

City of Portland - Office of Neighborhood Involvement  
Bureau/Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Summary Notes  
November 30, 2009

**In Attendance:**

Christina Albo (Resolutions NW), Ann Balzell (Disability Commission), Richard Bixby (EPNO), Sylvia Bogert (SWNI), April Burris (N Tabor NA), Carmen Caballero Rubio (Latino Network), Lee Po Cha (IRCO), Betsy Coddington (Resolutions NW), Paige Coleman (NECN), Anne Dufay (SEUL, BAC Co-Chair), Donita S Fry (NAYA), Vicki Hersen (Elders in Action), Kayse Jama (CIO, BAC Co-Chair), Jane Netboy (Goosehollow), Jerry Powell (Goosehollow), Midge Purcell (Urban League), Tom Schaper (SWNI/Ashcreek NA), Doretta Schrock (Kenton/NPNS), Mark Sieber (W/NW), Martha Simpson (Disability Commission), Alison Stoll (CNN), Jen Tonneson (Rocky Point Marina, BAC Co-Chair), Bob Ueland (CNN/Hollywood), Peiru Wang (IRCO)

**ONI Staff:** Amalia Alarcón de Morris, Katherine Anderson (Labor/CP), Amy Archer, Kelly Ball (CP), Michael Boyer (Labor/CP), Celeste Carey (Labor/CP), Nickole Cheron (NRC), Brian Hoop (NRC), Michael Kersting (Finance), Paul Leistner (NRC), Judith Mowry (NRC), Teri Poppino (Labor/CP), Stephanie Reynolds (CP)

**Commissioner's office:** Dora Perry

**Lead Facilitators:** Eryn Deeming Kehe, Elizabeth Erickson, Lisa Reed Guarnero, (supported by Joe Hertzberg and small group facilitators)

**Welcome and Introductions**

Jen Tonneson gave a general welcome and introduced Joe Hertzberg for the following general background:

- We have 4 years of success to build on.
- We have a volunteer facilitation team.
- We have a diverse group.
- There is an added challenge of budget cuts but this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time so we have experience.
- In prior years there was a budget for facilitation, this year it's all volunteers. We have 3 lead facilitators; Lisa, Elizabeth, and Eryn

Each facilitator gave a brief introduction of their background including the following highlights:

- Eryn -"I believe strongly in the things that can happen when groups get together."
- Elizabeth -"I have a passion for protecting processes that allow a group of people with disparate interests to come together."

- Lisa - "I am not a highly skilled facilitator, but I bring deep relationships with deep grass roots organizations in the community and some back process knowledge for this session."

Elizabeth gave a response to some concerns and requests received at the prior BAC meeting regarding the agenda:

- Some recommended eliminating breaks. We are having breaks and recognize that people don't want their time wasted but they need to be energized
- We are committed to finishing the meeting as close to time as we can.
- We don't have specific times listed on the agenda so that things can grow organically.

## **Overview of City Budget Process**

Amy gave an overview of the process. Refer to the City process overview provided at an earlier meeting, included in the budget notebook and also available online at:

<http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?c=51168&a=267414>

- Office of Management and Finance (OMF) financial analyst is not able to make it and give presentation, but will attend future meetings.
- There are mentors to help understand the information. Contact info provided in each of the summary notes (included at end of these notes).
- We are in the process of developing the Requested Budget based on preliminary instructions from OMF.
  - Focus of the BAC is to develop our requested budget to turn in by February 1<sup>st</sup>. Specific instructions may be done prior to our next meeting.
    - Presumed to have a 5% budget cut to ongoing general fund
    - Either limited or no one-time dollars
      - We will be losing about \$500,000 one time dollars
      - Lose \$300,000 ongoing dollars (assuming 5% cut)
      - Result is approximately a 12% cut across the bureau
    - Although we can discuss any critical add packages this would be a significant challenge in a cut year.
  - When the budget is submitted it will be reviewed by OMF and they will make recommendations balanced with requests from other bureaus. OMF makes recommendations to the Mayor for his Proposed Budget, there are public hearings, and then the budget is adopted by June 2010.
- One member stated that there are no final numbers yet and the neighborhood associations only meet once a month. They don't have anything to take back to them. For now tell them we lose our one time money and take approximately 5% cut to ongoing so that is an approximate cut of 12% bureau wide.

## ONI BAC Budget Process

Joe gave an overview of the BAC budget process in prior years and started the discussion on what a good process would look like for this year.

