with the committee about their engagement.
- A committee member feels they don't define accountability as guidance and input. For him, it means evaluation and assessments.
  - Response: How do we keep you engaged until there is enough information for evaluations and assessments? It will be a long time before the committee will receive the information. The timescales will be long.
- Ciara Pressler shared that one element of accountability is the response to the Community Responsive Grants. This can happen between now and when the strategic programs are ready for evaluation. There is accountability in the process and the outcomes.
- In the process, what does accountability look like? How are we establishing guardrails to ensure the priority populations and priorities, such as contractor equity, benefit, and carbon emissions, are reduced?
- Getting government to change the way they do business is challenging. How will staff shift the mindset of how business is done? How do we change the way the government does business with PCEF funds? This feels like part of accountability— ensuring PCEF funds are doing what they are supposed to be doing, even in government.

- Ciara Pressler told the committee that some challenges are unforeseen and encouraged them to allow space for the unexpected, such as the next climate emergency and changes in government.
- A committee member would like the PCEF staff to share when they encounter a roadblock.
- A committee member can see how accountability can become very traditional and bureaucratic. At the same time, the committee can be more engaged. Two to three committee members can get involved at a high level.
- A committee member would like a third-party evaluator to conduct the assessments. They trust that staff will inform him of any mishaps and successes outside of a formal evaluation. They emphasized that the committee relies on the staff.
  - Response: Staff has a level of expertise and contractors for support. It is not helpful for staff to have people without that expertise conduct in-depth audits. PCEF would need to hire people to manage the process of completing an annual evaluation.
- Ciara Pressler assured that a work plan would be developed after CIP is approved, including a timeline for evaluations and milestones.
- How do we verify what staff reports? Do we rely on trust? It's vital to hire a third-party evaluator.
  - Response: What does it mean to verify? There are many comments from the community, and creating a system to respond to them is a challenge.
- A committee member suggested that subcommittee work should be more critical than high-level work. Once CIP is implemented, it should take about three years to get data back. It needs to run its course through a new government. In subcommittees, they would like to have more robust discussions. In public meetings, the committee will not generally say as much. Open dialogue can happen easier in subcommittees.
- A committee member shared that committee meetings feel performative. There is a need for another space where the committee can ask staff hard questions and have candid conversations. They would like the public meetings to be designed intentionally for the public. How do we meaningfully engage people for whom that space is not created? They suggest moving from a welcoming space to one created for the community.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY SCENARIOS: CIARA PRESSLER, PREGAME**

- The committee members were presented with three scenarios to determine the committee's role, obstacles, and solutions.
  - **Scenario 1:** After a 2-year evaluation, we are 50% short of meeting our two-year goal of the number of houses served.
    - The committee's role:
      - Ask questions and ask for solutions.
      - Determine if a response or a pivot is needed.
      - Be a resource.
      - The staff brings a recommendation, and the committee votes. If approved, the recommendation goes to Council for a vote.

- **Obstacles and Solutions:**
  - The staff presents issues and explains the outcome. The issue and the reasons are communicated broadly. The staff needs to come to the committee.
  - Two-year forecasting.
  - There are external obstacles that PCEF cannot control and can impact outcomes.
  - Some strategic programs are new and have a long lifespan. These will impact the metrics and evaluation timelines.
  - Check on programs through informal reports, not full-blown evaluations.
- **Scenario 2:** PCEF receives substantial negative feedback about a contracted program administrator.
  - The committee's role:
    - Responds to maximize the administrator's safety in the media.
    - Committee members can receive feedback from an entity or person that approaches.
  - **Obstacles and Solutions**
    - Determine whether the information is unofficial, gossiping, or if there is a legal or human resources (HR) concern.
    - Approach staff proactively regarding the concern.
- **Scenario 3:** City Council proposes to re-appropriate PCEF funds in ways that do not benefit frontline communities.
  - The committee's role:
    - Co-chairs have a strategic relationship with Council.
- **Committee member questions and comments:**
  - A committee member believes the committee is not in a role of accountability that can demand changes.
  - Committee members have had back-channel conversations with the community. They have relationships they can leverage.
  - What would staff like the role of the committee to be?
    - Response: Staff would like committee members to share their expertise when needed. They can act as liaisons. Staff would like the committee members to be connected enough to CIP that they can have information to ask the right questions.
    - Response: It is helpful for staff to know the specifics of the issue shared with committee members in the field. What is the quality of the input? How many people share the concern?
  - How do you want the committee to be a liaison?
    - Response: The committee's role is to bring the issue to staff. Committee members do not have to listen to the issue; they can set boundaries.

- Issues with legal implications need to be communicated to staff. The sooner staff is made aware, the sooner they can address the problem.
  - Response: PCEF has the responsibility to respond as the contract holders. The staff doesn't want to put the committee in compromising situations.
- A committee member asked for a process and training on being a good reporter, particularly around racial and sexual harassment.

**BIKE RACK: CIARA PRESSLER, PREGAME**

- What does the staff want the committee's role to be during implementation?
- PCEF will be hiring new staff to lead parts of CIP. The staff that developed CIP will be different from those moving forward. PCEF anticipates growing to 29 staff in 2023-24 and eventually to over 40 staff members.
- Implementation will need to be done quickly. How does the committee fit in?
- Land acquisition.
- What must we do between now and August 2023 to achieve Council and public support?
- Have an updated dashboard.
- What are staff roles in the implementation? Will staff take leadership of different strategic programs? Will questions be directed to certain people? Who wrote and built the strategic projects? Committee members need to know which staff owns parts or all of CIP. How will this be communicated to the public?
- Integration of our new committee members.
- What would monthly reporting look like? What information would be helpful to share?
- Union worker engagement.
- What can committee members do to interface with commissioners and other officials?
- Communication strategy in anticipation of critique.
- Don't have a budget for unanticipated programs.

**NEXT STEPS: CIARA PRESSLER, PREGAME**

- On June 21, 2023, a summary of the feedback will be shared, and staff will propose changes based on the input.
- In July 2023, the draft will be presented to staff.
- In September 2023, Council will meet.
- In early 2024, a staff person will manage the dashboard.
- Committee members can anticipate a Community Responsive Grants performance report soon.
- New committee members will vote on CIP in July 2023. They will be interviewed by the mayor and briefed beforehand.

**THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:01 PM.**

**NEXT MEETING:** The next hybrid meeting will be Thursday, June 29, 2023, 6:00 PM—8:00 PM



Submitted by Camerina Galván, Notetaker, Galvan Consulting LLC.