

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, June 7, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. This meeting was held as an electronic meeting under the authority of the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976) as amended by PA 254 of 2020.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Patrese Griffin
Jeanne Hess
Erin Knott
Chris Praedel
Jack Urban

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Eric Cunningham

All members present indicated they were physically located in the City of Kalamazoo.

Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, Deputy City Manager Jeff Chamberlain, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and Deputy City Clerk Shelby Moss.

Commissioner Excused

Commissioner Urban, seconded by Commissioner Praedel, moved to excuse the absence of Commissioner Cunningham. With a voice vote the motion passed.

Communications

City Manager Ritsema announced a virtual City Commission retreat on Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss future City Commission priorities.

Public Comments

Next, when an opportunity was given for general citizen comments, the following people addressed the City Commission:

Jeff Messer, City resident, expressed concerns regarding the continued use of the virtual meeting format for City Commission meetings.

Review of Items on
Upcoming City
Commission Agendas

Deputy City Manager Chamberlain reviewed items for upcoming City Commission meeting agendas, including the policy items on the agenda for the 7:00 business meeting and he stated additional topics for future Committee of the Whole meetings would be generated from the meeting discussion.

2021-00
Presentation on the
American Rescue Plan
(ARP) Local Fiscal
Recovery Funds

City Manager Ritsema and Deputy City Manager Jeff Chamberlain delivered a presentation entitled *American Rescue Plan (ARP) Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

City Manager Ritsema proposed the following questions to the Commission for consideration and discussion: 1) Did Commissioners want to dive deep with a program or project why or why not; 2) Did Commissioners want to use a separate process for program decisions, or use the current budget review processes, or a combination of plans that guide the City's work to evaluate where the money should be spent, or did the Commission have a different idea; 3) Did Commissioners want to use the funds for programs or capital? City Manager Ritsema expressed hope that a separate infrastructure plan would be coming from the federal government, and he stated the use of those funds would be put towards roads and infrastructure.

Mayor Anderson thanked City Manager Ritsema for his presentation and highlighted the Department of Treasury document 31 C.F.R (Code of Federal Regulations) part 35 as a valuable document for guiding decisions. Mayor Anderson remarked on the overlap of funding that may come from other sources and the need to be aware of other COVID relief and stimulus dollars being spent to best leverage our dollars in the community.

In response to questions from Mayor Anderson, Deputy City Manager Chamberlain stated the City had referenced document 31 C.F.R. part 35, and he stated the presentation given was a summary of the document. Deputy City Manager Chamberlain stated the City was reviewing guidance published by the Michigan Municipal League, the National League of Cities, and the Government Finance Officers Association. Deputy City Manager Chamberlain stated the City had the foundational guidance, but as the City developed programs, staff would be checking in with the federal government and State of Michigan to ensure the money was being spent appropriately.

City Manager Ritsema stated the required quarterly reporting to both the state and federal government should help identify early on if the money was not being spent on the appropriate programs.

Commissioner Urban expressed support for quickly funding and starting any experimental programs on a small scale so the programs could be evaluated for additional ARP funding. Commissioner Urban was pleased with the amount of time given by the federal government to spend the APR funds, and he stated the length of time allowed the City to assess and adjust program funding in the areas of homelessness, public health, and unemployment.

Vice Mayor Griffin stated the City needed to develop a timeline for how and when money would be spent, so the community had a clear picture.

In response to questions from Commissioners, City Manager Ritsema stated the City had the in-house expertise to design a community input strategy, and if there was a specific area of the community the Commission wanted to receive input from regarding a program or project, the City could reach out to those community members. City Manager Ritsema stated the City wanted to be a resource for the ideas and solutions coming from the community. City Manager Ritsema stated funding conversations with Kalamazoo County were just beginning, but he was hopeful there would a coordinated effort and partnership to fund overlapping programs.

Commissioner Praedel expressed support for using the Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 document as a guide for program funding, and he hoped the City would be “bold” and fund programs that would provide monumental change for the community. Commissioner Praedel stated it would be helpful to receive community input regarding the most imminent impacts from the pandemic and ideas that would provide transformational change. Commissioner Praedel suggested enlisting the help of City Commission candidates to receive community input because they were already knocking on doors and talking with residents. Commissioner Praedel observed the ARP funding provided a means to guide the community out of the COVID-19 pandemic in a strong way.

Commissioner Urban expressed concern regarding the deteriorating housing stock in the City and expressed support for a home repair/maintenance loan or gift

2021-00

Presentation on the
American Rescue Plan
(ARP) Local Fiscal
Recovery Funds (cont'd)

2021-00

Presentation on the
American Rescue Plan
(ARP) Local Fiscal
Recovery Funds (cont'd)

program for residents to fix up their homes. Commissioner Urban also expressed support for funding a virus detection program using the City's wastewater, as it was something only the City could perform but would benefit all of Kalamazoo County.

Vice Mayor Griffin expressed support for a 30-day community survey specifically asking the community how the APR money should be spent and how the money would best serve the community coming out of COVID. Vice Mayor Griffin asked that the compiled information be presented to the Commission at a future meeting, and that the survey be used as the framework for ARP funding decisions.

Commissioner Praedel and Commissioner Urban both expressed support for a community wide survey regarding the distribution of APR funds.

Mayor Anderson asked City Attorney Robinson to evaluate any proposed funding ideas and especially any direct funding to residents from a legal perspective and report back to the Commission at a future meeting. Mayor Anderson expressed support for a coordinated funding effort with Kalamazoo County and local jurisdictions.

In response to questions from Commissioners, City Manager Ritsema stated once a consensus was received from the Commission regarding a 30-day community survey City staff could present survey questions to the Commission at the June 12th retreat. City Manager Ritsema stated a community survey would help the City administration identify immediate community needs versus long term needs or goals. City Manager Ritsema stated the City's budget revenue shortfall was due to losses in the areas of parking fees, Public Safety contracts, street revenue, license fees and permits, and other charges for events and services.

By consensus the City Commission authorized the City Administration to put a community survey regarding the use of APR funds in the field for 30 days.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hess, Chief Financial Officer Steve Vicenzi stated he and his staff would be able to accommodate the additional accounting workload for the ARP funding, as they had experience doing the accounting for Foundation for Excellence funds.

Deputy City Manager Lam stated the City Administration had other community surveys that could be used as a foundation for the ARP funding survey. Deputy City Manager Lam stated the City Administration would explore additional ways to disseminate the survey throughout the community, not just in a digital format.

Deputy City Manager Chamberlain stated the City Commission would need to narrow their focus by giving direction on select programs if it was the desire of Commissioners to dive deep on a project.

Upon request from City Manager Ritsema, Commissioner Urban volunteered to remove item G-3 from the consent agenda at the 7:00pm business meeting so a presentation could be given by Public Services Director James Baker.

Commissioner
Comments

Next an opportunity was given for comments from City Commissioners, but no comments were offered.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelby Moss
Deputy City Clerk

For City Commission approval on October 18, 2021

Approved by: _____
David F. Anderson, Mayor
Dated: October 18, 2021