

City of Montgomery
Government Affairs Committee
April 15, 2024

Staff Present

Brian Riblet, City Manager
Tracy Henao, Asst. City Manager
Matthew Vanderhorst, C.I.S. Director
Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council

Council Committee Members Present

Chris Dobrozsi, Chair
Catherine Mills-Reynolds
Sasha Naiman

The meeting of the Government Affairs Committee of City Council convened in Council Chambers at 3:30 p.m., with Mr. Dobrozsi presiding.

New Business

Service to the Community Grant Application Review

Mr. Vanderhorst explained that the City received a record number of grant applications from local organizations. He stated that Grant applications were received from:

1. You to the Rescue
2. A Kid Again
3. Neighborhood Bridges Sycamore (Sycamore Bridges)
4. Evergreen Presbyterian Church
5. American Legion NE Post 630
6. Montgomery Elementary

For the 2024 grant cycle, **You to the Rescue** requested \$2,500 to help fund four events, including a microchipping event, Yoga with cats, an adoption/awareness event, and a build-a-shelter event.

A Kid Again requested \$2,500 to fund adventures for six Montgomery families.

Neighborhood Bridges Sycamore requested \$2,500 to create a retreat room ("Bridges Break Room") in Sycamore High School. The room would be used by students needing a place to relieve some of the stresses, anxieties, and pressures of high school. The Bridges Break Room is meant to redirect students who may otherwise cause disruptions in class, create chaos in the hallways, or just need a place to regroup before making a poor decision. This project is being planned in partnership with Sycamore Community Schools Pupil Support Coordinator and other school counselors and therapists.

Evergreen Presbyterian Church requested \$1,000 to help fund their annual Earth Care Festival.

American Legion NE Post 630 requested \$2,500 to purchase comic books about America and the Flag to be handed out from their booth during the July 4 Festival in Montgomery Park.

Montgomery Elementary School requested \$2,500 to help fund incentives for their Family Fitness Contest in April.

Mr. Vanderhorst explained that the Service to the Community Grant Team reviewed the applications and determined that they would all bring value to the community. Given the budget of \$5,000, the following recommendations are being made:

1. The team recommends not funding You to the Rescue's application this year. You to the Rescue did receive grant funding in 2023.
2. Grant \$2,000 to A Kid Again. This amount would fully fund three to four family adventures.
3. Grant \$1,500 to Neighborhood Bridges Sycamore.
4. Grant \$500 to Evergreen Presbyterian Church.
5. Grant \$500 to American Legion NE Post 630. This would allow them to purchase 500 books.
6. Grant \$500 to Montgomery Elementary to help fund their family physical fitness incentive.

Mrs. Naiman asked if there would be an issue with public funds being granted to a religious institution.

Mr. Riblet replied that since the funds were to support a public event to support the environment and not to the operation of the church, he did not think there was a problem with the grant.

Mr. Riblet reminded the Committee that the Montgomery Farmers Market normally applies for this grant funding but last year the Committee voted to issue a \$2,500 annual stipend to the Montgomery Farmers Market rather than requiring them to apply for the grant each year.

Mr. Dobrozsi stated that he would recuse himself from this vote as he is on the Board of A Kid Again.

Mrs. Naiman made a motion to accept the recommendations of the Service to the Community Grant Team and issue the grants as presented. Mrs. Mills-Reynolds seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Hopewell Cemetery Internal Management Policy Review

Ms. Gaylor explained to the Committee that in 2022, the Committee approved an increase to the grave redemption policy which has allowed gravesite owners to sell their unwanted graves back to the city in a much more efficient way. This and prior changes to the fee structure have provided increased revenue opportunities for the City and have brought those policies up to date. In consideration of those updates, recently she met with Public Works staff to review the existing internal management policy and to discuss increasing maintenance issues at the cemetery. The result of the discussion is the redlined version of our internal maintenance and management policy included in the packet. She explained that some of the proposed changes are to provide clarification and/or update information related to burials of cremains and also indigent burials. The remaining changes are related to ground maintenance and grave decoration. The recommendations are not only issues related to the aesthetic value of the cemetery but to the safety of those who work in the cemetery and maintain the grounds.

