City of Bloomington Common Council
Jack Hopkins Social Services Committee

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION ON:

RESOLUTION 2024-13 – Authorizing the Allocation of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Program Funds for the Year 2024 and Related Matters

Prologue: *The following description of the 2024 Jack Hopkins Social Services Program, along with the supporting documentation attached hereto, constitutes the Report of the 2024 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 32nd year of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Program, named after former Councilmember Jack Hopkins. Since its inception in 1993 through 2023, the City has awarded over $6.2 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 $350,000 available in 2024. 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. This year, the Committee received 39 applications for funding and recommends awarding grant funds to 30 agency programs.

Res 2024-13 implements the recommendations of the 2024 Jack Hopkins Committee. The legislation:
- Allocates $359,996.38 in grant funds to 30 agency programs ($350,000 appropriated for use in 2024 and $9,996.38 in unspent funds from previous years);
- Approves the *Funding Agreements* with these agencies;
- Delegates questions regarding the interpretation of the *Funding Agreements* to the Chair of the Committee (Councilmember Asare);
- 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 2024 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:

- Isak Nti Asare (Chair)
- Courtney Daily
- Hopi Stosberg
- Andy Ruff
- Nordia McNish
- Camryn Greer
- Eddy Riou

Housing and Neighborhood Development Department Staff
While Council staff coordinates the program prior to Council action, Anna Killion-Hanson 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 2024 Hopkins Process

The following is a brief summary of the 2024 Hopkins process:

- **Organizational Meeting – 29 February 2024**
  The Committee met to establish policies and procedures for the 2024 program. At this meeting the Committee:

  o Received a status report of last year's grants from the HAND department;
  o Reviewed and made some changes to the elaboration of criteria for evaluating and awarding grants, as follows:
      o More clearly stating that high priority is given to programs primarily serving city residents
      o Adding that high priority is given to programs providing services to historically marginalized populations or groups
      o Specifying that agencies may only submit claims for expenses incurred after adoption of the authorizing resolution for grant allocations
  o Discussed other possible changes to criteria for future consideration;
      o Incorporation of a scoring rubric or matrix
      o Ways to improve transparency and to include a systematic equity review process;
  o Approved solicitation materials; and
  o Established a schedule for 2024.

- **Request for Applications Issued – 04 March 2024**
  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 – 18 March 2024**
  A voluntary Technical Assistance meeting was held on 18 March in order to explain the program to, and answer questions from, agency representatives. Approximately 17 individuals attended the meeting. Agencies were encouraged to contact the Council office with remaining questions.

- **Deadline for Applications – 01 April 2024, 4:00pm**
  A total of 39 applications were submitted to the Council Office by the deadline requesting a total of $649,067.36

- **Distribution of Packet of Applications – 12 April 2024**
  The Council Office distributed summaries and application materials to committee members and staff.

- **Initial Review of Applications by the Committee – 16 April 2024**
  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 two applications from further consideration and developed questions to be answered by remaining agencies, which were shared with the agencies via email.

- **Agency Presentations – 23 April 2024**
  Agency Presentations were held in a hybrid meeting format. A total of 36 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 – 08 May 2024**
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 – 09 May 2024**
The Committee accepted conflict of interest disclosures from two members (Riou and McNish) and made preliminary recommendations for funding amounts to be considered at its Allocation hearing.

- **Allocation Hearing – 14 May 2024**
The Committee recommended funding for 30 agency applications for a total of $359,996.38. The Committee offered an opportunity for public comment before voting on its recommendations at this meeting.

- **De-Briefing Meeting – 23 May 2024**
The Committee met to review the 2024 program – what worked well and what warrants change in 2025. The Committee explored several ideas, including:
    - implementing a funding focus area for a given year's funding cycle (e.g., focusing on housing service providers one year, focusing on healthcare providers the next year, etc.);
    - awarding larger amounts to fewer agencies or continuing to award many partial awards to more agencies, and possibly separating out the grant process into two different tracks or pools of funding;
    - utilizing a scoring rubric to encourage equity and transparency in decision making, as well as to aid in providing feedback to applicants;
    - incorporating an equity review as part of the grant process, either through a scoring rubric or through some other mechanism;
    - using agency presentations as an opportunity to hear only from those agencies from which the Committee needs more information rather than all applicants still under consideration;
    - adding questions to the application to ask how agencies coordinate and work with each other and to ask more explicitly about the minimum amount of funding needed for a particular project to proceed.

    The Committee left open the possibility of meeting again in 2024 or in early 2025 to better think through and implement the ideas noted above ahead of the 2025 funding cycle.

- **Council Action – 12 June 2024**
The Common Council will consider the *Resolution* approving recommendations and taking related actions regarding the program.

- **Technical Assistance Meeting for Grantees - Tuesday, 18 June 2024, 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 an 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 uavailable 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 funding agreement contains an 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 6, 2024 (a requirement made of all grantees); and again by March 14, 2025 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 2024 Report of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee is signed by the following majority of its membership:

Council Members   Date

_____   _____

Isak Nti Asare (Chair)
Council Member, At-Large

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Courtney Daily
Council Member, District V

_____   _____

Hopi Stosberg
Council Member, District III

_____   _____

Andy Ruff
Council Member, At-Large

Residents With Experience in Social Services   Date

_____   _____

Nordia McNish

_____   _____

Camryn Greer

_____   _____

Eddy Riou