

CITY OF GROVE CITY, OHIO

COUNCIL MINUTES

September 09, 2024

Special Finance Committee Meeting

The special Finance Committee meeting of Council was called to order by Mr. Sigrist at 5:00 p.m. at Brookpark Middle School on Southwest Blvd.

Roll was called and the following members were present:

Jodi Burroughs, Melissa Anderson, Mark Sigrist, Christine Houk, Randy Holt, Rodney Dew

1. Mr. Sigrist recognized Mayor Stage for opening remarks.

Mayor Stage thanked Council for having the meeting and said it is a healthy exercise. He explained that the City negotiated the use of Brookpark with the Beulah Park school site. The City has a 10-year lease that started in 2023 and it has two (2) five year extensions. There is also an "out" clause. He said this is a 16-acre property close to downtown and it has extra parking for the Big Splash. The building was reviewed by Mr. Dingleline. He said SWCS has the right to use 20% of the building space. He shared ideas for the use of the building, with relocating the Building Division as the most current pursuit, in order to make room at City Hall. He said the school has \$300,000.00 set aside that is to be used for Brookpark and the City has the ability to use those funds towards improvements to the building. *Mr. Holt* asked if we owned the building. Mayor Stage said no. It was explained that the School District cannot sell it without first offering it to a charter school. However they can lease it for 100 years. It was also explained that if the City makes improvements and the school District wants the building back, they will repay the city for those improvements at a prorated amount.

*Editor's Note: Mr. Berry arrived at 5:09

Mr. Sigrist asked about girls' softball fields being installed at this location. Mayor Stage said they are looking into it.

Mayor Stage said they have had an excellent relationship at the Kingston building and doesn't see any difference with Brookpark. *Ms. Houk* asked if there has been a discussion today with the new leadership. Mayor Stage said they have had some talks.

Mr. Berry said it looked like there may be a lot of asbestos in the building and it may be better to keep the gym and level the rest.

Mr. Holt asked if the building met current Code. Mr. Boso, Chief Bldg. Official, said if a school moved in, yes. If there is a change of use, other things kick in.

Mayor Stage said there is no intention to repurpose the whole building. The auditorium, gym and cafeteria could be used.

2. Chair Sigrist declared the meeting in recess until 6:04 p.m., at which time the meeting would relocate to the Lower Level of City Hall and commence with the remainder of the agenda.
3. Chair Sigrist called the meeting back to order, with all Council Members present, at 6:00 p.m.

He explained that the second half of this meeting was to start conversations with the stakeholders/city partners utilizing the Bed Tax. He began with the Grove City Area Chamber of

Commerce:

Ms. Shawn Conrad, Director, introduced Mr. Nick Connaughton, Finance Chair, who reviewed the 2024 allotment (slide attached). Ms. Conrad stated that they are the second largest Chamber of Commerce in Central Ohio. Chambers across the nation are struggling to be vibrant and relevant in today's world. She said if they don't critique themselves and make changes, they will cease to exist. She said their Strategic Plan identified items that they have turned into five Focus Pillars. *Mr. Berry* commented that when the City started providing funding, it was for specific events. He said he isn't looking at supplementing the Chamber's operating budget. He would rather invest in items that are outreach events and bring people to Grove City. Mr. Connaughton said the majority of their funding does go to events and marketing of those events. He said they prepared a wish list of items that would improve the Town Center and shared all items. Mr. Berry said he would like a list of each event that promotes the community and not supplementing their budget for employees, etc. He said he wants to see a combined effort to bring people to Grove City and get the most out of our marketing dollars. *Ms. Houk*, said she thinks what Council is trying to get to is how the dollars are being used as outlined in the City's Ordinances concerning a visitor's and convention's bureau responsibilities. She said perhaps an Event Grant program could be created to look at events and award dollars on a case by case basis.

Mr. Sigrist recognized the Little Theater Off Broadway:

Ms. Lisa Napier-Garcia, Director, explained that they are a 501c3 and all volunteer organization – except for paying for technical people for productions. She said they received \$9,000 for the year and explained what they used it for, including a projector, offering movie nights, and extending the season for a 7th production. She then shared all the projects they intend to do next year (see attached). *Mayor Stage* said the Admin. assisted in helping LTOB apply for some grants to help subsidize their efforts. Ms. Napier-Garcia said one was from the Ohio Arts Council. *Mr. Berry* asked if it was possible to build a third story on the building. Ms. Napier-Garcia said it is not structurally sound to do so and a lot would have to change. Mr. Berry suggested the City do an architectural review as a Capital Improvement project.

