

STATE OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AUTHORITY
Grant Committee Special Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2020

The Grant Committee of the State of Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority held a special teleconference meeting at 12:45 p.m. on Wednesday, May 20, 2020.¹

The special meeting was called to order by Dr. Estela Lopez, Committee Chair, at 12:45 p.m. and upon roll call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT: Dr. Estela Lopez, Committee Chair
Peter Lisi, Board Chair
Anne Foley
Barbara B. Lindsay, Esq.

OTHER CHEFA BOARD
MEMBERS PRESENT: Lawrence Davis

ALSO PRESENT: Jeanette W. Weldon, Executive Director
Denise Aguilera, General Counsel
Robert Blake, Network and Data Architect
Debrah Galli, Manager of Administrative Services
Andrew Kwashnak, Systems and Data Analyst
Eileen MacDonald, Senior Transaction Specialist
JoAnne Mackewicz, Controller
Michael Morris, Managing Director
David Pantaleo, Senior Systems and Data Analyst
Cynthia D. Peoples-H, Managing Director
Kara Stuart, Administrative Services Assistant
Betty Sugerman Weintraub, Grant Program Manager
of Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Lopez requested a motion to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2020 Grant Committee Meeting. Ms. Foley moved for approval of the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Lisi.

Upon a voice vote, the “Ayes,” “Nays” and “Abstentions” were as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTENTIONS</u>
Anne Foley	None	None
Barbara Lindsay		
Peter Lisi		
Dr. Estela Lopez		

Before the overview was provided, Dr. Lopez stated she will recuse herself from any action on the grant for the Malta House of Care, Inc. because she is a member of the Board for this entity. Dr. Lopez turned the floor over to Ms. Sugerman Weintraub.

¹ All attendees participated in the meeting via conference telephone that permitted all parties to hear each other

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FY 2020 NONPROFIT GRANT PROGRAM AWARDS

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub stated the FY 2020 Nonprofit Grants were submitted prior to the shutdown of business due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since this was the case, the grants were reviewed by the Internal Review Committee (“IRC”) on their merits and they scored each grant application based on the criteria of the evaluation rubric.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub reported, at the April board meeting, the board approved the FY 2020 Nonprofit Grant award recipients will be given an option to utilize their grants for general operating support if their program or capital project cannot move forward due to the uncertainty of return to business or school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The board also approved the extension of the grant period to 18 months versus the typical one-year timeframe and a six-month extension on the grant reporting timeframes. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub said the philanthropic sector is responding to the COVID-19 crisis by implementing similar measures, with the option for general operating support, as well as grant and reporting timeframe extensions.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub reported on the FY 2020 Nonprofit Grant program, stating the Authority received 162 Letters of Interest (LOIs), up from 115 in FY 2019 or a 41% increase. From the group of LOIs, the IRC selected 49 organizations to move forward with a full application. Of this group, 45 organizations ultimately submitted applications. Four applications were withdrawn by the applicants for various reasons. Of the 45 reviewed applications, there were nine (20%) new organizations that had never applied to CHEFA in the past. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub said the quality of the grant requests were very impressive for this cycle. The grant requests totaled just under \$2.4 million for the pool of \$1,054,687 available to be awarded. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub reported the available award money came from \$1 million that was budgeted and \$54,687 of returned funds.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub provided a timeline of the process:

- November 15, 2019: CHEFA released the FY 2019 Nonprofit Grant Program RFP for the Letter of Interest (LOI). The RFP was placed on the CHEFA and the CT Council for Philanthropy websites.
- December 13, 2019: Deadline for submission of the LOI.
- February 3, 2020: Nonprofit organizations were notified of the decisions of the IRC to either move forward with a full application or declination of their LOI.
- March 2, 2020: Grant applications due.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub noted the RFP for LOI, the LOI application, a list of the LOI applicants, the RFP for application, and the grant application were all provided in the Grant Package.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub mentioned a phone conference was set up for all organizations invited to submit a full application. The purpose was for staff to review the grant application, discuss required attachments, provide suggestions for internal review prior to submission, and answer applicant questions. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub said that out of the 45 applicants, more than 25 joined the phone conference.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub stated the IRC members for this grant cycle were Ms. Debrah Galli, Mr. Andrew Kwashnak, Mr. Dave Pantaleo, and herself. The IRC members evaluated and scored the grant applications on the online Foundant Grant Management System Scoring Rubric. The Foundant Grant Management System was also utilized to aggregate the

