DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2026 - 4:30 PM
5555 PERIMETER DRIVE
COUNCIL CHAMBER

Meeting Minutes

Ms. Alutto called the Finance Committee meeting of October 20, 2026 to order at 4:30 p.m.

Committee members present: Ms. Alutto (Chair), Ms. Johnson and Mr. Keeler.

Staff members present: Mr. Barker, Mr. Rubino, Mr. Jiang, Ms. LeRoy, Ms. Gischel, Ms. Murray

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Alutto moved to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2026 Finance Committee meeting. Mr. Keeler seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion: Ms. Johnson, yes; Mr. Keeler, yes; Ms. Alutto, yes.

REVIEW OF THE 2027 HOTEL-MOTEL TAX GRANT APPLICATIONS

Mr. Rubino explained that this was the annual process in which organizations apply for hotel/motel tax grant funding. Staff had evaluated each request against established criteria, and each applicant would make a presentation according to the schedule provided to the committee.

Mr. Jiang reviewed the history of the grant program. Ordinance 133-87, adopted in 1987, levied a 6 percent hotel/motel tax. It designated 25 percent of revenues for the Dublin visitors bureau and 75 percent for cultural arts, beautification of public property, improvements to historic districts, special events, and other projects that enhance the City's appeal to visitors and tourists. Ordinance 05-90, adopted in 1990, amended Chapter 182 of the Codified Ordinances to require that funds be used mainly for activities within the City. It also required recipients to provide a detailed account of fund use within 90 days after a supported event, or through quarterly reports. In 2016, Council discussed creating a formal grant policy, and Visit Dublin received an additional 10 percent allocation as part of that year's operating budget, subject to review. In 2024, the committee shifted its policy discussion from a hotel/motel tax fund policy to a hotel/motel tax grant policy.

Historic Dublin Business Association -- Events: Time Trek, St. Paddy's Day Crawl, Bunny Hop, Play Nine, Summer Music Series, Barks and Brews, Ole Time Dublin Day, Historic Halloween, Say Thank You, Holly Days and Ugly Sweater Crawl

Representative: Linda Kick, President, HDBA

Request: $ 55,000

Ms. Kick thanked outgoing leader Rick Gerber for 12 years of leadership and over 30 years of volunteer service. She described the organization's reboot year, its 20th anniversary, and its commitment to supporting small businesses in the historic district, and she invited the committee to the Halloween candy trail.

Club Ohio Soccer – Nike Challenge Cup
Representative: Costa Kalorides, Managing Director
Request: $24,000

Mr. Kalorides presented the Club Ohio Nike Challenge Cup, a youth soccer tournament for ages 7 through 18 that has been hosted in Dublin for more than two decades.

Crawford Hoying Foundation – The Dublin Market and Fore!Fest
Representative: Kamryn Brown
Request: $35,000 for Dublin Market
$100,000 for Fore!Fest

Ms. Brown presented the Crawford Hoying Foundation's Dublin Market and Fore!Fest. The Dublin Market is a family-friendly Saturday market held May through September in Bridge Park with more than 130 vendors. Fore!Fest is a free, two-day street and music festival held in conjunction with the Memorial Tournament. Proceeds support scholarships for graduating seniors at each Dublin high school and other youth programs.

Rotary Club Dublin AM – Dublin AM Rotary Classic Car Show
Representative: Lou Charobee, Event Chair
Request: $3,000

Mr. Charobee presented the Dublin AM Rotary Classic Car Show, planned as its ninth annual event on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend. The most recent event drew a record 141 registered cars, and proceeds support local charities through the Dublin AM Rotary Charitable Foundation.

Dublin Education Foundation – Elevate Education
Representative: Melissa Bogner and Deb Papesh
Request: $15,000

Ms. Bogner and Ms. Papesh presented the Dublin Education Foundation's Elevate Education event. Last year the foundation awarded 50,000 dollars to teachers for 43 classroom projects, double the prior year, aided by an event that raised 75,000 dollars while relying heavily on donated services from local businesses.