Mr. Sigrist recognized Town Center Inc./Heart of Grove City:

Mr. Andy Furr, Director, said they started off with a slim budget for 2024. He said all monies in the first half of the year went to marketing. He said the majority of the grant funds the organization as they don't make a lot from the events. He said their mission is to put feet on the streets of the Town Center and believes they accomplish that. He said they are asking for \$195,000 for next year and would like to add a few more events. They also need to hire a new Director. *Ms. Burroughs* confirmed that prior to 2023, Town Center Inc. received monies from the Community Development Fund. Mr. Furr said that was correct – as a reimbursement program. Ms. Burroughs asked if they ever get sponsors for their events. Mr. Furr said they ask every October for sponsors for each of their events. He said they get a little bit and they get some in-kind work. He shared that he applied for 14 grants this year and none were awarded.

Mr. Sigrist recognized Visit Grove City:

Ms. Amanda Davis, Director, shared that since 1979, they have been solely funded by the Bed Tax. She said they receive a very small amount from sponsors, ticket sales, etc. She said the majority of their dollars are spent on marketing outside the community to drive people

here. For 2025, they are requesting \$500,000.00. She explained that there has become an oversaturation of the market with hotel rooms that are closer to large event space. We are no longer the most convenient place to stay and we must think strategically to sustain the hotels we have. She said we do not have anything in the hotels that generate a night's stay, such as a ballroom or meeting spaces. *Mr. Berry* asked what the City should invest in to attract people. *Ms. Davis* said meeting space; a convention space; sporting events; something big to sustain the hotels. *Mr. Berry* said he believes there should be a separate meeting to discuss this topic. *Mayor Stage* said the largest soccer tournament was held in Grove City last weekend and hotels should have been full. He shared that we are the second largest collector of bed tax dollars in Central Ohio.

Mr. Aman Patel, owner of seven (7) of the hotels, commented that they don't feel they are getting a good return on their investment. They are struggling to get full capacity. He mentioned that they hosted a volleyball tournament in Hilliard and the City of Hilliard gave them a grant to support that event. Perhaps something like that could be done in Grove City.

Mr. Jim Hale, former Dir. of the VCB and resident, stated that Exit 100 is the best location on I-71. There is easy access, hotels in three price ranges, restaurants, shopping, golfing and a hospital. He said everything he has heard tonight is not for conventions and pulling in visitors. He believes a Visitor's and Convention Bureau should be fully funded, but the current Visit Grove City is not doing a good job of helping the hotels. He suggested defunding the current VCB and starting a new convention and visitor's organization.

Ms. Karen Cash, Board Member for Visit Grove City, voiced support for *Ms. Davis*. She said she has won many awards and has the only retail shop. She said nothing can be planned when you don't know how much money will be received. She passed out information on the history of the funding of the VCB.

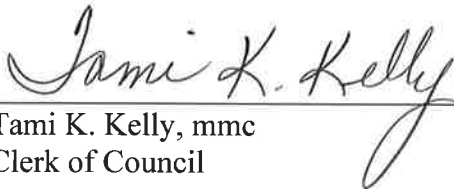
4. *Mr. Sigrist* thanked everyone and said we must have a path forward for all the partners. We must keep the conversation going.

Mr. Berry suggested a Task Force that includes hotel owners.

Ms. Houk said she feels it is important to resolve the clouding of each organization's missions. There should be a collaborative relationship with all parties and not a competitive one. She said she would like to see a grant program for all non-profit groups and feels there needs to be a written agreement for each organization with expectations of what the city should get from their dollars.

5. There being no further questions or comments, a motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous consent.

Adjourned at 7:27 p.m.


Tami K. Kelly, mmc
Clerk of Council


Christine Houk
President of Council

Purposes

Taken from the websites

Grove City Chamber of Commerce:

Founded in 1978, the Chamber exists to help the success of business. We play a vital role in supporting and representing the interests of businesses within the community, while also fostering collaboration, growth, and prosperity.

Visit Grove City:

The Grove City Area Convention and Visitors Bureau promotes and develops the Grove City area as a great place to meet, stay, work, and play. We take great pride in our role and are excited to be at the forefront of marketing our amazing city to potential visitors. We're part of many great organizations and associations to help bring our vision and mission to life. See a list of some of our great partners below. If you're looking for more information about local organizations see our [Community Resources page](#).

Heart of Grove City/Town Center Inc.:

For people visiting our town, or thinking of joining our lovely community, we would like to think this website will help convince you to do so. Grove City's Town Center, the nostalgic heart of the community, a walkable, vibrant place with a civic flavor, where people live, work, shop and play, a place to come visit and experience.

