



## Social Equity Council

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL | Finance Committee – Special Meeting (DRAFT)

February 28, 2023, Meeting 2 P.M.

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft TEAMS

### 1. Call to order

Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Andréa Comer at 2:02 p.m.

### 2. Attendance

Marc Pelka  
Paul Robertson  
Kevin Walton  
Andréa Comer

Council members absent:  
Edwin Shirley

Staff: Ginne-Rae Clay, Executive Director; Jennifer Edwards, Program Manager, SEC; Komla Matrevi, Staff Attorney, SEC; Kristina Diamond, Communications & Legislative Program Manager, SEC; Jennifer Stevens, Associate Accountant, SEC.

Chairwoman Comer referenced a conversation from January regarding the funds collected from the fees from the recreational cannabis program and kept in the Social Equity and Innovation Account. As of February 9, the Social Equity and Innovation Account has \$42 million in it. This account terminates at the end of the fiscal year, at which point the funds will be transferred to the Social Equity and Innovation Fund, which is a non-lapsing fund held in the Office of the Treasurer.

### 3. Approval of the January Special Meeting Minutes

Councilwoman Comer asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

Motion – by Marc Pelka  
Second – by Kevin Walton  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstention – None  
Motion passed.

### 4. January Fiscal Statement Review

Associate Accountant Jennifer Stevens presented the expenditures for January.

Councilman Walton asked why CohnReznick was paid in 2 payments. Ms. Stevens said as CohnReznick's work is done and applications and workforce development plans are recommended, approved, and voted upon, they send a bill. They are paid per hour for work done in the scope of work for each agreement.

Chairwoman Comer clarified that there are 3 staff members paid at different hourly rate levels. Ms. Stevens confirmed this. Rates are negotiated in each agreement at a discount. Rate targets are verified by Ms. Stevens.

Councilman Pelka asked if the reduced budgeted amount for Camelo Communication was moved into the SEC Marketing, Branding, Communications category. This was confirmed by Ms. Stevens.

Councilman Pelka asked if the drawdown of the Accelerator Program line was expected to increase now that they are contracting with Oaksterdam University and work is underway. Executive Director Ginne-Rae Clay said the second invoice from Oaksterdam University for \$111,158 was received yesterday. There was a lot of work prepping for the program in December 2022 and the full program was started in January. They will send an invoice each month. The balance will be spent by September.

Councilman Pelka asked if the focus for Community Reinvestment will be to spend down as much as possible in the remaining months. Director Clay said the Reinvestment Committee met today. They have established some next steps and are putting together a timeline and a plan to move as much of the \$6.1 million as they can by the end of the fiscal year. The Committee plans to look at existing programs that may need enhancement and conduct community conversations and outreach to determine the needs of the community.

Councilman Walton asked if the Reinvestment Committee has spoken to the chair of the Outreach Committee regarding pushing forward community conversations. Chairwoman Comer said that is the next item on the agenda.

#### 4. Allocation of Resources for Community Conversations and Outreach

Chairwoman Comer said the Council recently formed a Reinvestment Committee to determine the plan and approach for disseminating funds to disproportionately impacted areas. Committee Chair Ojala Naeem has provided a summary of the roles and responsibilities of the Reinvestment Committee and the Outreach Committee. The Reinvestment Committee will provide the criteria and parameters for investment, guidelines for evaluation of proposals, and make investment recommendations to the Council. The Outreach Committee as it pertains to reinvestment will select a third party to run community

conversations and provide Reinvestment Committee output of community conversations. The Finance Committee will discuss Outreach Committee Chair Subira Gordon's request on how to ask for funding to host community conversations. Chairwoman Comer said they have 3 months to expend resources.

Director Clay spoke said she would work with Chairwoman Gordon on the next steps as outlined by Chairwoman Naeem.

Chairwoman Comer asked if there needs to be a recommendation from the Finance Committee with regard to resource allocation for the Outreach Committee. Director Clay said the Finance Committee could make a recommendation but the funds are already in the operating budget so they can be spent as the Council sees fit. They need to determine what communities will be involved and how deep into the community to go, e.g., service agencies or residents, and this will determine the level of funding.

Councilman Walton asked if there needed to be an RFP process and voiced concern over time being available to do that.

Director Clay said the Reinvestment Committee determined the first step would be to enhance existing programs, e.g., grandparent and fatherhood programs. They would reach out to various state agencies that are already funding these types of programs and either providing more funding directly to those organizations or to the state agencies.

Councilman Walton asked for the opportunity to share in local decision-making because of understanding who does the real work and who can get the information to the people.

Councilwoman Comer said the 2 parallel tracts consist of supporting existing organizations and holding conversations in the community. Chair Gordon is requesting resources for hosting community conversations. Council member knowledge can be leveraged for suggestions on where these conversations can be held.

Councilman Robertson said there is a large community that has not been heard from in regard to social equity. Organizations could be asked to help determine where the need is. He noted the immediate need to get the funds out.

Councilman Pelka asked if there was remaining funding in the IMRP budget for convening community conversations.

Councilman Walton said there is lack of awareness and lack of trust from the community and community meetings are important for public relations.

### 5. Recommendations to the Full Council

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Councilwoman Comer asked if the Committee wanted to make a recommendation to the full Council to provide resources for the Outreach Committee to get the process moving. She asked for a motion.

Councilman Robertson agreed with making a recommendation to the full Council to include a geographic look to ensure even disbursement of messaging.

Councilman Walton made a motion for the Finance Committee to provide resources to the Outreach Committee upon presentation of a plan and budget.

Motion – by Kevin Walton

Second – by Andréa Comer

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstention – None

Motion passed.

### 6. Other Business

There was no other business.

### 7. Adjournment

Chairwoman Comer asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion – by Paul Robertson

Second – by Kevin Walton

The meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

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