

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, August 16, 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*
Eric Cunningham
Erin Knott
Chris Praedel
Jack Urban

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Jeanne Hess**

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, Assistant City Attorney Marcia Jones, and City Clerk Scott Borling.

*At various points Vice Mayor Griffin experienced issues with technology that affected her presence in the meeting.

Commissioner Excused

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

Public Comments

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

Dorothy Appleyard, City resident, spoke about a recent Planning Commission hearing for a property on Alcott Street and questioned how a person who did not have control of a property could request a rezoning. Ms. Appleyard offered remarks that connected the Natural Features Protection (NFP) ordinance with the Alcott Street property and the property at 322 East Stockbridge Avenue.

**Commissioner Hess arrived at 5:03 p.m.

Review of Items on
Upcoming City
Commission Agendas

Deputy City Manager Chamberlain reviewed items for upcoming City Commission meeting agendas, including items on the agenda for the 7:00 business meeting and the following topics for future Committee of the Whole (CoW) meetings: the September 7th CoW meeting would include follow-up with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS) regarding the OIR Group Report.

2021-00
ARP Funding Allocation
Process

City Manager Ritsema provided introductory remarks for a presentation and discussion of process for allocating American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.

Deputy City Manager Laura Lam, Chief Financial Officer Steve Vicenzi, and Grants Specialist Kerry Lyn Williams delivered a presentation entitled *American Rescue Plan (ARP) Phase I Allocation Process Proposal*. A copy of the slides from the presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

Commissioner Urban asked staff to put a "Hiring Bonuses for Educators" program through the prioritization tool and scoring process.

Commissioner Praedel noted the “Hiring Bonuses for Educators” proposal had been brought forward by Kalamazoo County Ready 4’s (KC Ready 4’s), and he spoke about the urgent need to address the shortage of educators and childcare workers in the community.

Mayor Anderson encouraged Commissioners to reflect on and respond to the prioritization model that was presented, rather than focusing on specific programs.

Commissioner Cunningham noted data was a luxury for African American non-profit organizations, and he expressed concern about equity as it related to past performance data.

Mayor Anderson stated the City’s ARP allocation process needed to be transparent and accessible. Mayor Anderson asked Commissioners if they were comfortable with the process that was presented and with staff implementing the plan.

Commissioner Cunningham stated he was not opposed to the plan that was presented.

Commissioner Urban stated “urgency” was a missing evaluation factor and expressed concern the City would miss an opportunity that needed immediate funding.

Commissioner Praedel expressed support for the five priorities presented by staff and offered brief comments on ways ARP funding could be used in these areas. Commissioner Praedel encouraged the City to be mindful of other potential funding sources, such as federal funding for infrastructure and funding options from the state. Commissioner Praedel urged the City to be thoughtful about working with other jurisdictions and community partners, and he expressed hope that the City would be a regional leader in areas of need like youth development. Commissioner Praedel remarked on the good response to the ARP community survey and thanked people for participating.

Commissioner Hess suggested that the City work closely with Kalamazoo County, especially in the areas of safety and the juvenile home.

Commissioner Urban offered that the next urgent issue could be the end of the eviction moratorium.

Mayor Anderson expressed appreciation for the team that presented and asked whether urgent needs could be addressed in the current budget year. Mayor Anderson questioned whether the Commission wanted to prioritize categories that were more granular or specific topics like gun violence. Mayor Anderson noted there was an opportunity to take advantage of faith-based organizations and grassroots, emerging non-profit organizations.

In response to Commissioner questions, staff provided the following information:

- ARP funding for 2022 would be focused on City projects, so the past performance data that would be considered was data from past City projects. The United Way Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) process was focused on rapidly deploying resources into the community in a way that recognized the limitations Commissioner Cunningham referenced with regard to data.

2021-00ARP Funding Allocation
Process (cont’d)

2021-00ARP Funding Allocation
Process (cont'd)

- the initial request for project proposals was made to City departments in May. The ARP team would be circling back to departments to ask about data.
- representatives from the following departments and offices would be on the program/project evaluation team: Human Resources; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; City Manager's Office; and Management Services. The members would be chosen for their areas of specialization.
- every year, as part of the regular budget process, departments submitted special requests for funding. This year the special requests would be evaluated with the ARP prioritization process.
- the DRF was a mechanism that was already in place and could be used to address urgent needs in the community.
- \$7 million of the ARP funding would need to be used to fill budgetary gaps as a result of COVID-19. The amount available to program was \$31 million.
- it was possible for the timing of the ARP funds disbursement to affect project timing, but it was not likely.
- the project evaluation and ranking process could begin within the next two weeks; the ranking would need to be completed by the end of September to fit with the 2022 budget process.
- the DRF had been used in the past for urgent projects like emergency housing and KC Ready 4's, so it would be a natural mechanism to use again. ARP regulatory compliance would need to be fully understood before the City could move forward with funding projects through the DRF.
- the United Way had made gun violence prevention one of its focus areas, opening the door for addressing this area through the DRF.
- the City received approximately 1,500 responses to the ARP community survey, with 300 of the responses coming from people who were not City residents. The responses and demographic information would be published on the City's website.

In response to a question from City Manager Ritsema, Deputy City Manager Lam stated September 7th could be the goal for Commission action on the DRF funding allocation, but it would take time to integrate the ARP regulations with the DRF process in a way that did not ruin the already streamlined DRF process while protecting City funds.

Mayor Anderson remarked on other resources that could be coming to the Kalamazoo community, include ARP funding from the state, federal ARP funds received by Kalamazoo County, and federal infrastructure funding. Mayor Anderson noted 31 CFR Part 35 was the federal publication that contained the rules for the use of ARP funds.

Commissioner Hess thanked City staff for their presentation and hard work.

City Manager Ritsema thanked Commissioners for their input and City staff for their hard work.

Next an opportunity was given for comments from City Commissioners.

In response to a question from Commissioner Urban, City Manager Ritsema stated he would talk about the City response to the OIR Group Report at the 7:00 Business Meeting.

Commissioner Praedel asked staff to ensure that Vice Mayor Griffin was able to be heard during the 7:00 meeting, and he asked that she have an opportunity to make any remarks she would have made during the Committee of the Whole.

City Manager Ritsema stated the “City Commissioner Comments” portion of the Business Meeting would be the appropriate place for the Vice Mayor to offer remarks she would have made at the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Commissioner Hess stated it was remarkable to think that IK 2025 had been used to address the impacts of a global pandemic.

Mayor Anderson thanked everyone who participated in the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on September 7, 2021

Approved by: _____

David F. Anderson, Mayor
Dated: September 7, 2021

Commissioner
Comments

Adjournment