Ms. Gaylor added that Staff have surveyed other cemeteries and have found that the proposed changes are in line with surrounding cemeteries. If approved, staff will update signage at the cemetery reflecting the changes, notify area funeral homes and monument companies, and place an article in the Montgomery Bulletin for residents. In the case of specific issues an attempt to notify family will be made by staff to provide notice and understanding of the changes.

Mr. Riblet recommended removing the word "internal" from the policy so it would be understood to be a policy that would be shared with the public.

Mrs. Naiman recommended looking at the application to purchase gravesites to add a signature line for purchasers to acknowledge receipt of the policy and that it could be amended at the City's discretion.

Mrs. Naiman made a motion to approve the recommended changes to the Hopewell Cemetery Policy. Mrs. Mills-Reynolds seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Co-branding Discussion

Ms. Henao explained to the Committee that staff met with Kolar to discuss a scope to create a logo and associated collateral to co-brand with businesses in the City as called for in Strategy C.4 of the current Strategic Plan. Mrs. Henao distributed a Statement of Work from Kolar that detailed the scope of services to provide three options of a tagline, a messaging plan with digital and physical art to support the initiative. Ms. Henao explained that this would not be a rebrand but an extension of the City's brand that would promote businesses in Montgomery. She stated that there were two options to consider. The first including brainstorming, design and production at a fee of \$9,500 and the second would cover the brainstorming session resulting in a final verbal recommendation to the City at a fee of \$2,500.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds asked what the goal of co-branding would be.

Ms. Henao explained that it is a tool to help promote the businesses in Montgomery through the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Dobrozsi asked if the tagline would double with our logo.

Ms. Henao replied that that it would. She gave examples of *Montgomery the Future is Bright, Come Glow with Us, Shop, Shine & Dine*.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds stated that her concern was that a non-Montgomery Business could use it.

Mrs. Naiman stated that is it a benefit to get Montgomery into the culture of people that are here. She asked if it would be free for the businesses to use it.

Ms. Henao replied that we would need to let every business use it.

Mr. Dobrozsi stated that he did not care if businesses outside of Montgomery used it, it is more if the wrong kind of business used it. He stated that we would not want to create an enforcement issue.

Mrs. Naiman stated that it would be an extension of the branding of the City that we should investigate obtaining a copyright or trademark of it that we would be able to share.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds asked what budget the services from Kolar would come from.

Ms. Henao replied that she would investigate that as this was not a budgeted item. She added that she thinks it is a worthwhile expense as it is an economic development tool that will help to grow business in the city.

Mrs. Naiman asked if the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce does this kind of work.

Ms. Henao replied that this is not really something they are in the position to do. She stated they are interested in partnering as far as facilitating with their members.

Mr. Dobrozsi asked how many of their members are in Montgomery.

Ms. Henao replied approximately 1/3.

Mrs. Naiman made a motion to approve the recommendation of staff to move forward with the creation of a Co-brand to be utilized by Montgomery businesses. Mrs. Mills-Reynolds seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Minutes

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds made a motion to approve the March 11, 2024 minutes as written. Mrs. Naiman seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Executive Session

Mr. Dobrozsi asked for a motion to adjourn into Executive Session for matters related to the appointment of a public official.

Mrs. Naiman made a motion to adjourn into Executive Session for matters related to the appointment of a public official. Mrs. Mills-Reynolds seconded. The Committee unanimously voted yes.

The Committee adjourned into Executive Session at 4:05 p.m.

The Committee came back in into Public Session at 4:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Mrs. Naiman moved for adjournment. Mrs. Mills-Reynolds seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

The Government Affairs Committee meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.



Chair