

Chaffee Common Ground – Citizens Advisory Committee (CCG-CAC)

Minutes from Meeting on Friday April 21, 2023

Meeting Called to order at 1:03 p.m.

CCG-CAC Members present: (all attended virtually) Cindy Williams, Michael Hannigan, Ben Lenth, Dan Omasta, Kit Kuester and Jim LaRue. Also present Ben Doon, Administrative Support and Kim Marquis, Outreach Coordinator.

CCG-CAC Members absent: Sydney Schnurr and Greg Felt, BOCC liaison

Agenda review

Cindy reviewed the agenda. Topics include a financial update, mini-grant proposals not covered at the last meeting and recommendations for grant funding for the Board of County Commissioners to consider. She said the committee might want to look at any additional cuts to any mini-grant requests, or if anything else could be cut from the lower rated full applications in order to meet the amount of unobligated funds for this grant cycle.

Approval of minutes from previous meeting and approval of agenda

Consent agenda was approved as presented. Motion Ben L. Second Michael. Vote unanimous.

Financial Update

Ben D said he received the most recent sales tax and revenue and expenditure numbers from Dan Short this week. There was an interest payment of \$20,000 that came through in March that he didn't anticipate which boosted the unobligated balance from \$930k to \$950k. Sales tax remains strong and the county is at 9.54% over 2022 collections. Also, Dan Omasta pointed out that the Upper Arkansas Elk Monitoring Project's funding request is broken up into funding for 2023 and 2024, which Ben D had missed. The applicant used their own budget format spreadsheet and not the Common Ground template so, he missed the cell that called this out. It shows that about \$9k is requested for 2023 and \$16k for 2024. Given this and the elimination of four mini-grants from funding consideration from the last meeting and with the proposed partial funding for the GARNA Wilderness Monitoring project, the total funding request is currently just above \$948k.

Dan Omasta asked if we could check with GARNA to make sure they are ok with a partial funding award of \$7,800 for the consultant and staff time to see if these elements of the project can still move forward without the other components being funded by Common Ground.

Mini-grant Reviews

Ben D shared his screen from the grants portal that shows each evaluator's score by application broken down by each question in the evaluation form.

Upper Arkansas Conservation District No-Till Drill Community Rental Program

Ben D said he was not able to get answers for the follow up questions regarding maintenance and storage of the drill because Natalie was out of the office from Wednesday to Friday this week. A review of the application confirmed that the drill had already been purchased, and the funding request is to help develop a template for loaning the equipment.

Jim said another use of the drill is to help reseed forested areas after a wildfire which helps the proposal.

Michael said the funding risk for this project is low due to the small amount of funds being asked for.

Group consensus to provide full funding for this proposal.

GARNA Volunteer Education Series

Cindy said she felt like education is a bit on the side of the Common Ground goals, but she can be persuaded to support the proposal. Group consensus to provide full funding for this proposal.

BV Singletrack Waste Management

Ben L felt this proposal was a bit of an isolated, one-off effort, and he would like to see more coordination with other organizations that are working on waste management issues. Cindy said she would also like to see coordination among all the groups working on this issue, but she knows the project is a high priority for BV. She suggested providing a note to the applicant regarding any future proposals to be coordinated with GARNA or other groups working on this issue. Michael agreed and said he would like to see more coordination with other groups that are establishing porta potties at trailheads around the county. Kim said she wants to make sure that the groups doing this work install the correct infrastructure, including dog waste stations. She feels it's always better if these groups could work together. The Rec Council has a task force for infrastructure. Cindy suggested providing the applicant with information in the grant agreement that asks them to include plans on how to fund longer term solutions dealing with waste in their grant reporting.

Group consensus to provide full funding for this proposal.

Guidestone - Promoting Agriculture Career Pathways for the Next Generation of Chaffee County Farmers & Ranchers.

Kit said the proposal seems like something that may already be in place in the county, but she can be persuaded to support the proposal. Group consensus to provide full funding for this proposal.

Follow-up Discussion on Select Full Proposals

Chubb Park Fencing and Improvements Project

Jim said he wants to see a better budget and only fund future costs and not reimbursement for work that's already been done.

Dan said he understands that this rancher was hit really hard with the increase in recreation visitation, especially during the pandemic.

Cindy said she would like Ben D to get budget numbers from the rancher for future costs. We can offer him up to \$50k for work to be done this year, but we need a budget for those projects.

USFS - Rangeland Infrastructure Improvements and Maintenance.

Ben L had a question regarding the Bear Creek culverts aspect of the proposal. He had concerns that the culvert might be installed in Fremont County. He understands that Bear Creek Rd travels through Chaffee County, Fremont County and federal land and he's unclear if the installation would occur in Chaffey County. He suggested flexible funding for this project to address work that happens within Chaffey County. Cindy suggested telling the Forest Service that funding can only be used for infrastructure that is placed within Chaffey County.

Murray Ditch Headgate and Bank Restoration.

Ben L noted that there is a conservation easement on the property where the headgate is located, and he wants to be sure that the land trust that holds the easement is informed about the work happening on the property. Cindy suggested that we request that the Murray Ditch folks engage with the land trust to inform them about the planned work and to be sure that the project is in compliance with the language of the easement.

Funding Recommendations

Cindy suggested making a note that the funding for the Rangeland Improvements Project and the Chubb Park Fencing and Improvement projects may go down depending on the locations of the infrastructure for the Rangeland Improvement Projects and the specific budget provided for the 2023 work to be done in Chubb Park.

Cindy said after considering partial funding for the GARNA Wilderness Monitoring Project, spreading the funding for the Elk Monitoring Project over 2023 and 2024, as was proposed in their application, and removing 4 mini grants from funding consideration, the total funding request is \$948,647.

Michael made a motion to recommend grant funding for 22 proposals for a total funding amount of \$948,647. Kit second. Vote unanimous.

Cindy asked Ben D to check the total amount of funding awards for the three categories after these recommendations to make make sure that we are still in line with the ballot measure language of providing at a minimum, 25% funding for forest health, 25% funding for sustainable agriculture and 5% funding for recreation impacts management.

Other Business

None.

Next Steps

Ben D said we will bring these funding recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners at their May 9th meeting. In the past Kim has provided good project summaries and other information about the funding to be presented to the commissioners, and she will prepare that information again for this year's meeting. Jim said he is available to attend the May 9th meeting in person and Kit will try to attend as well.

Cindy said she would like to get the group back together in mid to late July to look at updating some of the application questions and rubric evaluation questions based on comments and feedback we had from this current grant cycle. Group consensus that we will pencil in July 24th at 9:00 a.m. to meet about revising application questions and evaluation form questions.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.