



# Multnomah County Charter Review Public Engagement Subcommittee

February 22, 2022, 5:15 – 6:15 pm

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING 4

Purpose: To discuss community engagement priorities, strategy, and tools

### Attendees

#### Committee Members Present

- Donovan Scribes (he/him)
- J'reyesha (Jay) Brannon (she/her)
- Ana Gonzalez Muñoz (she/ella)
- Maja Harris (she/her)

- Theresa Mai (she/her)
- Jude Perez (they/them)

#### Staff:

- Kali Odell (she/her), Charter Review Committee Program Coordinator

In addition, members of the public were welcome to observe the meeting as non-participatory attendees. There were no observers at this meeting.

### Welcome

Kali Odell opened the meeting with a brief overview of Zoom logistics.

Maja asked subcommittee members to share if they had heard any feedback about or interest in Charter review. She said she had tried engaging some people, but that she had not gotten any feedback.

Jay said a couple of people had reached out to her work email since that was publicly available, but not something she engaged with since there was a public comment process for people to go through. She said she had picked up a call on her work phone that was from someone who had previously commented at an MCCRC meeting and that person talked about public utility board commissions; Jay was not sure that was in the MCCRC's purview.

Ana said she had not been contacted. She said she had a group of 20 Latino folks who met once a month that she would like to get more engaged with Charter review, but she was working to better understand the Charter herself, first, so she could provide more information to them about it. She added that another person who worked at Latino Network was serving on the Portland Charter Commission and she intended to contact them to see if there was overlap in their scope of work.

Theresa said no one had reached out to her.

Jude said that in their circles, people either did not know what Charter review was or they confused the county's process with the City of Portland's Charter Commission. Jude said their conversations had not yielded anyone engaging with the MCCRC's public comment process.

Donovan said he had connected with someone who knew who had expressed interest in Charter-related topics, like how campaigns could be affected by the Charter and how MCCRC members were compensated for their work. He said when he announced his appointment to the committee on Twitter, a few people he did not know commented with suggestions, but he would need to go back and look at them to remember what they said. He said he had also talked at his workplace about the possibility of addressing issues with evictions and the Sheriff's Office in the Charter.

Maja noted that since subcommittee members were all trying to explain Charter review to people, maybe that was something that the subcommittee could work on – developing an elevator pitch or graphic to explain the process.

## **County Communications Update**

Kali shared that she had been in touch with County Communications and they were willing to post content about Charter review. She hoped they would be able to take up some of this work with guidance from the subcommittee about what information they wanted to share and when it was helpful to share that. She added that they had discussed creating some video content that included educational content and recordings of MCCRC members talking about why their work was important. She said subcommittee members could send that content out over their own channels, as well as Communications posting it through county channels.

Kali asked subcommittee members to weigh in on these ideas. She noted that as subcommittees solidified their research focuses it might be easier to get community members to engage with these more specific ideas rather than the abstract concept of Charter review. She asked subcommittee members to share what kind of support they would ask for from Communications. She suggested focusing on education first, but then perhaps planning a transition to focusing more on subcommittee work. She also said that she wanted to solidify which posts the subcommittee was ready to move ahead with distributing in the next couple of weeks.

Donovan suggested creating social media accounts specifically for the Charter Review Committee. He also suggested taking the information on the county's website and creating a separate website at [countyconstitution.com](http://countyconstitution.com) or something similar.

Maja shared the toolkit that Communities of Color created for the Portland Charter Commission. She said this toolkit had been used for a very effective campaign and they could take inspiration from it. She said Portland had some funding available to pay for community organizations to use the toolkit to spark conversations about that charter review process in their networks. She said a toolkit was at the top of her wish list, although she acknowledged that the limitations of government websites might mean the toolkit could not be directly embedded.

Ana said they could not deny the effectiveness of social media in reaching a large number of people. She talked about the effective toolkit used in organizing around the 2020 census.

