

# Community Budget Discussion Meeting

## for Regional Budget Day

### Sample Agenda

#### Agenda Sections

#### Notes for Facilitators, Committees, Boards

##### Set up for Meeting

- Set up the chairs in the room.
- Place snacks, translation equipment, and directional signs where needed.
- Lay out sign-in sheets and name tags.
- Check in with small group facilitators.
- Lay out budget materials that may be available such as:
  - ✓ Copies of the Power Point presentation
  - ✓ City budget educational information
  - ✓ Results of compiled board budget surveys
  - ✓ Results of compiled community budget surveys (if Neighborhood Council surveyed the community or collected other community input data.)

- Consider whether translation services will help people feel welcome and more comfortable giving input.

##### Introduction & Opening of Meeting

##### *Should take 10-15 minutes*

- Welcome group and thank them for participating.
- Review ground rules for the meeting and introduce key folks.
- Meeting Overview- ***explain to the group*** that this meeting is for the community to give input on what the budget priorities should be for the city and for the Neighborhood Council area
- Review meeting agenda.
- Review process for getting to this meeting:
  1. October 13, 2007 Budget Day where Mayor laid out his vision and plan for developing City budget and
  2. Requested input from Neighborhood Councils and the communities they represent.
  3. Neighborhood Council made decision to participate in advising the Mayor on the budget & appointed 2 Neighborhood Council budget representatives (*if Neighborhood Council has done so*)
  4. Neighborhood Council organized Community meeting to gather additional stakeholder input and complete all budget surveys
  5. Board members are surveyed individually by the Mayor's office
- Review goal outcome of meeting:  
***Set budget priorities for Neighborhood Council based on community input***

- Be positive, this may be the first time community members interact with the Neighborhood Council leadership.

- Make people feel welcomed and encourage their ongoing Neighborhood Council participation.

- Let community know who the two budget representatives are if they have already been chosen

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### City Budget “101”– *optional education on City budget process*

**Should take 10-15 minutes**

- Brief (no more than 3-5 minutes) general discussion of City budget
  - Importance of budget to City and to community
  - Importance of being heard in the budget process
- Go over the steps of how the city creates and approves a budget including:
  - City’s fiscal year timeline
  - Roles of Mayor, City Council, Neighborhood Council, and community members in creation of budget
  - Opportunities that Neighborhood Council and community have for giving input in the budget process
  - Services covered and not covered by the city’s budget
- Review any available budget education materials (optional)
  - Power Point presentation from Budget Day (if AV equipment is available)
  - General budget information distributed by City Administrative Officer (i.e. City budget department )

•The NC may want to invite staff from the CAO’s Office, the Mayor’s Office, and/or the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to do a brief presentation

### **Budget Priorities Discussion– Option 1**

**Should take 40-60 minutes**

- Review any available **compiled** budget survey results with the group:
  - Results from the board
  - Results from community stakeholders
- Begin discussion of budget priorities and budget survey questions
- Announce that you will go through the budget survey questions one by one, giving each question 5-10 minutes of discussion
- Take survey questions one by one and ask community speakers to comment on what their preferred option would be and why
- After hearing a broad range of input on each of the questions, the board votes to adopt a collective position on the survey questions
- After approving the position, the board selects someone to draft a written statement that will accompany the board position
  - The written statement should elaborate on why the board chose to go with the position it did on the survey questions
  - The person assigned to draft the statement might cite values, conditions, community input, or preferences that led the board to adopt the ultimate conclusion
  - The writer of the statement might also choose to use quotes from community members or give local examples related to a given budget question

▪ If most of the speakers are supporting one point of view, the facilitator should specifically ask for persons with a differing point of view and call on them.

**Please proceed to “ Meeting Closure” section**

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### *Budget Priorities Discussion– Option 2*

*Should take 60-100 minutes*

Review any available **compiled** budget survey results:

- From the board
- From community stakeholders

Announce that people will break into small groups (no more than 5-6 persons) to discuss the budget survey questions and lay out the suggested discussion format

#### **One discussion format option:**

With the help of a facilitator and note taker for each small group, have small groups look at each budget survey question one at a time and discuss the following:

1. What is the preferred option of each group member for each of the survey questions?
2. What are the values, reasons, or experiences that inform each person's preference?
3. What are possible tradeoffs—benefits and disadvantages—of each choice?
4. Take a final poll of everyone in the group to see if their original preferred options have changed or been modified.
5. Have one representative of each group report back to the larger group on key points in the discussion such as:
  - Whether there was or was not general agreement on most of the questions
  - What were some of the values and experiences that strongly influenced people's choices?

If there was general agreement, the most preferred options can be reported.

If there was not general agreement, report what were the most contentious points.

After hearing a broad range of input from each of the small groups, the board votes to adopt a collective position on the survey questions.

After approving the position, the board selects someone to draft the written statement that will accompany the board position

- The written statement should elaborate on why, ultimately, the board chose to go with the position it did on the survey questions
- The person assigned to draft the statement might cite values, conditions, community input, or preferences that led the board to adopt the ultimate conclusion
- The writer of the statement might also choose to use quotes from community members or give local examples related to a given budget question

▪ If the small-group option is chosen, make sure that your meeting site has adequate space and seating options for small groups to talk and still be able to hear one another.

▪ Make sure that the process for breaking into groups is decided and planned ahead of time.

▪ One method is to give people bits of various colored paper as they enter the room. At the designated time, all persons with the same color of paper will move into a small group together.

▪ Make sure that small group facilitators have been prepared and are comfortable leading discussions

▪ In addition to a facilitator, small groups should also have:

✓ A note taker

✓ Someone who reminds the group of when it's time to move the discussion to the next budget question

✓ Someone who reports the results to the larger group

▪ If most of the speakers are supporting one point of view, the facilitator should specifically ask for persons with a differing point of view and call on them.

***Please proceed to " Meeting Closure" section***

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### *Meeting Closure— should take 5-10 minutes*

**Explain to group:** Now we are going to end the meeting. We want to end with an evaluation of the meeting.

➤ Review next steps for follow-up .

➤ Ask: What worked about the meeting and what could have been improved?

▪ Follow-up steps should be written down and later shared with as many board members and stakeholders as possible.

▪ The close of the meeting is also a good time for Neighborhood Councils to remind stakeholders to fill out volunteer cards and/or sign-up sheets so you can add them to your database.