



SLC FOOD MICROGRANT SELECTION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 17th, 2026

The following members of the SLC Food Microgrant Selection Committee were present:

In-Person

Maria Schwarz, *Chair*
Leesie Clegg, *Vice Chair & Secretary*
Josh Rebollo
Karina Villalba

Electronic

Maria Romero
Marifer Rivera
James Hunter

The following members were absent:

Minutes by:

Leesie Clegg, Salt Lake City Sustainability Department

Meeting Time: 2:36 p.m. | Time Adjourned: 4:08 p.m.

1. Welcome & Roll Call

Chair Schwarz welcomed everyone and called role and mentioned that Committee Member Villalba would be late. She thanked everyone for scoring the Community Food Grant applications and ran through the meeting agenda.

2. Approve Meeting Minutes

Chair Schwarz shared a draft of meeting minutes from March 17, 2026 and called for any adjustments, questions or concerns. She announced that in the time between meetings one Home Food Production Grant Awardee withdrew their application so only 112 applicants would be awarded the grant. All applicants were notified of the committee's decision within the previous two weeks. There were no comments, so Committee Member Hunter made a motion to approve with a second from Vice Chair Clegg. All committee members present unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

3. Review Community Food Grant Application Scores/Questions



Chair Schwarz gave an update on the budget, sharing that there would be about \$28,800 to distribute to Community Grant applicants. The total ask from all applicants was about \$170,000.

Chair Schwarz ran through the Community Food Grant scoring process. The decisions will be based on the scores given by the committee out of 5, as well any community context the committee can provide. She reminded the committee that the role of the committee was to decide where best to use of this particular fund.

Committee Member Villalba joined the meeting in person at 2:45 pm.

Community Grant Applications:

Accumold Distribution Green Farms Committee Member Hunter felt this application was AI generated and Chair Schwarz agreed, adding that a few other applications had similar wording and a hollowness to them. Chair Schwarz and Committee Member Rebollo dropped their scores from a 3 to a 2. Committee Member Rivera asked if AI should be a matter for docking points and Chair Schwarz expressed her opinion that it is less about whether they used AI and more about how specific the application was about its project and how grounded in reality of what they can accomplish with the funds.

Albert's Produce Committee Member Rebollo pointed out that this was one of many applications directly tied to IRC's New Roots Program and asked for clarification about the differences. Vice Chair Clegg gave some context on the farmers in the program versus the program itself. Committee Member Hunter shared that he worked with the IRC for years and expressed that he would prefer to fund the farmers directly rather than the New Roots program if we had to decide because New Roots has other funding sources whereas the farmers have less access to funding. He also shared that he knows Albert and felt this was a great application. Committee Member Villalba shared that she also knows Albert and also knows that organizations like New Roots have lost a lot of funding streams in the last couple of years. However, she agreed that funding should go to farmers first. Committee Member Rivera suggested that the City could perhaps find a way to support New Roots directly.

Allred Family Greens Committee Member Hunter pointed out that this farm's name came up in another application. Chair Schwarz and Committee Member Villalba pointed out that community connections within the food system are important and this is an example of that. Committee Member Hunter changed his score from a 3 to a 4.

Blue Sky Institute Chair Schwarz expressed that checking with Public Lands before funding this project would be a good measure and added that their plant share event held on the West Side has been noted by a significant number of Home Food Production awardees as the place they get their plants.



Committee Member Villalba explained that because they added a line in their budget for a mural, she gave this application a 3 out of 5. Vice Chair Clegg asked if it was possible to fund their project but stipulate that they don't use any of the funding for a mural. Committee Member Hunter suggested offering a partial grant and Committee Member Villalba agreed. Committee Member Rebollo and Rivera, and Chair Schwarz changed their score from a 5 to a 4 due to the Mural. Committee Member Romero changed her score to from a 5 to a 3 due to a realization that most of the funds in their budget would go to marketing.

Chef Mikey Committee Member Rivera and Romero expressed the importance of after school programs. Committee Member Villalba felt similarly but also expressed that the committee should prioritize farmers because school programs have more access to funding. Vice Chair Clegg changed her score from a 5 to a 4 due to a lack of clarity in the budget.

Community Health Centers Committee Member Villalba provided context for how much this organization is accomplishing in the community. Chair Schwarz felt putting funding towards their project would be a good use because it would help this project over the finish line.

Craft Lake City Chair Schwarz expressed concern that the timeline of their classes does not line up with the seasonal produce they are planning to purchase. Committee Member Villalba gave context for Craft Lake City's work at Backman Elementary, noting the resources Backman already has that are not being utilized. Vice Chair Clegg changed her score from a 5 to a 3 due to a concern that the scope of their impact was much less than she originally understood. Committee Member Rivera and Rebollo changed their scores to a 3 for similar reasons as well as the additional funding opportunities the organization has that farmers do not.

DBA Good Garden Friend's Committee Members Rebollo and Romero and Chair Schwarz expressed concern that this farm wouldn't be selling to Salt Lake City residents this coming season. Committee Member Romero also felt this farmer was not clear on how to benefit folks using Double Up Food Bucks. Vice Chair Clegg shared that the farmer's plan was to move into Salt Lake markets this year. Committee Member Villalba added that because this farmer will be part of the Farm Incubator Group of Wasatch Community Gardens, his farming will impact all the volunteers and folks who will be helping on that property throughout the year.

Dorcas Tando Kafuti Committee Member Villalba pointed out that New Roots farmers are part of a supportive community which can instill confidence in their project. Committee Member Hunter said he gave this a slightly lower score than the other farmers because there was some lack of clarity in the budget.

East Central Community Council Committee Member Romero moved her score from a 5 to a 4 because the leadership structure seemed unclear. Committee Member Rivera moved her score from a 4 down



to a 3 because she wanted to be consistent with how she scored the other applications that asked for a shed.

Edison Elementary Committee Member Villalba felt like funding for this program could come from many other sources and expressed concern about the ambitious timeline of their project. Chair Schwarz agreed and felt there was lack of clarity around budget, partnerships and preparations for the bureaucratic process ahead. Both Committee Member Villalba and Chair Schwarz shared from their professional backgrounds of working in schools that this application felt like it had not considered all the hoops and red tape that must be dealt with in order to make the garden happen. Vice Chair Clegg and Committee Member Rebollo moved their score from a 5 to a 3 and a 4 to a 3 respectively due to this context.

Committee Member Hunter had to leave the meeting at 4:00 pm.

4. Next Steps

Chair Schwarz shared that the next meeting would pick up where it left off in the applications. She said she would send a spreadsheet with everyone's scores so they could review and prepare for next week's discussion.

5. Adjourn

Chair Schwarz said the meeting would pause and reconvene next week.

APPROVED:  Maria Schwarz (Apr 8, 2026 10:30:04 MDT)

DATE: 04/08/2026