NC Human Trafficking Commission: Appropriations Committee
Meeting
Monday, December 11th, 2023
WebEx through the NC Judicial Center / Cypress room (C1-1225)

1:06 PM – Call to Order & Roll Call Attendance
Committee Chair, Angelica Wind
Committee Chair Angelica Wind opened the meeting and stated that this will not be an official committee meeting. We will talk about the scoring process as we move on to the 2nd round of funding. We will also offer feedback on the scoring process that would help improve it for the next round. Committee members in attendance were Amy Auth, Danielle Carman, Joseph Kyzer, and Kindl Detar. Also in attendance were Commission Executive Director, Christine Long, Grants Administrator, Kathy Estrada, Grants Managers and Data Manager, Kristen Howe, Jacqueline Kehinde, Ellen Chupik Smith, Ashawntee Cabello, and Mel Gilles. Members of the public were also able to view or listen to the meeting via WebEx.

1:07 PM – Scoring Process Discussion/Areas of Improvement
Open Comments
Committee Chair Angelica Wind stated that she wanted to start by asking just a couple of questions regarding the scoring process starting with what went well. She stated that she welcomes all feedback from members who were apart of the scoring committee to chime in at any time. She stated what went well for her was the session that was available by staff that was considered a mini training. She thought it could be more robust, but she also found it helpful. We were guided on how to look at the applications, how to score, and so forth, and to have that assistance was helpful to me. It set the tone of how I would look at other applications. Amy chimed in and agreed with Angelica's statement that it was helpful. Amy said that having staff walk through different applications and pointing out red flags or some examples of strong applications helped her look at applications with that same kind of background knowledge. Amy also said she liked where the staff had given a recommended pre score in some of the sections. This allowed you to agree or disagree. She stated that it was very helpful to have a good baseline versus starting from scratch. Angelica stated that she would also agree as well that having the pre score done by the staff helped a lot. Angelica wanted to highlight and give credit to the staff on the risk assessment. As she was going through some applications, she referred to the risk assessment notes that were captured, and that not only help validate what she was thinking, but also helped to identify some other risks. Kindl stated that as newbie to this, she agreed with the prefilled recommendations from the staff. She found it very helpful and appreciated. Danielle stated that she also agreed that it was helpful. She said that it did take her way longer on applications, and she did not expect that and hadn't set aside time for the task. Danielle spoke about trusting her gut a little more than some of her other co scores because she thinks she saw other people struggling. Some people were spending even more time on scoring due to not being

sure. She said she think that as long as you're consistent as you can be with yourself, it shouldn't matter. Just because one score is high and another is low, and we are consistent throughout, it all washed out in the end. Danielle felt like at the end, her personal scores, compared to what the ranges and the averages that were provided, she did have a couple of outliers, but she was right along everyone else was. She stated that she doesn't know what can be done to make people feel more comfortable just trusting what they have scored. She stated that Mel's emphasis during the training was the most helpful part about letting us know to trust your instincts. Danielle stated that scoring competitive grants is incredibly time consuming and there is just not a lot you can do. She also stated that she was disappointed in the overall quality of applications. She felt like they were thrown together. She stated that it could stem form a lack of training. There was a mention as to assisting the organizations on what makes a good application etc. That could be a start. She stated what was also frustrating for her was she thinks everyone qualified as either high risk or medium risk and that pulled everyone's score down. She wished that we could have scored some of these organizations higher but doesn't know how those organizations get more risk without getting funding and having the opportunity to prove themselves. Mel chimed in and thanked Danielle for the feedback. Mel also stated she is talking lots of notes and thanked everyone. She stated that for the second round, we are really trying to get better quality applications. She said that by having an RFP open a bit longer is one way. Instead of 30 days, we are giving them 60. Mel said 90 days would have been her hope, but we need to get the funding appropriated and get the next round going. She also said more technical support with the applications. There was no one in her seat to really walk each applicant through any questions, so now she can utilize this time to assist agencies. She is currently in the middle of phone calls and meetings to all out prior applicants. They've each requested time with me, and she is spending and hour to and hour and a half with each one. She has received some very positive feedback from they applicants for spending this one-on-one time going over questions. The feedback that was provided by the scorers was very helpful and provided insight on what they can do to reduce their risk. We are putting more specifics and edits to the RFP for this round. That might help lead them in the right direction. Our next step is to do a webinar, between now and when the RFP closes to catch anyone that I may not been able to talk to personally and walk them through the scoring matrix. Mel hope is to show what a good application looks like to produce better quality product in the end. Mel asked he committee, on average, how long did you spend on scoring each application or total time spent scoring? Amy said it was a lot longer than three or four hours. Danielle said it was at least 12 hours. Amy said at least an hour for an application, but factor in getting a personal phone call or work emails. Amy also stated that it may be because we are all new to this, and we were also given so much supplemental materials to go back and refer to. She said for her, she did try to be thorough and go back and check their board and see what they are doing. Angelica stated that because it is competitive funding that she wanted to make sure that she made well informed decisions and that she was able to explain why she scored the way she did. She also stated that she had her own expectations on the applications versus the reality of what we were working with. She would have liked to see stronger applications. What was also time consuming was when their applications were not very strong and not connecting to what the agency is doing. She said a good 20hrs is what she spent, and a part of that is because one of getting a good baseline application for reference. The other piece that she suggested that would be helpful is if we could get a list of things that they can and can't get funded for. Amy piggybacked off Angelica's statement. Knowing what they can be funded for would be helpful when scoring the applications. Angelica chimed in and spoke about the budget questions on scoring. That whole process did not align and could use some approvement. Mel chimed in and spoke on the budget section. She asked should it be more weighted? Danielle also chimed in and agreed some things did not match, and it could be adjusted. In general, some areas of questions need to be changed, eliminated, or redistributed completely. Mel suggested taking a

