

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

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 11, 2024

EOB members present:

Jim Kennedy, Betsy Neptune, Carla Stovell, Lisa Hy, Jarret Wright, Khalid Mustafa, Marilyn Forman, Esther Weathers

Staff present: Renato Castelo, Director, Office of Participatory Budgeting; Cynthia Lin, Chief of Staff

Director Castelo called to order the External Oversight Board meeting, did a roll call, and shared an overview of the agenda. He then asked if there were any comments or corrections on last week's meeting minutes. With no comments from the Board, Director Castelo called for a motion and Board members approved to adopt the minutes.

Director Castelo shared that the final draft of the Rulebook is public and has been shared with the Board. He noted that the Rulebook will be annually reviewed and updated as needed, in consultation and with the majority approval of the Board. Board members Jarret Wright and Betsy Neptune both commented that once the equity guidelines are finalized, the Rulebook should be amended to incorporate them. Director Castelo agreed with this comment and approach. Board member Jim Kennedy then led the formal motion and roll call for the adoption of the Rulebook and Board members approved to adopt the Rulebook.

Director Castelo shared a proposed timeline during the planning for PB implementation time period. He proposed bi-weekly meetings that are 2-hour in length, with the exception of the April 25th which was adjusted to accommodate schedules. The April 25th meeting will be focused on the Idea Collection Toolkit and Evaluation for PB cycle one.

Director Castelo introduced Mjumbe Poe, the website developer assisting with the online PB Portal website for Idea Collection. Mr. Poe has assisted in the website development for the City of Cambridge and City of Somerville for their PB processes. Mr. Poe provided an overview of the website and solicited feedback from the Board members on the various components of the website. Director Castelo noted this site is still in development mode.

Mr. Poe discussed the address feature associated with an idea. Several Board members discussed the best way to communicate instructions for this feature. Everyone settled on updating the search box instruction and for location specific ideas, changing the form prompt to allow for participants to drag the map or search for a specific location. The Board also agreed that it would be helpful to have a tutorial on how to upload an idea on the website.

Board members then provided feedback on how survey taker names appear on the website once an idea is submitted. Several Board members agreed that it would be best to allow users

to choose how their name appears on the website, including options like displaying first name, full name, or neighbor (anonymous).

Director Castelo provided an update that the comment on and like options for ideas would not be incorporated into the PB site. Cities like Cambridge and Somerville have shared that these features were a challenge to oversee and manage and suggested not incorporating. Rather the website should be a location where residents can propose ideas and see what other ideas are submitted.

Board member Betsy Neptune suggested adding a confirmation email to residents after they submit ideas. Board member Jarret Wright suggested adding more information on the 10 categories into the online survey as well. Mjumba agreed that these adjustments would be feasible to incorporate.

Director Castelo opened up the meeting for public comments at 7:17PM. One member of the public suggested incorporating language into the website on confidentiality regarding names and information collected by survey takers.

Director Castelo adjourned the meeting at 7:19PM

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