Little Theatre Off Broadway:

LTOB is located at 3981 Broadway, in the heart of downtown Grove City, a suburb of Columbus, Ohio. We are a member of the Ohio Community Theatre Association (OCTA), participating yearly in their annual competition, and a member of the American Association of Community Theatres (AACT), participating in their biennial conference.

CHAPTER 192

Hotel Tax

192.021 IMPOSITION OF TAX PURSUANT TO OHIO R.C. 5739.09.

(a) For the purpose of providing revenue with which to meet the needs of the City for the use of the General Fund of the City and for the purpose of providing funds to convention and visitors bureaus operating in the county in which the City of Grove City is located for the promotion and publicizing of the City of Grove City as a desirable location for conventions, trade shows and similar events to encourage the patronage and business of cultural, educational, religious, professional, sports and other activities to utilize the City of Grove City, an excise tax is hereby levied on transactions by which lodging by a hotel, motel or transient accommodations is or is to be furnished to transient guests. The excise tax levied under this section is in addition to any tax imposed by the City of Grove City on the same transaction as enacted pursuant to Ordinance C41-76 (Passed 5-17-76.) and codified under this chapter at Section [192.02](#). The tax levied under this section is three percent (3%) of the amount paid or to be paid by the transient guests for the lodging. The tax applies and is collectible at the time the lodging is furnished regardless of the time when the price is paid. The tax does not apply to lodging furnished to the State or any of its political subdivisions, or any charitable organization for the lodging of transient indigent individuals, when such charitable organization pays the hotel or transient accommodation for such lodging.

(b) Fifty percent (50%) of the revenue from the tax levied pursuant to this section, shall be deposited into a separate fund, to be appropriated annually by Council through the annual appropriation ordinance as defined in Section [5.05](#) of the City Charter. Each convention and visitors bureau will be identified by name and distribution amount. Each of the convention and visitors bureaus shall receive funds for the purposes of promoting tourism, convention, economic development and other projects or expenditures which would enhance the City's appeal to visitors and tourists, and the balance of such revenue shall be deposited into the Community Development Fund of the City of Grove City.

(c) Convention and visitors' bureaus which receives funds pursuant to this section shall, within one hundred and twenty (120) days after the end of their fiscal year, provide to the Finance Director of the City financial statements of the organization for such fiscal year, prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, consistently applied, with a compilation report prepared by a certified public accountant.

Convention and Visitors Bureau Allocation 2024 Mid-Year Review

Goal: Promote good understanding on how 2024 Bed Tax Allocated Dollars are being used.

Hear from Grove City Area Chamber of Commerce, Little Theater Off Broadway, Town Center Inc./Heart of Grove City, and Visit Grove City:

- How 2024 allocated monies have been utilized in the first half of 2024, and plans for remaining 2024
- Hear of any concerns or new needs projected for 2025

Convention and Visitors Bureau Allocation 2024 Fund Usage

Grove City Area Chamber of Commerce

\$.170m



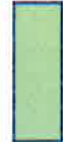
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\$1,500



