

CITY OF SAINT PAUL LONG-RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

Monday July 14,2025 - 5:00-7:00 PM Rondo Community Library

- I. Call to order at 5:13 pm by Chair Dees Erickson Roll Call :
 - a. Members in attendance: Demetrius Shaw, Jes Braun, Lauren Dees-Erickson, Nardos Ashenafi, Pang Yang, Raymond Hess, Liam O'Brien, Tim Marino
 - b. Members absent: Carl Johnson, April Eh, Darren Tobolt, Makayla Cox, Pat McQuillan
 - c. City Staff in attendance: Nichelle Bottko Woods, Shannon Forney, Caroline Swinford, Neal Younghans – Office of Financial Services , Anne Weber –Public Works, Alice Messer –Parks and Recreation, Council President Noecker, Ronde Berry on behalf of Council Member Bowie – City Council
 - d. Community Members in attendance: Guest: Dr. Heather Britt – Wilder Foundation Research, Michael-jon Pease – Saint Paul Parks Conservancy, Jane McClure – Village Voice Newspaper, Noah McVay – Audit Committee member
- II. Approval of 7/14 Meeting Agenda- Yang moved to approve the agenda, Braun seconded, motion passed.
- III. Budget Amendments
 - a. Parks – RES PH 25-142 Hillcrest Heights presented by Alice Messer. This budget amendment accepts \$2M in funding from the Port Authority for the Hillcrest Heights project.

O'Brien asks if the funding is restricted. Messer explains the funding is not restricted but is in addition to \$500k funding already given by the Port Authority for project pre-planning. Motion to approve the budget amendment is made by O'Brien, seconded by Hess. Motion passes.
 - b. Public Works – RES PH 25-136 is presented by Anne Weber. This budget amendment amends financing and spending plans in the Capital Budget for multiple capital projects totaling \$4.3M.

Dees-Erickson inquires how this list of amendments was developed. Weber explains that projects are submitted with estimates Sewer and Water expenses, that are updated once the project is closer to start date, as service and material costs can and do change over the project timelines for these larger capital projects. She went on to explain that all actual work is billed for, but that budget setting sometimes 1-3 years in advance of a project of this nature requires financial amendments and recalculations at some point. A motion to approve the budget amendment is made by O'Brien, seconded by Braun. Motion passes.
 - c. Treasury – RES PH 25-151 Issuance Bonds presented by Neal Younghans. This budget amendment reflects the final sale details resulting from the issuance of G.O. bonds which were finalized on June 26, 2025. He explained that there were 13 bidders for the 3rd bond series. O'Brien asks what classifies as a "green bond". Younghans explained that sewer or water bonds

CITY OF SAINT PAUL LONG-RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET COMMITTEE

are frequently offered as 'green bonds' because their activity has a positive environmental or social impact. O'Brien asked how Saint Paul's debt portfolio compares to other cities. Younghans responded that Saint Paul has higher than median debt when compared to other cities.

A motion to approve the budget amendment is made by Hess, seconded by Marino. Motion passes.

IV. New Business

- a. Wilder and Audit Committee Presentation of Community Proposals – presented by Dr. Britt of Wilder Foundation Research, Council President Noecker and members of the Audit Committee. Dr. Heather Britt presented the research and findings her group conducted from February through May of 2025.

Their work included a comprehensive review of all years of Community Proposals, creating a visual aid Story Map of what projects were funded in which locations across the City. Dr Britt referenced process critique that the CIB process was complicated and confusing to applicants. She shared grounding questions for the review like, "Who applies, who gets funded" and referenced a lack of shared understanding and goals between the CIB committee process, and the community at large. One of the questions that arose time and time again, was "Who is responsible for community engagement?"

Wilder Research offered the following recommendations for process improvement:

- i. Clarify roles and responsibilities at all stages of the process.
- ii. Document all processes comprehensively (OFS staff)
- iii. Consider offering a pre-application to community members so that they don't struggle so much with the application process, project costing, presenting objective data, etc.
- iv. Robust outreach and communications plan, naming a lead connector to the CIB committee. This person is recommended to be City Staff.

Hess noted that the CIB Committee/ District Council relationships have been fluid depending on the people and roles of the moment, rather than a consistent effort that everyone understands. Marino mentioned that he is on a District Council, and that building the contact lists for stronger communication with District Councils could happen throughout the year. He also reminded the committee that District Councils are also often limited in their capacity and resources to 'do more with less'. Dr. Britt confirmed that District Councils are also yearning for deepening engagement with the CIB committee.

Dr. Britt encouraged the CIB and Mayor's office to have dialogue about roles and accountabilities, so that a dynamic relationship with the District Councils can be fostered. Council President Noecker mentioned her appreciation of

CITY OF SAINT PAUL LONG-RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET COMMITTEE

the work and the conversation to audit this process. She said that the City Council stands ready to support the improvement work of the CIB committee.

- b. Community Proposal Process Discussion – led by Chair Dees-Erickson. O'Brien reflected that it's a big task to renovate CIB processes. There is needed change, but a daunting task to reenvision a more shared process. Dr. Britt reminded the committee that perhaps it's not a full overhaul that's needed but may be more about testing out smaller recommendations for improvements. O'Brien asks about the scope of a revised Community Proposal process, "what are the levers we are allowed to pull?" Braun concurs wanting to understand what is within the committee's power to change. Marino noted that creating a sub-committee to begin to work on these recommendations would be helpful. Braun introduces a motion to create a subcommittee to work on CIB Community Proposal process, Yang seconded. Motion passes. Dees-Erickson asks for members who have interest in this work. Braun, Dees-Erickson, O'Brien and Ashenafi registered interest in this subcommittee work.
- c. New Committee Member Drive – led by Bottko Woods, who noted a need to recruit new committee members, especially from Senate District 65, and Ward 2. Braun and Ashenafi registered interest in helping to conduct new member interviews.
- d. Capital Maintenance Team and Process – led by Bottko Woods. Bottko Woods explained that the Capital Maintenance application was in development and would be released to departments. She summarized that \$3M is available every 2 years for deferred maintenance projects like HVAC repair or parking lot resurfacing. Typically, 2 members of the CIB are recruited to sit on the Capital Maintenance Planning Team. This commitment consists of weekly meetings during the workday throughout September and October. Bottko Woods asked members to consider whether they would like to be on the subcommittee and make commitments in August.

V. Announcements - Upcoming Meetings at Rondo Community Library