Kali said that she could check with County Communications and get their thoughts about separate social media accounts devoted to Charter review, but she told the subcommittee that she did not have capacity to run

an account that had to build up followers. She suggested that maybe they could develop their own hashtag to help manage content. She said Communications might be able to help with this, but that they had a very heavy workload due to other things happening in the county, so she did not know that they would be able to support something this extensive. The Office of Community Involvement's (OCI) social media channels would likely remain their primary avenue for distributing content. She added that nobody had the capacity to generate the amount of content necessary to build and maintain an independent following.

## **Community Engagement Funding**

Kali said that in order to make a request for community engagement funding, she needed to be able to share specifics about what the funding would pay for. She added that the issues was not necessarily whether they could get funding, either, but how long it could take to secure it. She noted that the MCCRC had about six months left in its process and suggested that the subcommittee discuss a flexible strategy that could address the committee's more immediate needs because it could be a while before they had access to any funds.

Kali noted that the subcommittee had expressed interest in contracting a community partner to help with community engagement, similar to what the Portland Charter Commission had done with the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC). She said that if the subcommittee's goal was to get a large amount of money, like \$10,000 or more, they would probably have to request that from the Board of Commissioners, which would mean going through a more formal funding process. She said below \$10,000, the process could probably be less formal and allow for the reallocation of funds; although for transparency they would still need to have a proposal including how the funds would be spent.

Kali said that she was requesting information from the City of Portland about funding for their community engagement process, as well as looking for similar projects at the county. She said in publicly available information she had seen that Portland's RFP had estimated 9 months of work could cost \$125,000. She noted that while the MCCRC did not have to ask its partner to do all of the same things, this was still a significantly larger amount of money.

Kali shared that if the county sought a single contract with a community partner that cost more than \$10,000, county policy required opening that as a competitive bid, which would add even more time to the process. She said that during agenda planning with Maja and Jay, Maja had asked if they could start with the limited pool of funds more readily available and then request additional funds from the Board. She said they could do that, but that would likely mean needing to split the funds between multiple groups to do community engagement work. She said that to help her office work with the subcommittee on this proposal for funds, the subcommittee should determine which tools it wanted to prioritize. While they would pursue funding to cover everything the subcommittee asked for, she said that having a priority list would help her office determine what to fund first if they received more limited funding or if some funding was distributed later in the process.

Ana asked about how MCCRC members were selected; was selection just about engaging community members or if members were chosen based on where they worked was there an expectation that they would use those resources.

Kali said she thought the hope was that choosing people to serve on the MCCRC who were already involved in their communities would lead them to seek input from their networks and communities to help them feel more confident in representing perspectives from those communities.

Ana clarified that her question was about whether committee members were expected to use resources from where they lived or work. She noted that a community partner had not been engaged in past charter review processes, so she was wondering if that meant committee members tapped into their own resources.

Kali said she had not been part of those conversations, but she noted that this Charter Review Committee was different from past committees and that expectations were also being shaped by what the Portland Charter Commission was doing. She said that when the county had projected what resources to allocate for the MCCRC, that projection was based on what had been done in the past. She added that while she had not been following the Portland Charter Commission's community engagement process to the letter, that commission's two year project timeline had given the City more flexibility to respond to commissioners' expectations for engagement. She said this was harder on the county's much shorter timeline. She also said that she thought the expectation for MCCRC members was that they would tap into their connections to talk about their work and invite their communities to engage with the process, but not that they would use their organizations to provide free labor.

Jay said it seemed like the county was expecting them to do community engagement and said she thought that if this was the case for future charter review committees there needed to be more time allotted for it. She said that having meetings once a month with a \$30 stipend was hard and that community engagement took time to build relationships. She said she was frustrated by the design for this process, which seemed to only allow them to edit words rather than a system. She thought it should not be surprising that people chosen for their involvement with community members would want to engage community in the process, and it was frustrating that they did not have the resources to do so. She asked if they could give stipends out for community groups to engage members in focus groups, since that would not be an RFP.