- Refer to the ONI Draft Guidelines in the budget notebook.
- Reflecting past years to build on it.
- Accountability: There is a difference between accountability and compliance. We have to comply with budget instructions from OMF. The numbers change as we go and we have to live with them. The ground may seem to shift under us.
- We can be true to ourselves, set standards that we commit to follow and do it for ourselves.
  1. For the last 4 years budget by consensus has been achieved with this group.
  2. When we cut, those cuts impact those around the table
  3. We've used genuine consensus
    - We have not gone forward if anybody says "I can't support that" or "I'm not ready, I need more info, there's more to talk about"
    - One of the most important experiences was a group that did not see the reason their money needed to be cut, they revisited it continuously until consensus was reached
- Keep in mind our goal is to comply with the City requirements as well as what we want to advocate for in the long term.
- Advice came from last year about how to make better decisions as a group
  1. Make a commitment to this process
  2. Everyone has a right and obligation to speak. Bring it up in the group so the group can benefit.
  3. Everyone has an obligation to listen and look for solutions
  4. We will not move forward if there is a concern, principle at stake, issue to discuss further or more information needed.
  5. Nobody in this room fully understands every culture in this room. Anybody here can make a mistake and offend someone. We are all ignorant, just about different things
  6. Be patient, and listen. If someone does something offensive or questionable assume they are acting from good will and ask them about it. There are 3 sources of misunderstanding
    - Some cultures value group solidarity highly and are silent, but silence does not mean agreement. Find a way to be able to say what you need to.
    - There are different adversarial traditions in western culture by overstating positions and being louder and more aggressive, Another tradition says the best way to find a solution is to challenge every idea. These can look the same and are easy to confuse.
    - If you have a conscientious objection you are obligated to slow the group down or stop it if necessary. Difficult to

distinguish between this and seeming like you are just trying to get your way.

7. We are trying to make it comfortable for everyone to share and take risk.
8. Stop people when language gets complicated or people say something you don't understand.
9. Silence does not necessarily mean agreement.
10. Come early and talk to the mentors. Talk to everyone you can. Catch up. Get comfortable.

## **ONI Budget Criteria/Guidelines**

The group split into groups to talk about the draft ONI Guidelines to identify whether items still apply and what is missing. Following are some of the highlights discussed:

1. Transparency: The group makes the recommendation, and what is finally presented is different without any explanation of why the changes happened. They want to know what happened to cause the changes.
2. The need to safeguard the process and the work that's done here. There is commitment and we want the consensus to be protected.
3. Some folks don't know how to do it and want to support each other.
4. Some folks feel tough questions are being asked and they want clarification of the question and the answer, so that there is intensive information sharing (again transparency)
5. The meals work
6. Ranking and clarification: by program, by center, make this more transparent and clear. Do people realize what they are voting on? How to make sure that they do understand what they are voting on.
7. The process, decisions, determination weren't really validated and acknowledged like they need to be. These things were not recorded, the decisions had discrepancies and there was some need to follow up.
  - Look at the past to protect the future. Represent what everyone wants and values
  - Decisions made are more values based, not self interest based
8. We want something that says, here is what the group recommended, here is what got funded by the council, and here are the reasons why.
9. Have our values shifted? Expand the voices in the room and a broad definition of working partnership. Has the idea of inclusivity matured with this group?
10. Address the tension of "yes we work towards the right budget" and "advocate for the importance of the work of ONI"
  - Amalia: the struggle is that it's a compressed process every year. We have to respond to internal requests, and manage

- The Commissioners have to have a series of discussions. Some are public and some are not. They have the responsibility of looking at the bigger city picture and have to weigh our budget against everything else. Sometimes the reasoning is just not available around decisions made outside of the bureau.
- What are good ways to share any ideas we missed? If you still have something to say remember there are other opportunities to let us know:
  1. Index cards
  2. Conversation
  3. Telephone
  4. Email

The group agreed that the ONI Draft Guidelines were still pretty accurate. The facilitators will compile the feedback from groups and also integrate some suggested minor changes:

- Make sure there is language about confidence in the transparency
- The group discussed a concern raised about whether people are missing around the table, such as homeless community. If anybody knows of anyone who has a stake or voice to be heard encourage them to come early. If they come last minute our process could get derailed (if they show up last minute with an agenda).
  - Perhaps working through Sisters of the Road. Or Portland Homeless Commission.
  - One member stated that they are committed to considering issues that impact homeless and bring those to the table. Suggested we each make that commitment to ask “does this serve everyone in our neighborhoods”. That could be added to our list of successful outcomes.
  - I have seen an increasing number of collaborations with DCL or Coalitions working with homeless communities. It’s a slow process to build the organizational relationships but we can move on it.
  - Reflect community needs and represent all communities. Someone is always going to be left out, but we can be mindful of them and extend personal invitations to those you know (not just who you think should be there). Involve people you know.
- Clarify final bullet about discussing problems, that it is appropriate to have discussions in the community but that we also need to bring those issues to the table here.
- Recommend changing language around City goals to be more appropriate for a single bureau – respect, support, or understand.

- Change “Rely” to “Identify evidence and trends to be solid and supportable”. Evidence that we are creating programming that is supportable and here is the data to support the need for dollars.
  - Here’s what we’re doing
  - Here’s what we are achieving
  - Here is why you’re investing city resources in us instead of others.
  - Back up our arguments with evidence
- What does “Be Strategic” mean? It means you have a plan, have gone through a process, and provide information in the most effective way. We are thinking about the long-term not just the current budget. Our “Talking Points” when advocating for the budget are based on a strategic approach.

