

**Fairview Council Executive Board Meeting Minutes:  
September 5, 2024**

**Attending** : James Thornton, Arianna Bellizzi (Chair FCC), Daniel George (vice chair FCC), Allen Kemplen, Sharon Chamard, Karen Gonne-Harrell, Kelly Ittenbach, Janel Walton, **Zoom**: Sj Klein, Tom Schneider

Ari talked about the new fiscal policy and how it came about. There had been no fiscal policy , so for liability purposes, she realized had to tackle this first. A clear policy was needed as soon as possible, so met with a lawyer and accountant, and fiscal policy was created.

Dan: Main source of funding is municipality. FCC under scrutiny the past year. Lax procedures were in place formerly, and had issues in the past.

James: Explain how we can't be under the thumb of the assembly.

Dan: I too have concerns about what the assembly can or can't do. There has been a lack of trust between councils in general and the assembly. Right now, we're trying to comply with grant agreements and prove that we are good stewards of our money.

Ari: This policy protects us from the assembly meddling too much.

Janel: What about matching grants...under they under the muni's thumb?

Ari: It depends. If they become the grantor, then they have a say. The only grant I have currently is the state grant under our EIN, so we have to follow those rules.

Sharon: What is the Leader Fit in section 5.4? Is there an expectation on the FCC's part that the president will be the leader and coordinate all the activities of that project or is it symbolic?

Ari: Chair is the primary contact. We hold fiduciary responsibility of the organization. Anyone else can be included, but it makes sense to have the chair be the primary contact

Allen: The language in the MOU and this contract is inconsistent. MOU spells out the primary contact, this policy doesn't.

Dan: Perhaps it stems from the definition of "project."

Sharon: Another issue we had is the process for approving or denying grants: Troubled that the FCC has sole discretion and no grounds for the council to appeal.

Ari: Section 5.3: doesn't name ME as sole responsibility: I am an employee. My boss is the board. I would complain to the FCC Board if there is a problem with a decision that has been made.

SJ: Maybe change language to make it more clear?

Ari: We will endeavor to support our mission of supporting councils, but we are still a nonprofit, so we have to have some boundaries to say "no" to projects that are out of the boundaries.

Dan: Most likely scenario is a question of resources. If there was an ambitious grant that has a lot of compliance and rules, we might have insufficient resources to allow FCC to adhere to it. Would have to take up organizational issue.

SJ: Worried about not being able to apply to last minute grants because we need FCC approval. Not much nimbleness in this policy.

Ari: Neighborworks would do the same thing. Generally I reply within 24 hours. Just need to send it to me so I can make sure grant money is being used correctly. Park Foundation can do own fiscal sponsorship. We will try to do the best we can, but we do need to see the grants first before approval. You would need to do this with any fiscal partner.

Janel: The concern is that You won't always be available within 24 hours.

Ari: If I am gone, there will be someone else that I will designate to take care of things.

Allen: You are supposed to a FACILITATOR, not overseer or administrative manager. The approach of community councils is a grassroots effort in the community and empowering residents to be good citizens. This fiscal policy and the MOU's approach is one of control to ensure there is no risk associated to the community. Have to have more flexibility. We need to provide documentation that we are good stewards. You could say we'll have a partnership arrangement. It's important to have a respectful relationship that will nurture activities of the community councils.

Karen: Want assurance that the oversight is fiscal, not how we go about how we apply for the grant.

Ari: As long as the grant is an allowable activity, I don't see a reason to not approve it.

Dan: Section 4.6 relates to this. State grants are extremely strict about their wording. If the grant wording doesn't say something, you can't do it.

Ari: Wanted to keep application policy vague due to this.

SJ: Have we lost the AARP grant?

Ari: No, but we need to answer tomorrow. AARP is really flexible, so we can use all the money the the last half of the grant.

SJ: Would like to move through the MOU points one by one so we can comfortable with signing the MOU. Discussion on points already discussed. Would like to move to approve the MOU so we can move forward. Sharon seconded.

Allen: Against the motion...too much ambiguity. Too much oversight of FCC. Fairview has long track record that should be respected. Language should have some type of tiered relationship with the councils. If a council has a good track record, they should be able to be their own fiscal sponsors. Uncomfortable ceding power. Too many hoops and hurdles to use the federation's EIN.

SJ: Counter argument: We are not giving control over everything we do, just to apply for grants. Without this, we won't apply for any grants through the federation. It doesn't preclude us from getting our own non profit status. 37 councils they have to deal with. They are trying to do the right thing.

Sharon: Don't see any onerous obstacles. Only submitting project narrative and budget documentation. Would need to anyway.

SJ: Not worried. We have our act together.

Karen: Didn't we need to basically do the same thing before, just not in writing like this? As a tenant, we do the same things to protect not only myself, but them as well.

James: All in favor of signing the MOU: 5 voted for: Sharon, Kelly, Karen, James, SJ. Allen only one against. There has been some bad blood between the council and the federation; We appreciate all the work the federation does for the community councils. We hope to have a good relationship with the federation.

Ari: Original grant had that we were going to hire disenfranchised youth for \$10/hour. We can't hire for under the state minimum wage and federation policy that we can't hire people. AARP grant has to be volunteers, and can use the money for other parts of the grant. I can ask if we can issue gift cards as thank you gifts or incentives. We don't have insurance to hire children.

Dan: Fairview has wonderful track record for pulling off cool projects. Just had training for councils to become their own non profits.

Ari: If we had been audited by the IRS, we would have lost our non profit status.

SJ: Assembly has no control over what projects you approve. Your FCC budget comes from assembly (100%). Since this is the case, does the assembly have control over the money?  
What if the assembly decided to defund the federation because of a decision they didn't like?

Dan: FCC has separate fiduciary account. Some assembly members wanted to get rid of community councils. Mayor even wanted to get rid of them. But the councils are in our charter, so they can't just be dismantled.

SJ: Assembly rumblings: councils represent only a fraction of the district population. If that is the case, we would expect the federation to be an ally of the councils.

Ari: Absolutely. When I was hired, illusions were made to get rid of the councils. I'm trying to meet with assembly members to see who is pro and against. Executive committee and I sat down with mayor to have discussion about community councils. More allies than not. In the Bill of Rights, residents have a right to organize community councils. My goal is to move away from 100% assembly funding. Won't happen this year. Maybe 5 years? I'm working with Foraker on strategic plan for how the assembly has an obligation to help councils with civic engagement but not be fully under their thumb. If they decided to pull our funding, we wouldn't be out.

Sharon: We have our own EIN, but not own non profit status. Next step should be to get 501C3 status.

Kelly: If go through the federation, grants under \$100,000 will have 6%, 4% over \$100,000 grant and donation money.

SJ: If we have our own non profit, we don't have to go through the federation.

Miscellaneous agenda discussion.

SJ: James, you are the delegating authority to manage these grants. If Allen is willing to jump through the hoops.

Sharon: Suggest a solution: Any fiscal responsibilities, I can do. Can delegate different responsibilities, tasks.

Allen: philosophically opposed to FCC new fiscal policy.

Meeting adjourned 8:44 pm.

