



Date: October 24, 2019

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Wanda S. Page, Deputy City Manager
From: Bertha T. Johnson, Director, Budget & Management Services
Robin Baker, Budget Engagement Coordinator
Subject: Participatory Budgeting (PB) Evaluation Interlocal Agreement

Executive Summary

Since the inception of Participatory Budgeting (PB) in the City of Durham, known as PB Durham, North Carolina Central University (NCCU) has partnered with PB Staff to assist with its implementation including having students serve as volunteer budget delegates. During the entire PB Cycle 1, PB Staff has continued to coordinate and collaborate with NCCU including discussing the potential for NCCU to have a role in the evaluation phase of PB. This option has previously been shared with City Council, the PB Steering Committee and the community. In order to finalize the agreement, the Budget and Management Services Department is seeking approval to execute an inter-local agreement with NCCU for evaluation of PB Durham Cycle 1. North Carolina State Statute (G.S. 160A-461) requires interlocal agreements to be approved by the City Council.

Recommendation

The Budget and Management Services Department recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute the attached Interlocal Agreement with North Carolina Central University for the third-party external evaluation of PB Durham Cycle 1 in the amount of \$20,000.00.

Background

City Council allocated \$2.4 million to implement participatory budgeting. Participatory Budgeting (PB) is an initiative that allows residents to directly decide how to spend a portion of the public budget. Since its launch on November 1, 2018, PB Durham has engaged over 2,000 Durham residents and students with the goal of increasing engagement in diverse populations while educating the public about local government processes; including but not limited to the budgetary process.

The four primary phases of PB Durham are:

1. Brainstorm Ideas - Through meetings and online tools, residents share and discuss ideas for projects.

2. Develop Proposals - Volunteers, usually called budget delegates, develop the ideas into feasible proposals, which are then vetted by experts.
3. Vote - Residents vote to divide the available budget between the proposals.
4. Project Implementation and evaluation - The government implements the winning projects, such as bus shelters, Wi-Fi in public parks, or sidewalk improvements. The government and residents track and monitor implementation.

The PB staff is currently designing the implementation and evaluation phase of the program. The evaluation phase requires a third party external evaluator to examine the effectiveness of the participatory budgeting initiative within the City of Durham. Budget and Management Services seeks to engage the services of North Carolina Central University to conduct the 2019 PB Durham Cycle 1 Evaluation.

Issues and Analysis

The purpose of the evaluation is to analyze the Participatory Budgeting Cycle 1 process and the impact on the community. The evaluation will include prospective and retrospective analyses of program administration, communication between PB participants, city staff, and the community and other factors that contribute to first cycle outcomes such as diversity of participants and winning projects and the quality of winning projects.

The evaluation will be conducted from the perspective of internal staff, the PB Steering Committee, and other program participants. The evaluation of Cycle 1 will include analysis of idea collection, proposal development, voting, and overall program administration including but not limited to program budget, staffing, and other resources. Recommendations from the evaluation will be used to redesign the participatory budgeting initiative for Cycle 2 with the goal of increasing equity, transparency, and inclusion.

Alternatives

City Council could decide not to approve the inter-local agreement.

Financial Impact

The cost of the evaluation is \$20,000 and will include an analysis of idea collection, proposal development, voting, and overall program implementation including but not limited to program budget, staffing, and resources. Program performance will be evaluated using a combination of surveying, focus groups, and individual interviews.

Equal Business Opportunity Summary

N/A

Attachments

Interlocal Agreement with Exhibits
Scope of Work