\$20,900



- Events
- Contract
- Payroll

\$5,300



- AA
- FM

\$46,300



Event Improvements

- AA
- FM

\$24,000



- Painting
- Roof Repair
- Flooring

\$8,100



- Enhancement
- KFS
- Gator Rental

\$14,200



Marketing Brand video

• Events

2024
July to
December
Planned Uses

Jun End
Remaining
Allocation

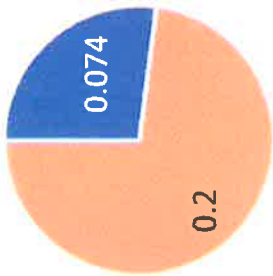
2024
January to June
Major Actual
Uses

2024 City
Approved
Allocation

2023 City
Allocation

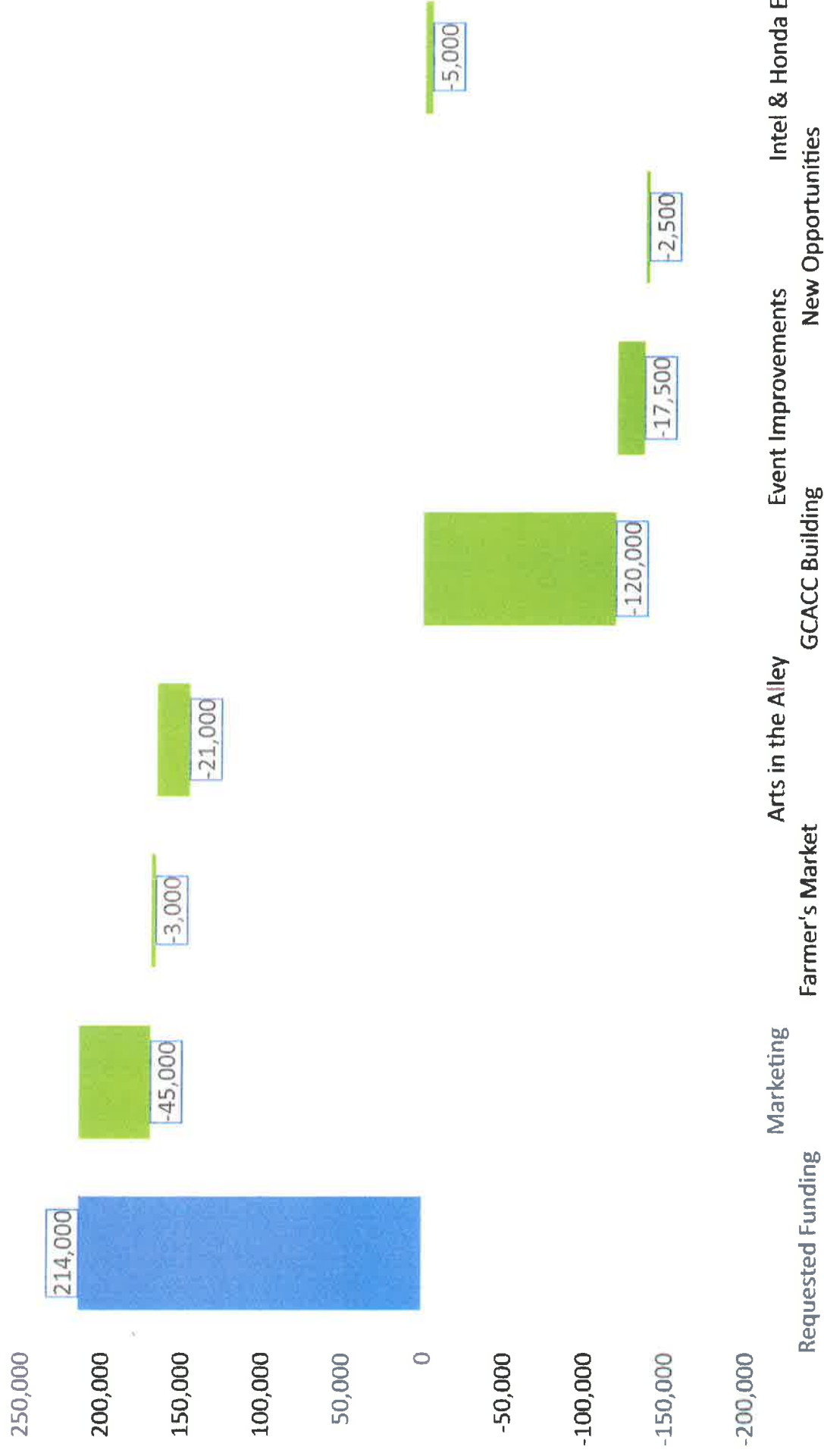
2024 Year End
Remaining
Allocation

2024 Est. Budget



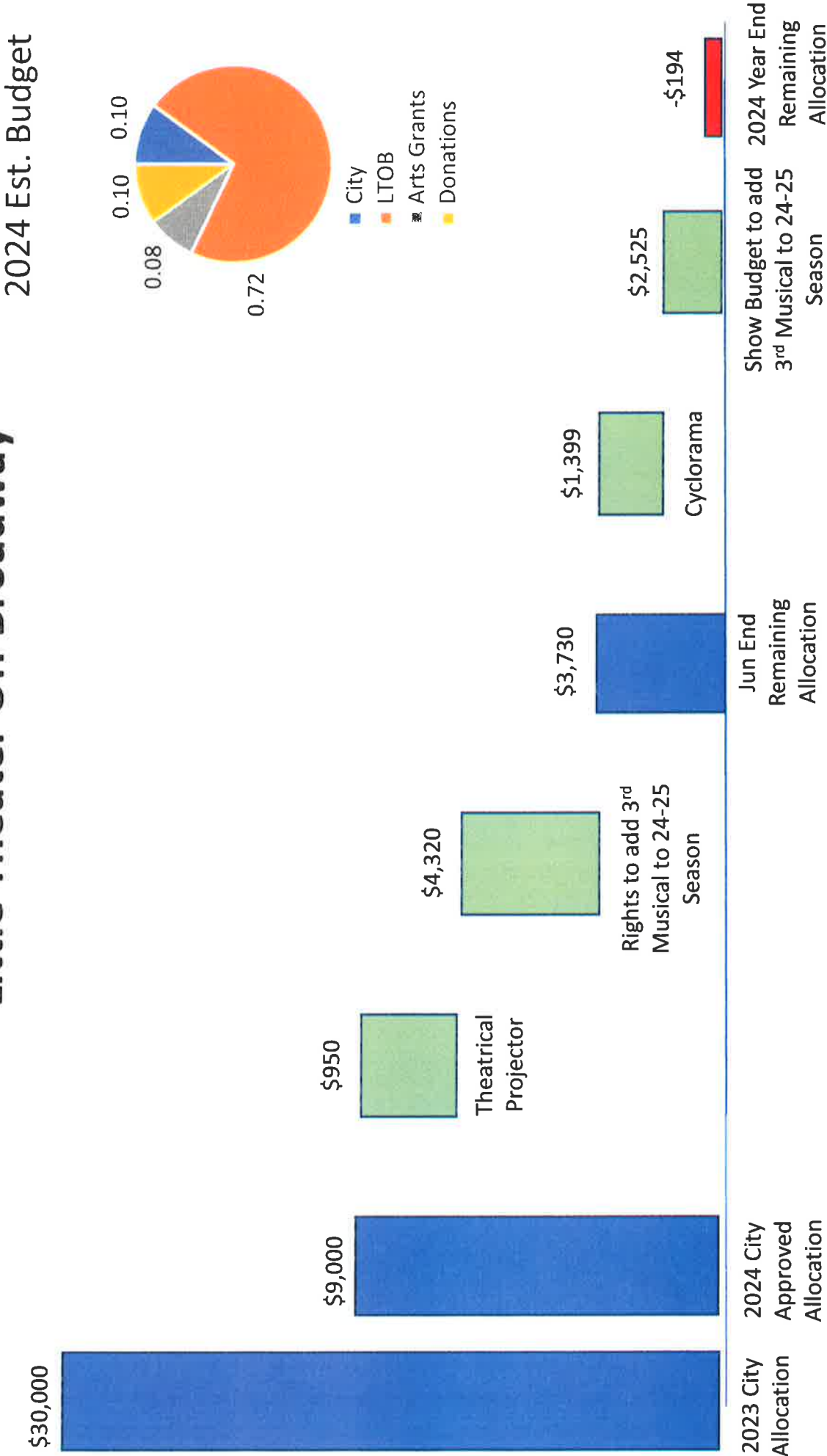
City All Other

GCACC 2025 Funding Request



Convention and Visitors Bureau Allocation 2024 Fund Usage

Little Theater Off Broadway



2024
January to June Major Actual Uses

2024
July to December Planned Uses

Convention and Visitors Bureau Allocation

2024 Mid-Year Review

Please share any concerns or requests you have from Grove City for FY 2025 - Little Theater Off Broadway

Capital Projects:

- LTOB's building was built in 1915 and has withstood a fire and three floods. We have been making updates to various parts of the building and have identified 3 capital projects that involve **necessary structural changes that need to be undertaken in the next 2 years**. These projects will improve both accessibility and the audience experience.
 1. 2025 - Update the **audience area**. This would include replacing the ceiling, floor, and seating. We are estimating a cost of **\$50,000**.
 2. 2025/26 - Update the **lobby, concession, public restrooms, and tech booth areas**. We estimate this will cost **\$55,000**.
 3. 2026/27 - **Waterproof the basement**. We have received an estimate for **\$90,000**.
- Any assistance Grove City can provide for these necessary capital projects is appreciated.

