



Legislation Text

File #: 19-1229, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: December 3, 2019

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Ben Martig, City Administrator
Beth Kallestad, Program Coordinator

Consider motion to approve grant application to the McKnight Foundation to support staff capacity for Climate Action Plan implementation.

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council is asked to consider a Motion to approve staff submitting a grant application to the McKnight Foundation for \$50,000.

Summary Report:

The City of Northfield has been invited to submit an application to the McKnight Foundation's Midwest Climate program to assist in building the City's capacity to carry out our Climate Action Plan. Staff have had several conversations with the Program Officer from McKnight. Based on these conversations, McKnight is not interested in funding projects such as solar panels or electric vehicles. Rather, they are interested in helping us build our staff capacity and achieve one of the items in the Climate Action Plan - *SPI.1 - Hire a full-time City staff position to focus on coordination and implementation of the plan.*

Staff will be seeking other grants that could fund project activities as we move forward with the Action Plan implementation. For example, a small grant application (\$3,000) was submitted in October to the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) for a solar assessment and we just received notice this week that we were awarded for this grant.

An initial inquiry form (see attached) was submitted on November 1st and the City was notified on November 18th that we are invited to submit a full-proposal which is due on December 4th. The McKnight Foundation has funded Sustainability Coordinator positions in other communities, such as Grand Marais and Rochester, in recent years (see hyperlink to website for more information). This request is for the timeframe of February 2020 - August 2021. We may be invited to apply for continuation of funds but that is not a guarantee.

At this time, we are not certain how the other duties (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and strategic plan support) as well as serving the Human Rights Commission being managed by the Program Coordinator would be accomplished if this position transitioned to a full time staff person to work on Climate Action Plan work. We plan to use the next year to better understand the time commitments and value of the climate action plan implementation to better inform the benefits and justification for a potential full time staff person to work on Climate Action Plan initiatives. Concurrently, we'd evaluate the staffing needs in support of the City Strategic Plan as well as the development of the Racial Equity Action needs. We are a little over seven months into a temporary position that currently is funded for twenty four months so we are still learning and evaluating as we

go. Again, this grant would not obligate the City to fund a full time position but we would be committing to exploring that as an option.

Grants Policy Applicability

- Council Authorization: This item is being brought to the City Council for consideration related to Section 6ii (see attachment highlighted clause). The grant is \$50,000 (over the \$25,000 limit and it also is not included in the 2021 budget) so this clause would require Council approval.
- Staff initiated this request not any City Councilor or Advisory Board. Although not required by the grants policy, staff included information on the grant to the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) at their November 20th. The EQC approved a motion recommending support for the Council to pursue the grant.

As a reminder, the Climate Action Plan Advisory Board (CAPAB) has been ended officially with the adoption of the Climate Action Plan. The EQC will be assuming future advisory capacity related to the Climate Action Plan implementation.

- The other provisions of the grants policy have been followed in accordance with the procedures included therein.

Alternative Options:

Decline to submit the full-proposal application.

Financial Impacts:

The request is for \$50,000 which if funded would be for the period of February 2020 - August 2021. The Temporary Program Coordinator position is currently fully funded through the end of March 2021. This would provide some additional funding at least through August of 2021 with this supplemented funding.

In the 2020 proposed budget, the City is planning to allocate \$20,000 for Climate Action Plan projects. The actual projects are being developed now that the Climate Action Plan has been approved but will include such activities as energy efficiency and solar assessments, fleet study, energy action plan outreach, etc.

There is also funding in the final proposed 2020 budget for professional services related to climate action in the stormwater drainage (\$4,000) and garbage (\$10,000) funds as well as approximately \$6,000 for outreach and education related to the Partners in Energy project. Waste Reduction project funds from the Shoger donation earlier this year will also be used for a few projects around recycling education. More detailed information will developed over the next few months.

Tentative Timelines:

The grant application is due on December 4, 2019. Notification of award would be in early 2020.