Kali said that yes, they could disburse money to different groups to host community events, and depending on the amount, that could be done without an RFP. She said that partnering with one organization to centrally organize these efforts would likely require an RFP.

Jay asked if they could put out \$1000 each for five organizations who respond saying that they would be interested in doing a survey and hosting an event. She asked if that was too much?

Kali said \$10,000 was probably the amount of money they had the quickest access to. She said that made smaller amounts more manageable, and why it was important to prioritize what they wanted to do. Was it most important to distribute a survey? Hosting community events? She asked about things they could do without funding, too, saying she could do some outreach to groups and see if they wanted to have committee members speak at their meetings, although she recognized committee members did not have a lot of spare time.

Maja said she agreed with Jay and that they were facing two standard obstacles: government bureaucracy and a short charter review timeline. She said it was hard to make systemic change in a short amount of time. She would like them to push back against that a little. She said her preference would be seeking the initial pot of funds they could have more timely access to and focusing on immediate community outreach and education, primarily for historically marginalized groups, and then seek additional funding they would ask for additional funding from the Board of Commissioners to be used when the MCCRC had more formulated proposals, with outreach to the whole community, but again prioritizing historically marginalized communities. She said if they did not ask for it, they probably would not get it.

Donovan said this was something to bring to the wider MCCRC. He said in their final report to the Board, they should be highlighting that the entire process was underfunded, from the committee members to outreach. He said he thought it was important to develop pillars for community engagement, but that was hard to do without knowing what resources they had. He said he was personally not interested in speaking to other groups because there was a lack of funding. He said that the NAACP, and organization he and Jay were part of, had sent a letter to Portland telling them their process was also underfunded. Donovan also whether he was understanding that they could give \$9,999 grants to several organizations.

Kali clarified that if they received the funding for it, they could give out grants under \$10,000 to multiple organizations without triggering the need for an RFP. She floated this was not her area of expertise, so while this was her understanding, she also let them know that it was possible she could come back with different information later in the process. She also said that she did not have experience petitioning the Board for funds, so she had no insight into how long it would take or what the Board's response would be. She said there was generally support for this process, so it was worth trying if subcommittee members were willing to develop a strategy.

Kali encouraged the subcommittee to include information about this in their final report. She noted that a lot of decisions about resourcing for this committee were made based on the last Charter Review Committee, so putting this in their report could be helpful guidance for doing things differently for the next Charter Review Committee.

Jay was in favor of making a couple of \$9,999 requests. She said it sounded like they would ask a community organization to come up with community engagement strategies; for example, surveys or a forum session. She said she did not have capacity to go and talk with organizations herself.

Kali clarified that they might get additional funding, but that they could only start out with one pot of \$9,999. She said if additional funds were granted, they could seek other organizations to give a similar amount.

Donovan said he had two questions. One: was the subcommittee developing a proposal for one organization to operate with \$9,999 in the hopes this would be a model for other organizations? Two: since subcommittee members were involved in community organizations, what would selection look like so that it did not seem like there was any quid pro quo happening?

Kali said her office would work on identifying any organizations, but that she was not knowledgeable about this process. She added that because of her own limited capacity, her supervisor might step in to work with the subcommittee on this process. Kali said it was up to the subcommittee to indicate whether it preferred providing a larger contract to one organizations initially, or several smaller contracts to a number of organizations.

Kali told the subcommittee that her office had included a request for more funding in its budget proposal that could also contribute to this, but that the budget had not been approved yet and that funding would not be available until the new fiscal year started in July. That would be of limited use given how close the MCCRC would be to the end of its process.

Maja said she was not sure how many batches of \$9,999 they could get without it seeming like they were dancing around the rules. She suggested that they could request the initial batch of funding and partner with a broad community organization like CCC, and then use additional funding to give out micro grants to

organizations, similar to what the Portland Charter Commission was doing. She asked if that was possible to do.