Convention and Visitors Bureau Allocation 2024 Mid-Year Review

**Please share any concerns or requests you have from
Grove City for FY 2025 - Little Theater Off Broadway**

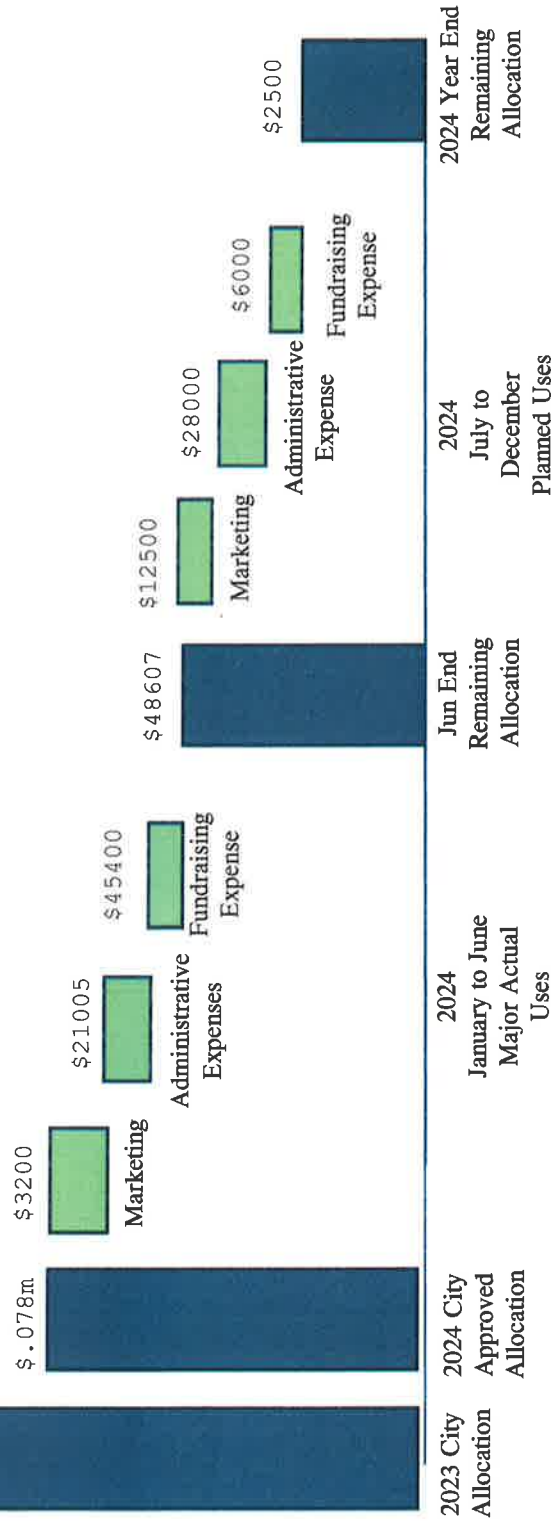
Programming & Community Engagement:

- LTOB is actively working with Grove City to provide more ways for the community to engage with live theater. We have identified the following as opportunities for 2025:
 - Late night movie/play at LTOB in fall. \$600/movie - \$2,500/play
 - Outdoor play in summer - \$8,500
 - Large holiday/community production that would require a larger stage (school or community center) - \$10,000
- LTOB is also participating in:
 - 2024 Arts in the Alley - Saturday Cartoons
 - 2024 Mistletoe Market at Heritage Village - \$800
 - 2026 USA 250-year Celebration - \$12,000
 - 2027 Grove City 175-year Celebration - \$12,000