scoring/ranking averages. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub thanked the IRC members for their time and effort dedicated to reviewing and recommending grants.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub said a 'Nonprofit Grant Program FY 2020 All Statuses Report' is included in the Grant Package. This report includes the formal description of the request, executive summary ("description"), project type/sector/location, current amount requested/recommended, prior submissions, and status of the prior submissions, as well as the project type, sector, and location of the grantees.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub reported that the IRC met on May 1, 2020 to determine recommendations to the Grant Committee for funding. The committee reviewed grants based on the following criteria: impact on the population served, likelihood of success, number of individuals served, need for the project/program, innovation, budget information, and effective organizational management.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub said the Nonprofit Grant Program receives applications requesting funds to support capital projects and purchases, and program requests. Capital requests are defined as building renovations or construction projects, and the purchase of specific equipment. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub stated for this grant cycle, the grant recommendations are split almost evenly between capital expenditures (8) and programs (10).

The IRC recommends approval to the Grant Committee of eighteen applications, thereby utilizing all the available funding and bringing the total awards to \$1,054,687. One grant was recommended for partial funding due to exhaustion of available funds for the cycle.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub reported three grants scored at 79.75% when the averages were calculated on Foundant, and staff recommends that two of the three grants receive funding. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub stated the Harriet U. Allyn Testamentary Trust (Lyman Allyn Museum) would be funded at the full requested amount of \$15,000, with partial funding for The Connecticut Forum at \$53,156 (their request had been for \$75,000) thereby utilizing all remaining available funds. The remaining grant that scored at 79.75%, the Litchfield Community Center, was determined to not be funded. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub reported the IRC based their recommendations on the number of low-income individuals served by the three organizations, and the impact of any partial funding on a capital expenditure. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub said capital expenditures, if only partially funded, may not be able to be completed by the organization in the grant period timeframe. As a result, the IRC did not recommend funding the Litchfield Community Center. The other two requests that were tied at this amount were both program requests that could be funded at a lower level, if necessary, and still be able to run their programs, potentially at a diminished level.

Mr. Lisi asked if there is a bias of the IRC to fund program grants over capital grants given the above information. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub said no, each program is evaluated based on its merits and the scoring rubric. In this case where there was a three-way tie, it was determined that the capital expenditure, if only partially funded, may not be able to be completed by the organization in the grant period timeframe therefore it was not chosen. A discussion ensued.

Ms. Sugerma Weintraub stated the proposed awards would provide grants to entities in four out of the eight Connecticut counties, including: Hartford, New Haven, New London, and Fairfield; in addition, there were two grants that are conducted in multiple locations, and three that are considered statewide. Grants were made in each of CHEFA's four grant priority areas of education, healthcare, childcare, and cultural. Ms. Sugerma Weintraub said with the current

IRC grant recommendations, the Authority achieves broad distribution of its grant dollars, geographically, by sector, and by capital project/program grants.

Ms. Foley inquired about the process of getting from the initial 162 organizations who submitted LOIs to the 45 organizations who submitted applications. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub explained the IRC reviewed the applications based on the guidelines and voted yes or no. The reviewers' answers were aggregated. With their being four reviewers, applicants scoring a "yes" 4 out of 4 times, or 3 out of 4 times were considered the highest voted. After completion, 49 applicants were chosen to move forward with a full application. From the 49, ultimately 45 submitted applications and the other 4 withdrew their applications for various reasons.

Mr. Lisi asked if the IRC, or the scoring rubric, has a preference as to the strength of the underlying organization versus the direct need for the grant. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub stated the reviewer ranks each applicant based on the scoring rubric criteria and does so on their own merits. Mr. Lisi rephrased the question as to what gets weighted more heavily on the scoring rubric, the strength of the organization or the project itself. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub reported the 'project need' and the 'likelihood of success' are the only questions weighted two times. A brief discussion ensued.