Crohn's and Colitis Foundation – Take Steps Walk
Representative: Carmel Elmer
Request: $4,180

Ms. Elmer presented the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation Take Steps Walk, held at Dublin Coffman Park Pavilion for 11 years. The Central Ohio event ranked fifth nationally in participation among 60 events, with about 800 participants this year and about 900 anticipated in 2027.

Dublin Jerome High School – Homecoming Parade
Representative: Diane Murphy
Request: $1,200

Ms. Murphy, senior class adviser, presented the Dublin Jerome High School homecoming parade. She asked for support with city service costs for street closures and suggested that the arrangement might become an ongoing process, since the costs remain relatively constant.

Dublin Scioto Lacrosse Boosters – Ohio Middle School Lacrosse State Tournament
Representative: Ann Rovers
Request: $12,500

Ms. Rovers presented the Dublin Scioto Lacrosse Boosters, who host the Ohio Boys Middle School State Lacrosse Tournament on Mother's Day weekend. The tournament has been hosted since 1998, includes about 90 teams, and draws roughly 10,000 people.

Dublin Soccer League – Dublin Charity Cup
Representative: Dominique Hoecherl, Tournament Director
Request: $13,630

Ms. Hoecherl presented the Dublin Soccer League Charity Cup, now in its 36th year, which hosted just over 140 teams over Labor Day weekend. The event has donated more than 881,000 dollars to charity, with about 30,000 dollars expected for 2026.

Dublin Special Olympics - Shamrock Games
Representative: Kate Newman
Request: $1,700

Ms. Newman presented the Dublin Special Olympics Shamrock Games, expected to host about 350 athletes and over 1,200 spectators, coaches, and volunteers. The grant would help cover meals for athletes, volunteers, and coaches.

Dublin United Soccer Club – Dublin United Champions Cup
Representative: Ken McMahon
Request: $7,530

Mr. McMahon presented the Dublin United Champions Cup, which hosted about 226 teams, including some from north of Toledo. He praised city staff for preparing fields after heavy rain and noted that hotel capacity was strained by a competing football weekend.

Dublin Youth Athletics – Wayne Williams Memorial Baseball Tournament
Representative: Justin Baker, Director of Travel Baseball for Dublin Youth Athletics (DYA)
Request: $21,000

Mr. Baker presented the Dublin Youth Athletics tournament, which hosted nearly 150 teams. Out-of-town participation has grown from about 18 percent to between 25 and 27 percent, and he also commended city staff for field recovery after record rainfall.

Federation of Asian Indian Association (FIA) of Central Ohio – Diwali Festival
Representative: Sriram Menneni, President
Request: $15,380

Mr. Menneni presented the Federation of Indian Associations Diwali Festival. The first festival drew about 2,000 attendees, and the organization intends to grow it into a major community event.

Global Asian Cultural Heritage Foundation – Ohio Moon Festival

Representative: Kay Zhang and Master Sen Gao
Request: $8,000

Ms. Zhang and Master Sen Gao presented the Global Asian Cultural Heritage Foundation's Ohio Moon Festival, now in its 10th year. The next festival is scheduled for September 18, and the foundation also hosts an Asian Culture Heritage Festival in May and a Lunar New Year event with the Dublin Arts Council.

The Columbus Feis – The Columbus Feis
Representative: Jason Bragdon
Request: $15,750

Mr. Bragdon presented the Columbus Feis, an Irish dance competition in its 45th year that draws 500 to 600 competitors and 3,000 to 4,000 spectators. This was its first grant cycle, and the funds would support operations and housing for international judges.

Japan-America Society of Central Ohio (JASCO) – Japan FestOH!
Representative: Isao Shoji
Request: $21,060

Mr. Shoji presented the Japan America Society of Central Ohio's Japan Festo, a free one-day event at Riverside Crossing Park expected to draw 4,000 to 5,000 people in its

eighth year. He described partnerships with Bridge Park businesses, dedicated hotel room blocks, and diversified funding sources.

