

City of Bloomington Common Council Jack Hopkins Social Services Committee

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION ON:

RESOLUTION 23-08 – **Authorizing the Allocation of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Program Funds for the Year 2023 and Related Matters**

Prologue: *The following description of the 2023 Jack Hopkins Social Services Program, along with the supporting documentation attached hereto, constitutes the Report of the 2023 Jack Hopkins Social Services Committee pursuant to Bloomington Municipal Code 2.04.230. The Report of the Committee is advisory in nature.*

This is the 31st year of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Program, named after former Councilmember Jack Hopkins. Since its inception in 1993 through 2022, the City has expended approximately \$5.8 million under this program to serve the needs of our community's most vulnerable residents. Indeed, since the inception of this program, annual funding has increased dramatically: from \$90,000 in 1993 to \$323,000 available in 2023. Each year the demand for funds exceeds supply, and each year the Committee works hard to develop a fair and responsive process, one sensitive to local need and one intended to foster responsible fiscal stewardship.

Res 23-08 implements the recommendations of the 2023 Jack Hopkins Committee. The legislation:

- Allocates \$323,000 in grant funds to 32 agency programs;
- Approves the *Funding Agreements* with these agencies;
- Delegates questions regarding the interpretation of the *Funding Agreements* to the Chair of the Committee (Councilmember Sandberg);
- Approves the *Report* of the Jack Hopkins Committee (which includes this summary and the attached supporting documentation).

Committee Members

The Committee is a Standing Committee of the Council, pursuant to BMC 2.04.210. The 2023 Committee included four Council members and three members of the public with experience in social services. The non-Council members are appointed by the Committee Chair:

- Susan Sandberg (Chair)
- Kate Rosenbarger
- Jim Sims
- Ron Smith
- Tim Mayer
- Mark Fraley
- Jami Scholl

Housing and Neighborhood Development Department Staff

While Council staff coordinates the program prior to Council action, John Zody and Cody Toothman of HAND provide critical insight and assistance throughout the process. Once Council approves the recommended allocations, Mr. Toothman executes reimbursement of funds to agencies, monitors the grants, and otherwise advises agencies post-award.

The 2023 Hopkins Process

The following is a brief summary of the 2023 Hopkins process:

- **Organizational Meeting – 28 February 2023**

The Committee met to establish policies and procedures for the 2023 program. At this meeting the Committee:

- Received a status report of last year's grants from the HAND department;
- Reviewed the elaboration of criteria for evaluating and awarding grants;
- Approved solicitation materials; and
- Established a schedule for 2023.

- **Request for Applications Issued – 03 March 2023**

The Council Office sent a solicitation letter directly to social services agencies, posted the letter and grant application on the Committee's website, and issued a press release announcing the availability of the application.

- **Technical Assistance Meeting – 21 March 2023**

A voluntary Technical Assistance meeting was held on 21 March in order to explain the program to, and answer questions from, agency representatives. Approximately 15 individuals attended the meeting. Agencies were encouraged to contact the Council office with remaining questions.

- **Deadline for Applications – 31 March 2023, 4:00pm**

A total of 48 applications were submitted to the Council Office by the deadline requesting a total of \$964,877.13

- **Distribution of Packet of Applications – 14 April 2023**

The Council Office distributed summaries and application materials to committee members and staff.

- **Initial Review of Applications by the Committee – 18 April 2023**

The Committee met for an initial review of the applications. The Committee first announced any conflicts of interests before reviewing the applications. During its initial review, the Committee removed thirteen applications from further consideration and developed questions to be answered by remaining agencies, which were shared with the agencies via email.

- **Agency Presentations – 27 April 2023**

Agency Presentations were held in a hybrid meeting format. A total of 35 agencies presented, with each agency having an opportunity to speak for up to five minutes. Agencies were then able to answer any remaining questions posed by committee members

- **Individual Committee Member Recommendations – 05 May 2023**

Committee members submitted individual recommended allocations and comments to the Council Office. The Council Office averaged allocations and returned those averages, along with compiled comments, to the Committee in interest of its next meeting.

- **Pre-Allocation Meeting – 11 May 2023**

The Committee made preliminary recommendations for funding amounts to be considered at its Allocation hearing.

