

American Rescue Plan Committee Meeting

02.01.2022

Present at Meeting:

Councilmembers Abe Herman, Randall Reitz, Dennis Simpson

ARPA Committee Members Bill Wade, Linda Taylor, Estrella Ruiz, William Findley, Raul De Villegas Decker, Ben Herman, Cindy Enos-Martinez, Kay Ramachandran, Diane Schwenke, Laurel Cole, Gary Schroen

City Staff Greg Caton; City Manager, Greg LeBlanc; Senior Asst. to the City Manager, Jodi Welch; Finance Director, Scott Rust; Deputy Finance Director, Johnny McFarland; Management Analyst

Introductions

- Greg Caton gave opening remarks
- Self-introductions were given of all present at the meeting

ARPA Presentation

A presentation was given from city staff outlining the eligible use guidelines as described in the Final Rule

Committee Discussion

A question was raised regarding how water, sewer, and broadband fit in to the ARPA SLFRF rules as responding directly to the pandemic. Councilmember Herman suggested that there may be a connection between broadband given accessibility issues of, for instance, children who needed to attend school remotely. City Staff suggested the connection to water and sewer may be an ancillary response to the impact of the pandemic. One committee member also suggested that because of how long the pandemic has lasted, its impacts have hit many areas, including deferred maintenance on infrastructure.

There was a question raised by a committee member regarding whether Mesa County also received SLFRF funds, and it was confirmed that they did indeed receive around \$30 million. One committee member indicated they believe the County is looking at affordable housing initiatives and a community center.

There was discussion regarding the types of projects the committee should be looking at and whether there is an added benefit to prioritizing projects that can benefit from more than just a one-time funding or it could be possible to think about other ways to continue funding certain projects after SLFRF funds have been exhausted.

A question was raised regarding revenue replacement. Given that the city is pursuing the revenue replacement use category, the question is whether or not the committee should still try to work within the other eligible use guidelines prescribed in the final rule. Councilmember Herman confirmed that the city is taking that direction to open flexibility of eligible use projects, but the City's intent is that spending is focused on addressing community issues and pandemic response similar to those described in the final rule. Councilmember Reitz echoed Councilmember Herman's response to stay as close to possible to the intent of what is written in the final rule.

Councilmember Herman asked that the committee discuss official formation of the committee structure including chair nominations. A committee member nominated Bill Wade as Chair which was seconded and voted on.

The Chair commented that (Continue at 45:56)

Vice Chair Nomination

Ben Herman to Vice Chair

- Seconded
- Approved

Wade: I think our responsibility is, how can we take this \$10 million and make the maximum use of it in the City. We are fortunate to have plenty of time to decide on the best use of these funds

Herman: one example is what Dan Rubenstein is doing with his Lighthouse project

- Here's a project that will make a sea change in important community needs

Wade: another aspect is to consider whether we can have more impact with small amounts of money, or should it be left to other available funding sources

Meeting Location, Schedule, and Time

Do we want to do a Doodle?

Are we thinking once a month, twice a month?

Wade: since we do have time, we could meet bi-weekly or monthly until we have our structure and vision developed and approved by council. As we get into the Spring, we will likely want to meet for longer amounts of time as we hammer down these discussions

We could meet here, or the Barn. Both work well virtually

- Second commentor agrees the Barn might be better for hybrid type meetings
- To me, the fan has a high-speed fan going which can be very noisy

Let's figure out times and dates:

Wade: we can put together a package of dates and times by Friday potentially

Herman: I'm a fan of Doodle as it can simplify the process and give a good start

- Wade: I agree, we can have Belinda work on that this week as long as it is restricted enough to make the process work relatively smoothly
- Schwenke: could we go with something like the second week of the month? To reduce the number of available options on the Doodle

There are also requirements under open meeting laws, and we should discuss whether public involvement is encouraged in the discussion

- Should the public be allowed to see interim projects prior to presenting them to Council?
 - o Caton: You could go as far as seeking applications, proposals etc. What we don't want is to not have any of this engagement before it goes before Council
- We don't necessarily want to entertain public comment at this time for this committee.
 - o Yes, but there are ways we could allow public input such as having them put it in writing

Chair: I would also like for Council to advise us on timelines, when we are expected to have proposals developed. That would be very helpful

Comment: I think we should discuss the areas we might be interested in

Chair: In our first discussion we should discuss what our real objectives are, understanding that this is largely a one-time payout

Herman: We should also think about criteria that we want to use to evaluate the type of projects we are interested in prior to looking at specific projects

Herman: How could we dovetail with what the County is doing? May be important to think about a liaison

Committee member: I've heard they are potentially putting resources in to Housing and could be an opportunity to leverage both our funds

Committee member: I would love to see if there has been a needs assessment done at a community level to understand what the need is in any given area. In addition, where have we already put money and what was the ROI on that money? Otherwise, we might find ourselves in a position that does not maximize the use of funds

Committee member: Just so everyone is aware, Mesa County has done a needs assessment, but they have only just gotten it this week. With regard to what's been done and how effective it is, that may take more time and effort

Committee member: We also have the housing needs assessment that can be made available to everyone

Committee member: It could be possible for us to bring organizations that have been funded with dollars to have them explain what the ROI has been in previous years

Caton: Just as a reminder, some of these organizations are not necessarily in the purview of the City. However, some areas like Housing the City could be a good resource for

Committee member: Is there something we could work into a proposal requirement: could we require the organizations do some of the leg work to present to the committee?

Chair: My list of things to do

- Caton is going to get a Doodle poll for dates and times
- Our job will be to get a list out to the committee of everyone's contact info
- I will work on seeing if I can get some of this background information out to you in advance
- Need to get an agenda posted as well for the next meeting

Caton: We could circulate information found but then attach them to the agenda in the spirit of transparency

We will get copies of the slides? Yes.