Kali said she thought so, but she was learning about these processes along with the subcommittee, so she would take these ideas and consult with others at the county to figure out what could be done based on the subcommittee's goals.

Maja asked subcommittee members to go around and share whether they preferred larger grants for a couple of organizations or a larger grant for one organization plus several smaller grants for other organizations.

Kali initiated a fist of five to gauge subcommittee members' support for one larger grant plus several smaller grants. Five indicated strong support and one indicated no support.

Jay, Ana, Maja, and Theresa were at five; Jay was at four; Donovan was at three.

Kali asked Donovan if his preference was two have larger grants for one or two organizations.

Donovan said he did not think either option was great and did not want to go against the will of the group.

Kali said she would check in with other people at the county based on what the subcommittee had discussed today and identify how to best move forward. She asked the subcommittee if they were comfortable with her consulting their co-chairs if there were more minor questions that came up based on the evening's conversations when working to generate a proposal.

Subcommittee members indicated they were okay with that.

## **Social Media Graphics & Next Steps**

Kali asked the subcommittee if they were comfortable with her posting the social media graphic Jude had drafted sometime in the next couple of weeks.

The subcommittee indicated support.

The subcommittee discussed adding the county logo on each graphic slide.

Theresa asked if they would be speaking about the agenda items they had not covered at their next meeting.

Kali said yes. She said she hoped that County Communications' involvement would mean less work for the subcommittee in terms of creating their own graphics.

Kali asked the subcommittee for input on when they wanted to meet next. Subcommittee members wanted to meet again as soon as possible.

Kali said she could work on an email about subcommittees' work to send out to community organizations and could include Jude's graphic with that.

Jude asked if it was possible for the co-chairs to work out a schedule for meetings and projects moving forward. They wanted something to help them wrap their head around what they were trying to accomplish in the next few months.

Maja proposed surveying subcommittee members to find a more regular meeting time. She asked if they could get a draft from Communications outlining what they could had in mind for the process so that the subcommittee could respond.

Kali also clarified that the subcommittee could not stay convened after the Charter Review Committee's work ended, although former members could do and say whatever they wanted after the process was over. She added that the county could provide education afterward, but could not take a position on the committee's recommendations.

Maja said that she intended for anything they did as a subcommittee to last beyond the conclusion of the MCCRC.



## Appendix A: Meeting Chat

00:22:55 Donovan Scribes: #FAMOUS

00:23:05 Theresa Mai (she/her): YES

00:35:46 Donovan Scribes: I'll be right back

00:35:49 Maja Harris (she/her):  
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IOXuwtuHWj4nXeWEjYnYsMVUPmscnlle>

00:37:41 Donovan Scribes: back

00:37:45 Theresa Mai (she/her): Oh wait, do we need someone to take draft meeting notes?

00:38:02 Kali Odell (she/her): Don't worry about that Theresa, I'll take care of documentation

00:38:15 Theresa Mai (she/her): Thank you.

00:49:31 Jude Perez: Moving around but I can hear

00:57:53 Theresa Mai (she/her): I need to turn the light on. It gets really bright. Brb.

01:13:56 Jude Perez: Should we do a fist to 5

01:17:23 Maja Harris (she/her): Agreed. Both less than ideal.

01:18:45 Maja Harris (she/her): Thanks, Jude!!!

01:20:34 Jude Perez: When's our next meeting?

01:21:43 Jude Perez: That's what I was thinking.

01:22:26 Maja Harris (she/her): Can we get a basic email out to community organizations about our subcommittees and their topics? Even if it's not with good graphics etc. Just to let them know the charter review process has begun and we welcome their input.

01:26:17 Maja Harris (she/her): Also, community engagement can keep going after our recommendations have been made and can help get the word out to the public about what will be on the ballot. So the community engagement process can continue after we have concluded our work..

01:31:32 Maja Harris (she/her): Thanks everyone for staying longer!