Ohio Premier Soccer Club – Ohio Premier Invitational
Representative: Shane Woodruff, Events Director
Request: $10,425

Mr. Woodruff presented the Ohio Premier OP Invitational, with over 320 teams and approximately 15,000 visitors. More than 1,900 hotel rooms were booked, and the event consolidated at Dublin fields this year. He described cancelling Sunday play for the first time because of storms and praised city field and maintenance crews.

Ohio Public Market Authority –North Market Night Market
Representative: Kamryn Brown, Events Coordinator and Olivia Good, Manager
Request: $13,810

Ms. Brown presented the Ohio Public Market Authority night markets. This was the first year of hotel/motel grant funding, which supported marketing and entertainment, produced record sales for small local vendors, and returned proceeds to North Market Bridge Park.

One Dublin – Back to School Celebration
Representative: Brian Carr, Executive Director
Request: $5,000

Mr. Carr presented the One Dublin back to school celebration, which provides new backpacks and school supplies to students in need. About 800 backpacks were distributed this year despite rain, and 32 community partners participated.

We R One Community – Hospitality Disability Awareness Project
Representative: Dee Marks, Treasurer and Jara Packer, President
Request: $5,000

Ms. Marks presented We R One Community, a first-time applicant that proposed training staff at approximately 20 Dublin hotels to support guests with disabilities. The proposal included sensory kits, branded backpacks, and communication boards.

The Ohio State University Foundation – LiFEsports Summer Camp at Dublin City Schools (DCS)
Representatives: Claire Sobecki and Jim Sotter
Request: $5000

Ms. Sobecki and Mr. Sotter presented the Ohio State University Foundation LiFESports program, a free four-week summer camp for students entering fourth through ninth grade that teaches social skills through sport. Grant funds would support supplies and participation prizes.

Arthritis Foundation – Classic Auto Show and Cruise-in
Representatives: Jeff Larger, Event Co-Chair and Christopher Haverlock, Executive Director
Request: $20,000

Mr. Larger and Mr. Haverlock presented the Arthritis Foundation charity auto show, scheduled for July 16 and 17, 2027, in its 44th year in the Dublin Metro Place business park. In response to a question from Mr. Keeler about a Friday cancellation, Mr. Haverlock explained that the event maintains a no-refund policy as a charitable fundraiser, that exceptions were made in a few cases, and that communication would be strengthened in 2027.

Staff Presentation/Committee Discussion
Staff highlighted that it recommended waiving city service fees for the Dublin Jerome High School homecoming parade in lieu of a cash grant, consistent with last year. Staff also noted that its recommendations were rounded to the nearest five-dollar increment, reflecting prior committee comments. For sports tournaments whose formula result exceeded the request, staff recommended funding at the requested level. The committee agreed with the fee waiver for the Dublin Jerome High School homecoming parade.

Mr. Keeler explained that total requests were approximately $413,000 against $292,500 available. He described the process as a rubric-based formula with a qualitative overlay, with room nights as a key quantitative factor and community or social impact weighed for organizations that serve residents rather than attract visitors. Ms. Alutto noted that requests formerly fell short of available funds, which had allowed a more intuitive approach, while current demand required a more formula-driven process that still retained some judgment.

Mr. Keeler offered his recommendations organization-by-organization. He supported the rubric amounts for several applicants, including Dublin Market, Dublin AM Rotary, Scioto Lacrosse, Special Olympics, Dublin United, Columbus Feis, and Ohio Premier. He recommended reducing Fore!Fest to $25,000, noting that many attendees would already be in town for the Memorial Tournament, and increasing awards to the Dublin Education Foundation, Charity Cup, Diwali Festival, Moon Festival, Historic Dublin Business Association, JASCO, Ohio Public Market Authority, One Dublin, and LiFEsports. He noted that he favored gradually weaning events off the grant if possible. He also stated that he had changed his earlier position on the Historic Dublin Business Association given its broad impact, and he cited the large Japanese community in Dublin in supporting JASCO.