Convention and Visitors Bureau Allocation

2024 Fund Usage

Town Center, Inc. Heart of Grove City 2024 Est. Budget



Convention and Visitors Bureau Allocation
2024 Mid-Year Review

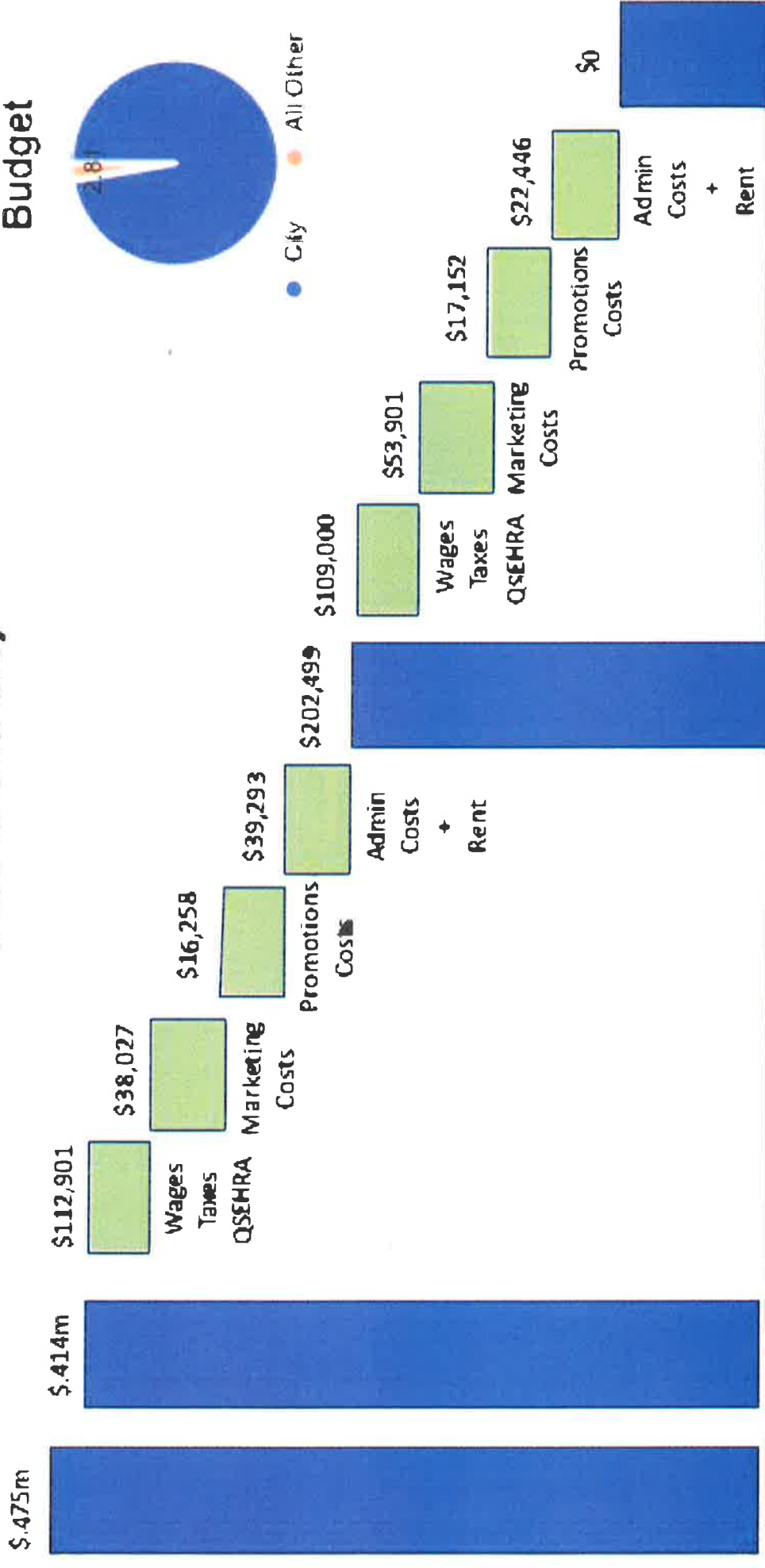
Please share any concerns or requests you have from Grove City for FY 2025 - Town Center Inc./Heart of Grove City:

- a. One request that we have is that the parcel on the East side of Arbutus has underground electric like the other parcel.**
- b. We would ask that the appropriation for 2025 be \$195,000. The increase is to facilitate the hiring of an Executive Director.**
- c. We would request that the parcels in the event space be leveled and compacted to facilitate the accessibility for ADA.**
- d. We would like to request a review of the disbursement each month in order to facilitate the day to day operation. In 2024 the monthly disbursement was not enough to cover the monthly expenses and that affected the balance of the bank account.**

Convention and Visitors Bureau Allocation 2024 Fund Usage

Visit Grove City

2024 Est.
Budget



2023 City
Allocation

2024 City
Approved
Allocation

2024
January to June
Major Actual
Uses

Jun End
Remaining
Allocation

2024
July to
December
Planned Uses

2024 Year End
Remaining
Allocation

Convention and Visitors Bureau Allocation 2024 Mid-Year Review

Please share any concerns or requests you have from Grove City for FY 2025 - Visit Grove City

- Budgetary request for 2025: \$500,000. To fulfill our marketing, communications, and sales plans, along with our administrative costs, we request \$500,000 for 2025.
- In reference to allocations, how do you see the new City Parks & Rec Event Supervisor Role and two part-time employees affecting the future role of the Heart of Grove City's event planning and execution
- In reference to Governmental Board & Commissions/Committees, how do we become appointed as a viable member to sit on these committees when direct appointments are made? (ie Park Board, Historical & Cultural Arts Commission)
- We ask that Council Members take into consideration that ours is the only graph that shows the full breadth of a Convention & Visitors Bureau's allocated expenses (rent, payrolls, etc.). We were created to be a traditional CVB fully reliant on bed tax as income, which is how most smaller CVBs still operate today.
- For 2025 - We would like to know which form of communication works best to share our work, CVB wins with RFP/Tours/Groups, etc. ie: Newsletter to City Council & Administration monthly, Round-Robin Meetings monthly to touch base, etc.

**City of Grove City
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING
August 26, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals was called to order by Chair Holinga at 5:30p.m., at the Grove City Municipal Building, 4035 Broadway.

1. Roll was called. The following members were present:

George Holinga

John Brant

Mark "Tony" Haughn

Staff present: Anthony Severyn, representing the Law Director, Chief Building and Zoning Official Michael P. Boso, Planning and Zoning Manager Laura Scott.

Also present; Leslie and John Leffler, 6751 S.R. 104/Jackson Pike and Justin Wagner of 5481 Brighton Way.

