



**Budget, Governance, and Intergovernmental Relations Council  
Committee Meeting Summary**

**Monday, June 2, 2025  
CH-14 at 2:00 pm**

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**COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS**

**Agenda Overview**

Review Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Financial Partners

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**COMMITTEE INFORMATION**

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**Committee Members:** Dimple Ajmera (chair), Lawana Mayfield, Tiawana Brown and James Mitchell were present; Edwin Peacock was absent.

**Staff Resources:** Shawn Heath, City Manager's Office  
Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget  
Cherie Smith, Strategy and Budget

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**DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS**

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Vice Chair James Mitchell called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Ms. Marie Harris, Interim Strategy and Budget Director, reminded attendees that full council made a referral during the May 19<sup>th</sup> Budget Adjustments meeting to have the Budget, Government, and Intergovernmental Relations (BGIR) committee review the proposed financial partners for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY 2026), and provide any recommended changes during the June 2<sup>nd</sup> Straw Votes meeting. The meeting was then turned over to Ms. Cherie Smith from Strategy and Budget, also the lead for the city's financial partners process, to provide an overview.

Ms. Smith provided an overview of the financial partners process which included the financial partner program timeline, the policy adopted in the fall, FY 2026 proposed funding, and additional put forward by Council at the May 19<sup>th</sup> Budget Adjustments meeting. The application process for FY 2026 began in October 2024, with invitations extended to existing and potential new partners. Applications closed on December 6<sup>th</sup> to allow sufficient time for review. Staff hosted an online information session in November, and invited interested organizations to learn more about the program and ask any questions they may have. A cross-departmental team of 19 staff members scored applications starting in January. The performance period for financial partners is set to begin on July 1<sup>st</sup> and conclude on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year.

Ms. Smith further explained that the policy framework, which codified eligibility requirements, contract terms, and payment processing, allowed for staff to develop an approach for recommending organizations for consideration. The policy stipulates that requests should not exceed 30 percent of an organization's operating or program budget and requires 501(c) status. The scoring process prioritized complete applications with detailed budgets, performance measures, and equity measures. Scorers also

assessed whether proposed activities aligned with the council's strategic priorities and if the performance and equity measures were measurable, attainable, and impactful. Budgets were reviewed for realism in accomplishing stated performance measures.

For FY 2026 funding recommendations, organizations funded in FY 2025 and recommended for FY 2026 had their funding held flat. New financial partners were capped at \$100,000, receiving either that amount or their requested amount if it was less. Historically funded partners whose work aligned with critical city or departmental missions were considered for longer-term funding sources, such as Tree Charlotte, which works closely with the General Services Department.

Vice Chair Mitchell emphasized the importance of aligning financial partners with priority areas like housing, workforce development, small business, and public safety. Ms. Smith clarified that organizations self-identified their primary strategic priority area during the application process. She also reiterated that an organization's score reflected the completeness and detail of their application, not the impact of their work in the community.

Discussion continued regarding the 30 percent budget cap. Ms. Smith clarified that the 30 percent limit applied to either the organization's overall operating budget or a specific program budget, whichever was relevant to the funding request. Ms. Smith presented different funding scenarios, including the manager's FY 2026 proposed budget, which included general fund and one-time funding sources. She noted that all financial partner funding is, in essence, "one-time" due to the annual application process.

A proposal from Councilmember Mayfield was discussed, which included adding additional financial partners using one-time funding. Her proposal was based on excluding applicants that requested more than 30 percent of their budget and consideration of organizations that were at or above the rating average for their selected strategic priority category. Councilmember Mayfield's proposal maintained the partners proposed within the City Manager's proposed budget, and added additional partners; however, Safe Alliance was removed due to their funding request exceeding the 30 percent operating budget threshold. The request maintained the methodology of capping new organizations at \$100,000 and holding existing partners' funding flat. The financial partners included in the "People's Budget" proposal were also shared, which included organizations that applied and some that did not, requiring over \$2 million in additional funding.

Concerns were raised about funding organizations that did not formally apply for the financial partner program, particularly in light of the established process and fairness to those who did apply. The conversation also touched upon a request from the Do Greater Charlotte Foundation for \$750,000, which Councilmember Mayfield clarified was a long-standing business partnership conversation, not a financial partner matter, and should not be considered within this process. Shawn Heath, Assistant City Manager, provided additional context in that there was an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding update provided to council in late October 2024 and the Do Greater Charlotte Foundation was included in an illustrative list of potential funding opportunities.

Vice Chair Mitchell moved to adopt the recommendation on slide eight, which would fund all of the organizations within the originally proposed FY 2026 budget along with the added organizations proposed by Council at the May 19<sup>th</sup> Budget Adjustments meeting and require an additional \$1.237 million in one-time funding. and the motion was seconded and passed with a majority vote (Dimple Ajmera, Tiawana Brown and James Mitchell voted yes and Lawana Mayfield voted no) The committee acknowledged the challenges of funding community organizations and the need to continue refining the application process to ensure fairness and transparency.

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.