



**Minutes  
Strategic Planning Committee  
Friday, April 15, 2022**

**Committee members present:** Chair Dave Donelson, Wayne Williams, Mike O'Malley and Stephannie Fortune

**Staff members present:** Tristan Gearhart, April Speake, Mike Francolino, Matt Dudden, Christian Nelson, Natalie Watts, David Padgett and Andie Buhl

**City of Colorado Springs staff members present:** David Beckett

**Citizens present:** Sam Masias

Call to Order

Committee Chair Dave Donelson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and read a statement regarding Colorado Open Meetings Law and the City Charter and confirmed that public comment would not be a part of the meeting.

Review Minutes

The minutes from the March 11, 2022 Strategic Planning Committee meeting were reviewed for posting and approved with a minor change.

Compliance Reports

- I-12 Environmental Stewardship

Mr. David Padgett, Environmental Services General Manager, provided a background history and an overview of the I-12 Compliance Report.

Community Focus Fund (CFF) Grants Program Funding Considerations

Ms. April Speake, Public Affairs Lead, said Springs Utilities has been investing in the community for many years; however, community investments were not formalized until 1997 with the chartering of the Community Focus Fund (CFF) Program by City Council resolution. The charter specified the ability to provide funding to local nonprofits in support of the overall CFF volunteer program. Original Focus Areas specified in the CFF program charter include:

- Seniors
- Youth
- Affordable housing
- Safety and health
- Education
- Environment
- Community

Ms. Speake said in 2019, the Utilities Board directed policy G-11 to allow 100% of CFF grant dollars be allocated to nonprofits in support of affordable housing programs. In addition, in January 2022, affordable housing program funding was approved, providing \$2 million in utility funding to the City, making the CFF funding duplicative.

Ms. Speake said community investment represents a positive return on investment for Colorado Springs Utilities. The organization is directly tied to this community and its success, and the organization's strength and vitality depend on the education, health and welfare of the community in which Springs Utilities operate. She said nonprofit investment:

- Enhances reputation as a trusted community partner.
- Demonstrates commitment to the community which directly impacts customer satisfaction as measured by the J.D. Power and Associates studies.
- Supports the economic sustainability of local nonprofits which are business customers and employers of many of the organization's residential customers.

To better support our overall community and enhance our reputation, Ms. Speake recommend that the scope of grant funding be widened to include the most important causes for residential and business customers, to include:

- Environment
- Senior citizens
- Veterans
- Homelessness/Affordable housing
- Food Insecurity/Hunger
- Safety and health

Ms. Speake said this recommendation aligns with the CFF charter and is supported by recent research. The Strategic Planning Committee agreed to change this item to informational instead of approval at the April Utilities Board meeting.

#### Economic Development Grant Funding Update

Mr. Mike Francolino, Chief Customer and Corporate Services Officer, and Mr. Matt Dudden, Interim Office of Economic Development and Stakeholder Relations Manager, provided background information about G-11: Community Support, a Utilities Board guideline for the Chief Executive Officer of Springs Utilities:

1. Allow the expenditure of no more than 0.1% of budgeted operating revenues on direct monetary support of community-oriented economic development and charitable organizations.
2. Allocate 100% of Community Focus Fund (CFF) grant dollars to nonprofit organizations in support of affordable housing, transitional housing and shelter facilities' utilities-centric projects and programs.
3. Provide up to \$500,000 annually, to match customer donations to the Project COPE (Citizens Option to Provide Energy) utilities bill assistance program.

Mr. Dudden said G-11 is one way Springs Utilities supports the community and the organization is trying to be more inclusive about allocating 100% of CFF's grant dollars to nonprofit organizations.

Mr. Dudden reviewed the Community Investment 2022 Budget and 2021 Expenditures, and 2022 Economic Development Program Funding Distributions. He explained the purpose of each partnership, as well as outlined the three proposed categories for economic development funding uses:

- Business Direct Capital Grants
  - Grants to nonprofit community organizations to help provide capital for business development.
- Small Business Efficiency and Conservation Capital
  - Grants to nonprofit community organizations to provide capital for business efficiency or conservation projects.
- Nonprofit Business Organization Program Support
  - Support to organizations that drive business development, job creation, business marketing, community marketing, business education, workforce services and other services that provide administrative support to help business prosperity in Colorado Springs.

Plan for future meeting:

The Strategic Planning Committee reviewed items to be discussed at the May meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.