- **Allocation Hearing – 16 May 2023**

The Committee recommended funding for 32 agency applications for a total of \$323,000. The Committee offered an opportunity for public comment before voting on its recommendations at this meeting.

- **De-Briefing Meeting – 25 May 2023**

The Committee met to review the 2023 program – what worked well and what warrants change in 2024. The Committee discussed whether to continue accepting requests for operational expenses from agencies or whether such requests should be limited to requests for bridge funding (where an agency has lost a revenue source and is requesting Jack Hopkins funding to bridge the gap in operational expenses). Discussion also included suggestions to look at ways to increase the amount of grant money available for the program. This year’s Committee did not forward any formal recommendations to the 2024 Committee.

- **Council Action – 14 June 2023**

The Common Council will consider the *Resolution* approving recommendations and taking related actions regarding the program.

- **Technical Assistance Meeting for Grantees - Tuesday, 20 June 2023, 9:00 am**

The HAND department has scheduled a Technical Assistance meeting to inform funded agencies how to obtain reimbursements under the grant.

Criteria and Other Program Policies

Former Council member Jack Hopkins established three criteria for this program in 1993. The Committee has elaborated upon the criteria over the years by providing a policy statement, which was sent out with the funding solicitation as well as placed on the Jack Hopkins web page. Those criteria are briefly stated below:

- 1) The program should address a previously-identified priority for social services funding (as indicated in the [Service Community Assessment of Needs \[SCAN\]](#), the City of Bloomington Housing and Neighborhood Development Department’s [Consolidated Plan](#) or any other community-wide survey of social service needs);
- 2) The funds should provide a one-time investment that, through matching funds or other fiscal leveraging, makes a significant contribution to the program or operational funds; and
- 3) This investment in the program should lead to broad and long-lasting benefits to the community.

On Criteria: Continued Allowance for Operational Funds

As originally envisioned, Hopkins funds were intended to be a “one-time investment.” This one-time funding rule was intended to encourage innovation, address changing community needs, and to discourage dependency of an agency on Hopkins funding for its on-going operational needs. Over time, the Committee has established exceptions to the “one time funding” rule. Those exceptions allowed for requests for operating funds for a pilot project, to bridge the gap left by a loss of another funding source, and for collaborative projects.

For the last several years, the Committee has received increasing feedback from agencies calling for a broader allowance for operational requests. Agencies have opined that in the current economic climate, operational funds are the hardest to come by and that such funds are critical for non-profits' continued provision of essential services. In response, in 2016 the Committee voted to accept applications for operational funds that do not fit one of the aforementioned exceptions on a trial basis, which was continued each year since. In 2022, the Committee agreed to amend its criteria indefinitely to allow requests for operational funding and included the following proviso in its solicitation material:

Operational Expenses

Agencies seeking funding for operational expenses should be aware that future funding may be unavailable or inadequate to cover their needs and therefore they should not rely solely on Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding for their operational expenses. Any request for operational funding should be accompanied by a well-developed plan for future funding.

Enhanced Reporting on Efficacy of Operational Funds

Over time, the Committee has worked to build in more meaningful reporting requirements for grantees, such that it might be better positioned to assess the efficacy of a program or agency in future years. This is especially true for operational funds. For that reason, this year's Committee continued the enhanced reporting requirement requiring those who receive operational funds to report back to the Committee at two points: once when the agency submits its final claim on December 8, 2023 (a requirement made of all grantees); and again by March 15, 2024 to provide an update on the project's outcome indicators. Operational costs are those that are recurring and include outlays for personnel, rent, utilities, maintenance, supplies, client services, and other like ongoing budget items.

The 2023 Report of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee is signed by the following majority of its membership:

Council Members

Date

/s/ Susan Sandberg

06 June 2023

Susan Sandberg (Chair)
Council Member, At-Large

/s/ Ron Smith

07 June 2023

Ron Smith
Council Member, District III

/s/ Kate Rosenbarger

07 June 2023

Kate Rosenbarger
Council Member, District I

/s/ Jims Sims

06 June 2023

Jim Sims
Council Member, At-Large

Residents With Experience in Social Services

Date

/s/ Tim Mayer

06 June 2023

Tim Mayer

/s/ Mark Fraley

06 June 2023

Mark Fraley

/s/ Jami Scholl

08 June 2023

Jami Scholl