The Council

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 18, 2026, Meeting
2:00 P.M. VIA ZOOM

1) Call to Order, Welcome and Attendance

Chair Avery Gaddis called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. After confirming that a quorum was present, the meeting proceeded.

Members Present:

Avery Gaddis (Chair)
Fanita Borges
Edwin Shirley

Members Not Present:
Kyle Abercrombie
A quorum was confirmed

2) Approval of March 19, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Chair Gaddis called for a motion to approve the March 19, 2026 Finance Committee meeting minutes.

Motion: Edwin Shirley
Second: Fanita Borges
Discussion: None
In Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstentions: None
Motion passed unanimously

3) Update on Fiscal Year 2026 Financial Review

Chief Executive Officer Brandon L. McGee, Jr. presented an overview of the Council's financial position and introduced the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

Mr. McGee explained that the Council's strategic plan, adopted in January 2025, serves as the foundation for the FY2027 budget. He noted that the budget aligns with the Council's priorities of staff development, governance, community reinvestment, and support for industry and social equity entrepreneurs.

He reported that Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026 focused on organizational development, including establishing staffing, fiscal controls, procurement procedures, compliance systems, strategic partnerships, grant infrastructure, and community reinvestment frameworks. These efforts positioned the Council to begin deploying resources more broadly in FY2027.

Financial highlights included:

- Approximately **$62.6 million** available in the Social Equity & Innovation Account after approved obligations and encumbrances.
- Approximately **$19 million** in revenue received during the current fiscal year, primarily from cannabis excise tax collections, supplemented by loan repayments and interest income.
- Approximately **$37.4 million** obligated, primarily supporting the Reimagine and Revitalize (R2) Program and other strategic initiatives.

Mr. McGee emphasized that obligated funds are distributed over multiple years based on project milestones, reflecting responsible fiscal stewardship.

He also provided an update on the Revolving Loan Fund, reporting:

- Seven active loans.
- Nearly $3 million deployed.
- No delinquent loans.
- More than $119,000 generated in interest revenue.
- Growing interest from municipalities eligible under the current statute.

Mr. McGee summarized recommendations emerging from the Market Outlook Working Group, including initiatives focused on:

- Youth engagement and advisory opportunities.
- Responsible-use educational campaigns.
- Municipal engagement tools.
- Certification programs for ancillary trades.
- Public education and market legitimacy initiatives.

He noted that recommendations requiring funding exceeding $100,000 would be presented to the full Council for approval.

The proposed FY2027 budget is organized around five strategic priorities:

- Community reinvestment.
- Entrepreneur resources.
- Workforce development.
- Strategic partnerships.
- Program administration and compliance.

Key proposed investments include:

- Continued funding for the Reimagine and Revitalize (R2) Program.
- A new Micro Grant Program to support smaller municipalities, community organizations, pilot initiatives, and emerging opportunities.
- Entrepreneur assistance through grants, technical assistance, and capital access programs.
- Workforce development initiatives, including cannabis workforce training and transferable skilled trades.

Mr. McGee also discussed the Council's bond strategy, explaining that bond proceeds would continue to be used for entrepreneur-focused investments where permitted, preserving excise tax revenues for community reinvestment and broader systems-change initiatives.

Committee Discussion

Chair Gaddis thanked Mr. McGee for the presentation and expressed support for the proposed budget, particularly the Council's investment in staff development and training. He stated his intention to work closely with staff in advance of the September Council meeting to ensure a smooth budget adoption process.

Chair Gaddis announced the following schedule:

- The previously scheduled September 17 Finance Committee meeting will be moved to **August 20, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.**
- Following the August meeting, Council staff will conduct two office-hour sessions for Council members to ask questions regarding the budget before it is presented to the full Council in September.

Chair Gaddis also indicated that he planned to contact Council members individually to address any additional budget questions and minimize discussion during the September Council meeting.

Committee members discussed the Council's bond funding strategy. Chair Gaddis asked about the current status of bond allocations. Mr. McGee explained that:

- The Council currently has a $10 million allocation supporting the Revolving Loan Program.
- A request has been submitted to expand allowable uses of those funds to include grant-making.
- An additional $40 million has been authorized but not yet allocated, and the Council has requested another $20 million to support future strategic investments.

Councilman Edwin Shirley asked whether proposed grants would utilize funds originally allocated for loans.

Mr. McGee explained that staff is pursuing multiple funding strategies simultaneously to avoid interrupting current programs. He clarified that the Council is proposing both:

- Business grant opportunities for entrepreneurs; and
- Community micro grants supporting reinvestment initiatives.

He emphasized that each grant program will have distinct eligibility requirements and funding purposes.

No further questions were raised.

4) Other Business

No additional business was brought before the committee.

5) Good of the Order

Chair Gaddis reiterated the upcoming August 20, 2026 Finance Committee meeting and reviewed the planned office-hour sessions that will precede the September Council meeting.

Committee members expressed agreement with the proposed process.

6) Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at approximately 2:20 p.m.