stab at redoing the matrix and sending it out for everyone to review. Danielle stated that everyone who is on this call knows full well that a weak application doesn't necessarily mean a weak organization. A lot of these organizations are newly formed that may grow into these phenomenal advocacy groups and provide a great service. She wants to be clear that the words we are using i.e., weak is not a reflection on their organizations, but a hope and expectation that they will be able to have this valuable feedback to submit a quality application to match their work. Mel thanked Danielle and stated that when she is doing these phone calls with the applicants, she makes it clear that we are not here to talk about the deficiencies in their organizations, or you as individuals. We are here to talk about how to give you the support to do an application that is going to have a higher chance of getting funded. A lot of the organizations are so appreciative of this support that we are offering because they need this funding. Angelica stated that she agreed with Daniel and regarding we are referring to the applications and not the organization when we are speaking about scoring. It is more about where it could've come up a little bit stronger, and how do we support you. She feels that the feedback that we give the organizations are not only going to help permit them, but it could also help them with future applications. Angelica asked about areas of improvement and Mel chimed in. She said that with each score sheet that was provided there should be a box at the bottom that says recommended for funding or not recommended for funding and then a space for notes about why you are making your choice. Those notes would have been helpful as she was collating everything and would have grounded things a little bit. Everyone agreed with Mel's suggestion. The other suggestion that Mel had was to have everyone post their scores in a spreadsheet so that everyone could see where the scores are lining up. It was problematic on her end with the scores being turned in to her. Angelica stated that it would have been helpful after she had done her scoring. It may have caused her to pause and go back to her applications to see if she overlooked something. Angelica's only issue is how do we do that in a way that we review them and then input scores, and if something was missed, go back, and review it again. But not in a way that it supports group think. Amy chimed in and agreed. Her only concern is, by nature we tend to look to each other if we feel like there is a consensus feel that it may quiet down our personal observations. If there was a way, we had a deadline to have our scores done and then plug them in the next day that way, we're not letting other people's opinion influence what we have already scored. Danielle stated that seeing the scores would be helpful. She suggested maybe a survey monkey that will not show scores until afterwards. Kindl agreed with having people do their own and then compare at the end. Kindl stated that she did want to mention that when she was reviewing the applications that she would get to the meat of the applications to get a sense of what they're hoping to do with the funds, then as you review it more, it's more of the technical information. Her suggestion is to move their proposal for funds more to the beginning of the proposal. It gives you a more grounding aspect of the organization. Mel chimed in and asked how they may have received the applications and perhaps she can include a cover page with this is the grant, the amount they are requesting, and a basic description of the project. Mel also stated she can include all these recommendations in the next training. Angelica asked Mel if there were any other suggestions that she may have. Mel said she is very grateful for all the feedback and wants all these refinements to be implemented. Angelica thanked everyone for being at this meeting. She also said we want to start on a solid foundation so that we can be consistent as we move forward to the reoccurring funding that we will be granting out in the future. Mel also thanked everyone for all their hard work and feedback. Angelica stated that she looks forward to seeing what the next round of scoring will look like after all the feedback and recommendations.

1:45 PM– Adjournment
Committee Chair, Angelica Wind