2. ***Motion by Chair Holinga to approve the minutes from the July 29 meeting. Second by Mr. Brant.***

VOTE: Brant, YES; Holinga, YES; Haughn, YES; **APPROVED.**

All representatives addressing the board were sworn in.

3. Hear the appeal of Justin Wagner, property owner at 5481 Brighton Way, (Parcel #040-017471), for a variance to Section 1137.05: To encroach the 30' building front setback facing Carlisle Dr. by 15' with a 4' tall decorative fence, for a total front setback of 15'.

Justin Wagner explained he has children and dogs on a busy corner and wants the fence for safety but needs the variance to encroach the building setback and increase the usable yard space. Mr. Haughn introduced the proposed staff modification stating that he was thinking ahead to the anticipated growth of the neighborhood and future requests. Chair Holinga asked Justin Wagner if he was supportive of staff's recommendation to reduce the requested 15' encroachment of the setback to 10', and he said yes. Mr. Brant asked if we had received any responses to the letters sent to adjoining property owners. Mrs. Scott said no.

Motion by Chair Holinga to grant the appeal of Justin Wagner, property owner at 5481 Brighton Way, as modified (Parcel #040-017471), for a variance to Section 1137.05: To encroach the 30' building front setback facing Carlisle Dr. by 10' with a 4' tall decorative fence, for a total front setback of 20', with 1 (one) stipulation to begin construction within 12 months. Second by Mr. Brant.

VOTE: Brant, YES; Holinga, YES; Haughn, YES; **APPROVED.**

Chair Holinga advised the applicant of the 21-day waiting period.

4. Hear the appeal of Leslie and John Leffler, property owner at 6751 Jackson Pike/S.R. 104. (Parcel # 040-006276), for the following five (5) variances.

- a) Section 1135.10 (a): To exceed the maximum garage space of 900sf by 2,284 for a total garage space of 3,184sf.
- b) Section 1135.10: To construct a metal pole barn not matching the same materials on the main building/the residence.
- c) Section 1137.08: To exceed a maximum wall height of 8', by 8'-5" for a total wall height of 16'-5" on an accessory structure.
- d) Section 1137.08: To exceed a maximum overall height of 13' by 11' for a total overall height of 24' on an accessory structure.
- e) Section 1137.11: To allow a section of gravel to remain between the house and the new barn for a period of 1 year.

Mr. Leffler explained he wished to build a building to house his 5th wheel camper (34' long and 13' high), a tractor, snowplow, 2 zero-turn mowers, golf cart and other equipment. He also plans to park his truck which does not fit in the attached garage. He plans to pave the existing gravel section within the year, after the construction is completed. Chair Holinga spoke of an inquiry from Jim Rauck who asked about the distance of the building to his property to the west. He determined the new building will be approximately 1,000 feet away from his property line. He stated he was in support of the project. Mr. Brant stated he understood the property had a tree line at the rear and the sides which would provide screening for the building. Mr. Leffler confirmed this.

Motion by Chair Holinga to grant the appeals of Leslie and John Leffler, property owner at 6751 Jackson Pike/S.R. 104. (Parcel # 040-006276), for the following variances, each with 1 (one) stipulation to begin construction within 12 months.

- a) ***Section 1135.10 (a): To exceed the maximum garage space of 900sf by 2,284 for a total garage space of 3,184sf. Second by John Brant.***
VOTE: Brant, YES; Holinga, YES; Haughn, YES; **APPROVED.**
- b) ***Section 1135.10: To construct a metal pole barn not matching the same materials on the main building/the residence. Second by John Brant.***
VOTE: Brant, YES; Holinga, YES; Haughn, YES; **APPROVED.**
- c) ***Section 1137.08: To exceed a maximum wall height of 8', by 8'-5" for a total wall height of 16'-5" on an accessory structure. Second by Tony Haughn.***
VOTE: Brant, YES; Holinga, YES; Haughn, YES; **APPROVED.**
- d) ***Section 1137.08: To exceed a maximum overall height of 13' by 11' for a total overall height of 24' on an accessory structure. Second by John Brant.***
VOTE: Brant, YES; Holinga, YES; Haughn, YES; **APPROVED.**
- e) ***Section 1137.11: To allow a section of gravel to remain between the house and the new barn for a period of 1 year. Secon by Tony Haughn.***
VOTE: Brant, YES; Holinga, YES; Haughn, YES; **APPROVED.**

Chair Holinga advised the applicant of the 21-day waiting period.

New Business: Everyone is available for the September meeting.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:53p.m.

Adjournment.

George Holinga, Chair

Laura Scott, Secretary