Dr. Lopez requested a motion to approve the FY 2020 CHEFA Nonprofit Grant Program Awards with the exception of Malta House of Care, Inc. Mr. Lisi moved for approval of the FY 2020 CHEFA Nonprofit Grant Program Awards with the exception of Malta House of Care, Inc., which was seconded by Ms. Foley.

Upon a voice vote, the "Ayes," "Nays" and "Abstentions" were as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTENTIONS</u>
Anne Foley	None	None
Barbara Lindsay		
Peter Lisi		
Dr. Estela Lopez		

Program Updates

Ms. Sugerman Weintraub reported the FY 2020 Nonprofit Grant Forum that was being planned for June 24th has been cancelled. The topic was scheduled to be the changing demographics of CT with Orlando Rodriguez, formerly of the CT Commission on African American and Latino Affairs and currently with the CT Education Association as the keynote speaker. The event will hopefully be rescheduled at the end of June 2021.

Ms. Sugerman Weintraub stated the Authority was contacted by Bill Villano, Chair of the CT Workforce Development Council regarding one of CHEFA's FY 2020 Targeted Grants. The grant was awarded to the Council at the January 15, 2020 meeting for \$250,000 for Training and Removal of Barriers to Employment. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub said with in-person classes suspended due to the COVID-19 crisis, she and Ms. Weldon approved a grant modification to allow the portion of the funds for in-person classes to be utilized for the online Metrix Learning platform, also known as SkillUp Connecticut. The platform offers over 5,000 courses and is offered by the State of CT Department of Labor to those collecting unemployment insurance as well as other unemployed individuals. The Governor issued a press release about the program on May 4th with CHEFA mentioned as the funder and which included a quote from Ms. Weldon. From the release there were articles in various print publications as well as on TV. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub stated the Authority is very excited that their funds are now being utilized

for this very important program. To date over 6,000 people have registered on the Metrix Learning platform and there have been 700 completed courses in just two weeks. Governor Lamont and Garrett Moran, Chair of the Governor’s Workforce Council, presented a PowerPoint this week to the National Governor’s Association and CHEFA’s role in this initiative was displayed.

Ms. Sugerman Weintraub stated the Authority is recommending a June 17th Grant Committee meeting to review the FY 2021 CHEFA COVID-19 Grant Program applications. There have been 35 applications submitted by the deadline of May 15th. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub said she and the Authority officers will be reviewing the applications and will make recommendations to the Grant Committee at the potential June 17th committee meeting.

Dr. Lopez recused herself and left the meeting at 1:21 p.m.

Mr. Lisi stated that staff recommendation is to fund the Malta House of Care, Inc. grant for \$75,000.

Mr. Lisi requested a motion to approve the Malta House of Care, Inc. grant. Ms. Lindsay moved for approval of the Malta House of Care, Inc. grant, which was seconded by Mr. Lisi.

Mr. Lisi opened the floor up for a discussion.

Ms. Foley said she had concerns with the optics of awarding a grant to an organization that included the Grant Committee Chair on its board. Ms. Foley stated she was primarily concerned about the perception. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub reiterated that each grant is reviewed based on the scoring rubric and its merits. Ms. Weldon stated that CHEFA used the recusal approach when similar situations have arisen in conjunction with bond issue approvals. A discussion ensued.

Mr. Lisi recommended Ms. Sugerman Weintraub find out how other philanthropic entities handle a situation where a Board member is affiliated with an organization being reviewed for a grant.

Mr. Lisi inquired whether there were any other comments or discussion on the motion, there being none, Mr. Lisi called for a vote on the motion to approve the grant for Malta House of Care, Inc.

Upon a voice vote, the “Ayes,” “Nays” and “Abstentions” were as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTENTIONS</u>
Barbara Lindsay	Anne Foley	None
Peter Lisi		

ADJOURNMENT

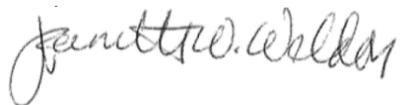
Mr. Lisi requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Foley moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Lindsay seconded the motion.

Upon a voice vote, the “Ayes,” “Nays,” and “Abstentions” were as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTENTIONS</u>
Anne Foley	None	None
Barbara Lindsay		
Peter Lisi		

The meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jeanette Weldon", written in black ink. The signature is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Jeanette Weldon
Executive Director