Ms. Johnson supported the Dublin Education Foundation, funding One Dublin at its full request, supporting people with disabilities through We R One Community, and funding a requested $8,000 for the Moon Festival that she expected to continue growing. She agreed that Fore!Fest should be reduced, as it is an add-on to an established tournament. Ms. Alutto agreed with the recommendations and entered a working set of

figures into the live spreadsheet, which the committee then refined. Ms. Alutto had previously stated that she preferred to give away all available funds.

Resulting recommendations. By consensus, the Committee arrived at the following recommended awards totaling $292,500 for 2027:

HDBA - Historic Dublin Business Association Events	$ 37,000.00
Club Ohio Soccer - Nike Challenge Cup	$ 17,580.00
Crawford Hoying Foundation – Dublin Market ($32,670) & Fore!Fest ($25,000)	$ 57,670.00
Dublin AM Rotary - Classic Car Show	$ 1,825.00
Dublin Education Foundation – Elevate Education	$ 15,000.00
Crohn's and Colitis Foundation - Take Steps Walk	$ 3,500.00
Dublin Jerome High School – Homecoming Parade	(Waive City Fees)
Dublin Scioto Lacrosse Boosters - OMS Lacrosse Tournament	$ 12,290.00
Dublin Soccer League – Dublin Charity Cup	$ 10,000.00
Dublin Special Olympics - Shamrock Games	$ 1,020.00
Dublin United - Dublin United Champions Cup	$ 7,530.00
Dublin Youth Athletics - Wayne Williams Memorial Tournament	$ 21,000.00
FIA – Diwali Festival	$ 15,000.00
Global Asian Cultural Heritage Foundation – Moon Festival	$ 8,000.00
The Columbus Feis – The Columbus Feis	$ 12,600.00
JASCO – Japan FestOH!	$ 21,060.00
Ohio Premier Soccer Club - Ohio Premier Invitational	$ 10,425.00
Ohio Public Market Authority – North Market Night Markets	$ 10,000.00
One Dublin – Back to School Celebration	$ 5,000.00
We R One Community – Hospitality Disability Awareness Project	$ 5,000.00
Ohio State University Foundation – LiFEsports Summer Camp	$ 5,000.00
Arthritis Foundation - Classic Auto Show and Cruise-In	$ 16,000.00

Staff presented three questions for committee direction.

First, regarding requests to waive city service fees, the committee agreed that an abbreviated application would be appropriate when an applicant seeks only a fee waiver. Mr. Rubino cautioned that for larger sports tournaments, city fees represent a major share of the grant, and suggested a cap such as 2,500 dollars. Ms. Alutto directed staff to return to a future committee meeting with a recommended cap and a proposed application process.

Second, regarding how staff should evaluate applications relative to the purpose and priorities of the hotel/motel tax, Mr. Rubino noted that the Committee had at times recommended amounts above rubric scores and asked whether common qualities could inform future policy refinements. Mr. Keeler stated that room nights and community or social impact were the two main factors, that social impact is not easily quantified, and that human judgment would remain necessary, citing One Dublin and Elevate Education, as examples. Ms. Alutto agreed, recalling that former colleague Rick Gerber had taught her that the grant balances economic impact with community engagement, and she

expressed appreciation for staff's work. Ms. Johnson said she found great value in the process. No policy changes were requested.

Third, regarding the policy provision that staffing costs are not eligible, the committee agreed by consensus that contractual personnel costs specific to an event are acceptable, but that grant funds may not be used for ongoing or year-round staff, whether classified as employees or as independent contractors. Mr. Rubino stated that staff would review reimbursement requests accordingly, and Ms. Alutto asked that the application instructions be clarified for next year.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Chair, Finance Committee

Clerk of Council