

**CITY OF BOSTON**  
**Office of Participatory Budgeting External Oversight Board**  
One City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02201

**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, January 11, 2024

**EOB members present:** Carolline Pontoppidan, Jim Kennedy, Esther Weathers, Betsy Neptune, Carla Stovell, Khalid Mustafa, Lisa Hy, Marilyn Forman, Jarret Wright.

**Staff present:** Ashley Groffenberger, Chief Financial Officer, Renato Castelo, Director, Office of Participatory Budgeting and Blanca Teixeira, Finance Manager & Grants Manager/Contracts Manager.

Director Castelo opened the meeting, greeting the members of the Office's External Oversight Board and introducing Blanca Teixeira as a new staff member for the Office of Participatory Budgeting.

Director Castelo called a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the previous session, and asked if there were any corrections. All the Board members approved to adopt the minutes for the last two sessions.

Director Castelo announced that while the Rulebook is being designed, he will facilitate Board meetings and oversee motions to make decisions. Once the Rulebook is established, Board Co-Chairs will take on their full roles during meetings. Board member Jim Kennedy reminded the group to continue to look at these weekly meetings as "working sessions" to set the policies and procedures for participatory budgeting.

Director Castelo proceeded to thank Board members for their responses to the survey, as it will help decide on key aspects of the City's first participatory budgeting process.

Director Castelo read off the results of the survey to Board members. Below are the answers that were updated during the meeting based on the group's discussion.

**Q1: What discussion norms will the External Oversight Board (EOP) observe?**

- Board members agreed to adopt the suggested norm "Keep current with meeting schedule (Timely RVSP, etc.)"

**Q2: What are the MOST important principles the participatory budgeting process should aim to implement.**

- Board member Betsy Neptune suggested adding "Creativity - test new ways to maximize community involvement." to the first principle, "Civic Education & Empowerment." Board members voted to adopt this suggestion.

**Q4: What should be considered as a “Reasonable Expense” for members of the board?**

- Board member Jarrett Wright shared that he would be in support of Board members being reimbursed for transportation (parking and transit tickets.) All Board members voted to adopt these expenses to be reimbursed.
- Director Castelo pointed out that Board members can make changes to the Rulebook later in the process, as needed.

**Q5: Do you have any feedback or thoughts on the Project Eligibility Criteria?**

- Board member Jim Kennedy suggested that on bullet point #4, we simply insert “any appropriate City department or agency that receives direct appropriations.” Board members voted to adopt language.
- Board member Esther Weathers suggested adding an introductory sentence on the criteria stating that “projects are meant to ensure City of Boston residents' voices are prioritized.” Board members voted to adopt language.
- Board members voted (backing Director Castelo) to utilize the language of the ordinance (build collective capacity on issues of social and racial justice) on the first bullet point, instead of listing all demographic groups.

**Q6: In what ways should submitted project ideas be assessed/prioritized to ensure that funds are directed to areas of greatest needs?**

- After some discussion, Director Castelo proposed coming back to the Board with a more robust proposal to further assess our options.

**Q7: Should there be a minimum age for submitting ideas?**

- Board member Khalid Mustafa pointed out that we would need to collect age if we choose to set a minimum age.
- After some discussion, Board members agreed that submitting ideas should not have an age limit and voted to approve that motion.

**Q8: What type of information should be required from residents to submit ideas?**

- Board member Jarrett Wright pointed out that we need protect individual's data
- There was a suggestion to add email as an optional field, giving residents the ability to stay informed on the process as it continues.
- Board member Lisa Hy suggested adding preferred language for future communication.
- Board member Khalid Mustafa pointed out that our criteria for gathering information is for adults, and that we should consider younger people when deciding what type of information we're requesting.

For the next session, Director Castelo proposed to discuss question #10 from the survey.

Director Castelo adjourned the meeting at 7:30pm.

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