



Nashville Community Education Commission Meeting August, 2020; 4:00pm Zoom Access

In attendance:

Commissioners:

Commission Chair Dr. Katherine Y Brown
Commissioner Secretary Whitney Slovick
Commissioner Bernard Pickney
Commissioner Dr. Denise Pridemore

Staff:

Mary Beth Harding, Executive Director
LaKeitha Anderson, Community Engagement Coordinator
Joshua Hill, Administrative Services Officer

Call to order:

4:03pm by Dr. Katherine Y Brown.

Public Comments:

N/A

Un-Finished Business:

N/A

Announcements:

1. Registration for the Fall 2020 session starts on Monday Aug 10
 - Almost 120 classes will be offered with 70 that are or could be virtual learning
 - A small number of in-person classes are tentatively scheduled to start after Fall Break (Oct. 12), but only if safe and with restrictions

Discussion Items:

1. Mary Beth talked with the commission about options for fundraising
 - Small donations: NCE can accept donations <\$5,000 without going through Council, but this is not sustainable for the long term
 - Friends of/Foundation
 - i. Mary Beth asked the commissioners to form a committee to help with coordinating volunteers and creating a 501c3
 1. Commissioners agreed it would need to be a shared commitment
 2. Mary Beth is going to contact instructors and the community to gather names of potential volunteers first and then share with the Commission and organize based on interest.
 - Grant funding
 - i. Mary Beth asked the commission for assistance with researching government eligible grants

1. Grants could be for operating (in FY22 and beyond) or for programming that helps build community or fosters adult education
2. **Minutes Appendix:** The attached information was sent to Commissioners prior to this meeting that more fully explains the needs of the Commission to continue operating beyond FY22

Vacation and Sick Accrual Update:

No announcements.

Motion to adjourn made by Dr. Katherine Y Brown; The meeting was adjourned at 5:15pm.

Next meeting – Oct 21, 2020

Zoom Access; 4:00pm

The Financial Future of NCE

The Mayor's Office and Finance Department have made it clear that for the Community Education Commission to continue functioning we must self-fund through fees and other revenue sources. I do plan on applying for funding of at least our salaries and a few other necessary costs in FY22, but there is no guarantee we will receive that.

We have started by increasing fees (30 – 50%) and cutting costs, but our enrollment will suffer with COVID and that increase in fees. We simply cannot make enough revenue for course fees to cover our expenses. Instead, we need to find other sourcing funds like grants, sponsorships and large donations.

An issue with grants, private donations and corporate sponsorships is that as a government entity grants involve much more work and contributions over \$5,000 must be approved by Council which is time-consuming. It took over 6 months for us to be able to use a \$10,000 grant we received last year. Establishing a fundraising group that could help up raise funds, would be one potential solution to this issue.

Friends Of

“Friends of” groups are “individual nonprofit organizations that support a specific local department or project with time, expertise, and privately-raised funds.” These can also be considered foundations that function to support the programs of government entities. They are used frequently by parks and recreation departments and can range in size and function. To create a “friends of” group you need:

- To establish a 501c3
 - You need three founding members to establish a board in TN
 - I cannot be on the board as it is a conflict of interest, but I can help with logistical information as we get it established
- Can take up to 6 months to establish the 501c3 and receive tax exemption

Once established a Friends of group can either purchase things for us (like advertising and supplies) or transfer money raised (I think this needs to be approved by Council but seems somewhat simple).

Pros of a fundraising entity:

- can apply for grants much easier
- can fundraise for us (events, campaigns, etc)

- can seek corporate sponsorship above \$5,000
 - we can do this too, but it takes approval
- If we are eliminated from the city's budget, there is an entity that can keep programming going

Cons:

- reliant on active and involved volunteers
- takes time to establish
- takes time to build it (Parthenon Foundation has taken over 30 years to get where it is)

My suggestion is to start this type of 501c3 as soon as possible. In the meantime, we can apply for our own grants, seek individual donations under \$5,000, and try to find sponsors for things like catalogs that are < \$5,000.

We are currently seeking volunteers (both Commissioners and the public) to help:

- Form a 501c3
 - Jane-Coleman's contact was so helpful but cannot represent us pro-bono as we have our own Metro Legal team.
 - We will need three people willing to form the board for that
- Research grants we are eligible for
- Grant writing
- Seek donations <\$5,000
- Find catalog/advertising sponsor

Fundraising Committee

Do you want to create a Fundraising Committee to help organize these efforts?

Other Thoughts

We would also love to hear any other ideas and creative solutions for significant fundraising (at least \$300 - \$350,000 annually). Continuing to operate, trying to build revenue through course fees, having no advertising budget and down one full-time staff member has been tough. Any extra support you can give to help build revenue would be greatly appreciated.