

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL | FINANCE COMMITTEE - DRAFT
April 9, 2024 Meeting 2:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft TEAMS

1) Call to Order and Welcome

Andrea Comer called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. and welcomed committee members, council colleagues, SEC staff and members of the public.

2) Attendance

Daniel Karpowitz
Melvin Medina
Edwin Shirley
Shirley Skyers-Thomas

Staff: Ginne-Rae Clay, Executive Director; Karen Colebut, Paralegal Specialist; Kristina Diamond, Communications & Legislative Program Manager; Arlene Galindo-Jimenez, Outreach Program Manager; Vera Lembrick, Reinvestment Program Manager; Jennifer Stevens, Associate Accountant, Jennifer Edwards.

3) Approval of December 13, 2023 special meeting minutes

Andrea Comer asked for a motion to approve the December 13, 2023 special meeting minutes.

Motion – by Edwin Shirley
Second – by Shirley Skyers-Thomas
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed unanimously.

4) Approval of January 9, 2024 meeting minutes

Motion – by Edwin Shirley
Second – by Shirley Skyers-Thomas
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed unanimously.

5) Fiscal Year 2024 Financial Review

Jennifer Stevens reviewed March's expenditures, including \$62,501 for salaries of eight full-time staff and \$51,657 for fringe benefits. She also discussed payments related to the CohnReznick

agreement, with \$32,729 for applications verification and the termination of the Workforce Development Plan contract, resulting in no further expenses for the year.

New agreements were signed with Oaksterdam University and A Plus Reporting Service, with payments of \$1,526 and \$7,493, respectively. The latter encompassed expenses for marketing, branding, and sponsorships, such as \$3,095 for the Cannabis Convention, \$850 for the CT Cannabis Commerce sponsorship, \$247.43 for legislative session brochures, and \$3,300 for promotional items.

Furthermore, \$54,209 was allocated for Waterbury Bridge to Success for community conversation work, which remained under budget. Other expenses included \$329.81 for the monthly subscription to West Law for legal counsel.

During the meeting, Andrea Comer inquired about the specifics of the marketing and branding expenses, particularly the \$7,493 spent and the \$30,000 worth of materials purchased. Jennifer Stevens clarified that the \$7,493 represented the initial payment of the \$30,000 order, with the second invoice scheduled for payment in the subsequent month.

Without further questions, the committee moved on to the next agenda.

6) Recommendations to the full council

Andrea Comer introduced the agenda item concerning recommendations to enhance transparency in the council's financial activities. She emphasized the importance of addressing concerns related to unspent funds and providing clarity on expenditures. The goal was to propose actionable recommendations for consideration by the full council.

Director Ginne-Rae Clay provided a comprehensive overview of the current process for spending within the council. This process involves identifying the items needed for purchase, ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and policies, obtaining approvals based on set thresholds, and finalizing purchases through established channels.

Councilman Edwin Shirley raised questions about the communication and reporting mechanisms during the expenditure process, particularly regarding notifications within the council and other relevant areas.

Following the discussion, Andrea Comer presented specific motions based on the recommendations discussed:

Motion 1: Andrea Comer moved that the SEC Finance Committee receive, as an addendum to the monthly balance sheet, a detailed list of specific expenditures related to marketing, branding, sponsorships, community reinvestment, workforce development, and consulting and marketing services.

Motion – by Edwin Shirley
Second – by Melvin Medina
In Favor – All

Opposed – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed unanimously.

Motion 2: Andrea Comer moved that, in accordance with DAS policy, the committee be provided evidence of three written quotes or bids for purchases over \$5,000 and up to \$50,000. Additionally, purchases over \$50,000 and less than \$200,000 should include verification that a request for quote or bid was noticed on the state contracting portal. Furthermore, purchases over \$50,000 should be brought to the full council for approval.

Motion – by Edwin Shirley
Second – by Melvin Medina
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed unanimously.

The committee engaged in further discussion, focusing on the intricacies of the bidding process, compliance with DAS procedures, and the need for transparent financial reporting. Director Clay and Jennifer Stevens provided additional clarifications and insights into the council's purchasing procedures.

Councilman Shirley suggested separating the recommendations into discreet items for voting purposes, which was agreed upon by the committee. Andrea Comer then restated the recommendations as separate motions, which were seconded and approved individually by the committee members present.

The approved motions will be forwarded to the full council for final consideration and approval, with the aim of improving transparency, accountability, and adherence to established procedures in the council's financial activities.

7) For the Good of the Order (New Business, Updates, Information)

None

8) Adjournment

Andrea Comer asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion – by Edwin Shirley
Second – by Councilman Medina
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed unanimously.



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Date: April 9, 2024

RE: Minutes: April SEC Finance Committee Minutes (Draft)

Please be advised that the above-referenced typewritten minutes are a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations to the extent that the audio could be clearly heard/understood. Portions that could not be heard/understood have been notated with a (an “inaudible” or “?...”).

Sincerely,

Brenda LaFleur

Brenda LaFleur
Owner, A Plus Reporting Service, LLC

I certify that this document is a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations contained in the listed audio file.

Boden Truitt

Boden Truitt,
Transcriber