

AD HOC REPORT GRANT AGENCY REVIEW

Chairman Cavo called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m. on February 23, 2009. In attendance were committee members Gregg Seabury, Mary Teicholz, John Esposito and Tom Saadi. Also in attendance were ex-officio Jack Knapp, Bob Arconti, Warren Levy, Phil Curran, Jane Diggs, Ben Chianese and Paul Rotello, Mayor Mark Boughton, Deputy Corporation Counsel Les Pinter, Director of Finance David St. Hilaire, Director of Health Scott Leroy, Mayor's Aide Ted Cutsumpas, CEO of the United Way of Western Connecticut Michael Johnston and members of the public.

Chairman Cavo began the meeting by stating there's been discussion over the years to review the way the City funds grant agencies. The United Way has a way to help. Mayor Boughton said this idea reflects a lot of discussion since the last budget cycle. The City will design the investment strategy, and the UWWC will implement the plan.

Mr. Johnston began by stating the mission of the UWWC to advance the common good in our local communities-creating opportunities for a good life for all by focusing on the elemental components to a good life: education/income/health. The key priority in economic crisis is to partner with other community organizations to most effectively invest reduced dollars and deliver services. Mr. Johnston said there will no co-mingling of funds from the City with funds from other donors. Funding decisions will be made by a group of volunteers that are Danbury residents. A scoring process is used and the City will determine the size of the pool and investment strategy. We also need to determine the financial ability and stability of the agency requesting funds. Every year, they will have to return and request funds. Priorities can change and funds may be allocated differently next year based on the volunteer group's recommendations.

Chairman Cavo asked about administrative fees. Mr. Johnston answered that although the national standard for non-profits is 10%, they can do it for less than 3%. They need to cover costs, but they're not making money on this.

Chairman Cavo asked for questions. Committee member Seabury asked how the UWWC decides who gets how much money. Mr. Johnston said an objective measurable standard of evaluation is used and the process is very efficient. There will be a set of processes including rigorous questioning based on the effectiveness of the programs. Mayor Boughton said that core agencies will be carried in the City budget, and it will be transparent. Non-profits were used to getting what they wanted without question, now they will have to compete for funds through the UWWC process. The total pool of money available has not been determined, but it will not be the same as last year.

Mr. Saadi asked if the Council will have any authority over the decision. Mayor Boughton answered that in June there will be a report from the UWWC, and the Council can request a change, but we're trying to avoid politicizing the process and putting us back where we were-making the funding decision.

Ms. Diggs asked questions about the volunteer group. Mr. Johnston said they would look to the City to help publicize the announcement, and to contact him or the Mayor if you have an interested person. The volunteers would be people who understand the community and have time to meet. The group would consist of 30-40 volunteer city residents. There would be about 10-14 meetings with 5-6 people per team.

Ms. Diggs asked if the Council would give final approval on funding. Mayor Boughton answered no we would be back in the same boat. There will be notification to the Council, but the UWWC decides who gets funding, not the Council.

Mr. Rotello said he doesn't like ceding control to the UWWC. The Council is responsible to its constituency. We can be voted out, how do they answer to the people?

Mr. Rotello also asked if this needed to be sent out to bid. Mr. Pinter answered no. This committee will vote to contract with the UWWC.

Mr. Saadi agreed with the Mayor that this provides accountability, and asked how long will this contract be in place. Mr. Cavo said it would be for 1 year and next year the cost may even be reduced.

Mr. Chianese asked how they would determine an eligible agency. The Mayor said that will be transparent in the budget, not a catch-all of all agencies. Mr. Chianese asked what happens to those agencies that have already submitted documents to request funds from the City. Mayor Boughton said they will explain to the agencies. Mr. Cavo said that two-thirds of the agencies already go through the UWWC process.

Mr. Seabury moved to recommend to the Council to adopt the UWWC as an agent of the City to manage the funding to the grant agencies formerly being the responsibility of the Council using the approaches presented by the UWWC. Mr.Saadi asked to add "for one year at a time". Mr. Seabury agreed. **Seconded by Ms. Teicholz. Motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Seabury moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Teicholz. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Cavo, Chairman

Gregg Seabury

John Esposito

Mary Teicholz

Tom Saadi