

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, November 21, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Jeanne Hess
Stephanie Hoffman
Esteven Juarez
Chris Praedel

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Vice Mayor Don Cooney*
Qianna Decker

Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and City Clerk Scott Borling.

Commissioners Excused

Commissioner Hoffman, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to excuse the absences of Vice Mayor Cooney and Commissioner Decker. With a voice vote the motion passed.

Public Comments

An opportunity was given for general public comments, but no comments were offered.

*Vice Mayor Cooney arrived at 5:05 p.m.

2022-45-01

Presentation re:
ARPA Funding
Recommendations

The following staff members delivered a presentation entitled *2023 ARPA Recommendations*: City Manager Ritsema; CFO Steve Vicenzi; Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Director Antonio Mitchell; Public Services Director James Baker; Acting Public Safety Chief Dave Boysen; and Parks and Recreation Director Patrick McVerry. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for the meeting.

In response to questions and comments from Commissioners, staff provided the following information:

- the process for making ARPA funding recommendations started with departments submitting projects, which were then scored by a cross-departmental team based on alignment with the Strategic Vision and City Commission priorities. Other scoring factors included program attributes, such as population served and the level of mandate for the program/service.
- the \$500,000 allocated for Downtown Placemaking would fund planning work for public restrooms.
- businesses could potentially receive both a Façade Grant and Whitebox Buildout Assistance. These are both grants, not loans; they are an investment in the community. Businesses on the waiting list for one of these programs can get additional support from the City, but those other opportunities are loan programs.
- home-based businesses are not eligible for the Business Development Fund (BDF) programs. Over the next two years the BDF will shift its focus to home-based businesses. The Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Economic Growth Authority will be able to fund assistance programs for downtown businesses.

- CPED had other funding sources; ARPA funding was extra and would help close the gaps. CPED staff needed to hear from the City Commission regarding targets for affordable housing. If ARPA funds were not available, the priorities would be the same, but the City would not be able to do the same amount of work.
- “Lead Support” under the Housing category was for lead remediation inside homes.
- the stormwater system was not funded by the water or wastewater utilities; it used up funds quickly and competed with major and local streets for funding.
- the Bridging Opportunities program was for young people who were 14-16 years old. Eight youth were involved in the program, which now ran all year long. Participants come to the program through a recommendation from the courts.
- law enforcement agencies across the country were struggling to retain officers and attract applicants; the proposed retention bonuses were in the median range compared to other agencies.
- gun violence was decreasing due to a balanced approach of outreach and enforcement, in collaboration with the community.
- the Public Safety “Training Center” dollars were for a new gun range and driving track.
- the Imagine Kalamazoo Engagement and Outreach funds would be used for community meetings and a “barriers to housing” study.
- the ARPA funding proposals for 2023 would not exhaust all of the ARPA funds, but the slides included projects proposed for funding in the outyears, which would use all of the ARPA funds.

Commissioner Juarez remarked that the City needed to decide whether ARPA funding was the best funding source for the various activities.

Commissioner Praedel expressed appreciation for Public Safety’s proactive responses to group violence and their efforts to provide wrap around services. Commissioner Praedel expressed a sense of pride regarding the number of youth who were involved with the City’s summer programs.

Vice Mayor Cooney and Commissioner Hoffman expressed reservations about using ARPA funds for a multi-purposed building at the Farmers Market, and they questioned whether the Parks and Recreation Department could use school buildings for their afterschool programs.

Mayor Anderson noted the presentations on the FFE budget and ARPA funding fed into the proposed budget, which would be transmitted to the City Commission on December 1st. Mayor Anderson commented that budgeting involved hard decisions, and those hard decisions started with City staff as they prepared the list of proposed projects for ARPA funding. Mayor Anderson noted these decisions were informed by long-term plans and the City Commission priorities.

2022-45-01

Presentation re:
ARPA Funding
Recommendations
(cont’d)

Commissioner
Comments

City Manager Ritsema stated the budget discussions might begin at the Committee of the Whole meeting on December 5th.

An opportunity was given for general comments from City Commissioners, but no comments were offered.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

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