## **Resource Sharing**

The group discussed how to approach the resource sharing portion of the agenda.

- This was added to our agendas during last budget cycle recognizing that everyone has something to offer and something that we need.
- As we bring new people in there are those who don’t have a lot of experience. There are experienced people and there can be some relationship building as a result. As the hard questions are answered with a foundation where we have shared then we are in a better position to have the hard discussions. It’s supposed to be 5-10 minutes were questions and feedback is addressed. Potential resources and knowledge is shared, to provoke offline conversations.
- During the Vision into Action forums they had 2 color cards. On green cards they wrote our resources and what could be offered, on the yellow what was needed. Suggestion of posting those and then connect them with strings. People can find answers and support, as well as people they can provide stuff for.
- Suggested that before the meeting send a list out to everyone as an email. Does anyone have a particular need? The same thing with the resources? People can respond in advance.
- Suggested having it posted at the meeting is a good idea and would be pretty fast – do it on breaks.
- When we look at each organization that is doing similar work. If we know what everyone else is doing we can do better over all coverage by knowing what others are doing. This way when there are cuts in one place the need can be covered by someone who does not have that cut.

## **Program Prioritization**

Following last year’s model, a City requirement was to prioritize program and base budget decisions based on those priorities. The BAC confronted the dilemma of defining what a program is last year and resulted in defining the program areas as the 4 main ONI centers, plus administration. We did it to meet

a requirement but it does have some utility in the process. Last time some guiding concepts came from the discussion:

- Better to cut some programs entirely than take slices that weaken all
- Don't cut budgets to the point of a program not surviving
- Encourage creative thinking about providing services in other ways,
- Encouraging partnerships
- Programs serving communities that have been historically treated inequitably should not be cut at all (Diversity and Civic Leadership program)

The FY2009-10 budget was partly formed by the prioritization. We asked for one time money to continue programs that were important but the lowest priority in relation to the ONI mission (graffiti and facilitation services). We assume that if one-time money is available this year we would do the same for the lowest ranking priorities.

Do we want to revisit the prioritization exercise this year, since nothing has changed? Or do we want to take apart last years to rearrange and reorganize it? Last year ranking based on what is most core to ONI mission and highest community need:

- Neighborhood Resource Center was the clear #1 priority
- Crime Prevention was the clear #2 priority
- Information and Referral and Livability programs were close 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> priorities respectively.

There are a lot of new voices and confidence in last year's decisions. It is a time consuming process, but we want to get everyone's voice involved. Priorities have possibly changed. There was general agreement that at the next meeting the BAC should review what was decided last year and then reprioritize. Prioritization will be required whether there is one-time available or not since the priorities help guide where cuts are made. The BAC could revisit the prioritization later in the process before the budget is submitted.

**Future Meeting Topics:**

- Finalize Guidelines
- Program Prioritization

**Next Meeting: Monday, December 14th, 5:30pm**

**Reminder regarding BAC leadership and contacts:**

BAC Co-chairs:

- Anne Dufay, Southeast Uplift
- Kayse Jama, Center for Intercultural Organizing
- Jen Tonneson, Rocky Point Marina

The following participate on the BAC Steering committee:

- Christina Albo, Resolutions NW
- Michael Boyer, ONI/Labor
- Polo Catalani, Office of Human Relations
- Paige Coleman, Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods
- Anne Dufay, Southeast Uplift
- Kayse Jama, Center for Intercultural Organizing
- Judith Mowry, ONI
- Doretta Schrock, North Portland Neighborhood Services
- Jen Tonneson, Rocky Point Marina
- Amalia Alarcón de Morris, ONI
- Amy Archer, ONI

Participants with experience budgeting at the City and ONI volunteered as potential “mentors” to be available to newer folks with questions throughout the process. If you have questions, please contact one of the following volunteers:

- Sylvia Bogert, Southwest Neighborhoods Inc, 503-823-4592, [Sylvia@swni.org](mailto:Sylvia@swni.org)
- Mike Boyer, ONI Crime Prevention, 503-823-5852, [Michael.boyer@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:Michael.boyer@ci.portland.or.us)
- Nickole Cheron, ONI Disability Program, 503-823-2036, [nickole.cheron@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:nickole.cheron@ci.portland.or.us)
- Anne Dufay, Southeast Uplift, 503-232-0010, [anne@southeastuplift.org](mailto:anne@southeastuplift.org)
- Vicki Hersen, Elders in Action, 503-235-5474, [Vicki@eldersinaction.org](mailto:Vicki@eldersinaction.org)
- Amy Archer, ONI Administration, 503-823-2294, [amy.archer@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:amy.archer@ci.portland.or.us)