

CITY OF PALM BAY, FLORIDA

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING 2021-32

Held on Thursday, the 9th day of December 2021, at the City Hall Council Chambers, 120 Malabar Road, SE, Palm Bay, Florida.

This meeting was properly noticed pursuant to law; the minutes are on file in the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, Palm Bay, Florida.

The meeting was called to order at the hour of 6:02 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

MAYOR:	Robert Medina	Present
DEPUTY MAYOR:	Kenny Johnson	Present
COUNCILMEMBER:	Randy Foster	Present
COUNCILMEMBER:	Donny Felix	Present
CITY MANAGER:	Suzanne Sherman	Present
CITY ATTORNEY:	Patricia Smith	Present
CITY CLERK:	Terese Jones	Present

CITY STAFF: Present was Joan Junkala-Brown, Deputy City Manager; Nelson Moya, Chief of Police; Britta Kellner, Special Projects Manager; Juliet Misconi, Chief Procurement Officer.

BUSINESS:

1. Further discussion related to the allocation of American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Mrs. Junkala-Brown advised that \$18,009,865 was allocated to the city. Disbursement would be given in two (2) equal tranches (\$9,004,932.50), and the first disbursement was received on June 17, 2021. Funding had to be expended or earmarked by December 31, 2024, and funding had to be fully expended by December 31, 2026.

Eligible uses for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds were:

- Respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality;
- Respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers;

- The provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the COVID–19 public health emergency relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency; and
- Make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure

To date, Council had approved the use of \$649,810.86 in ARPA funding for the purchase of 151 body camera units and all associated hardware and licensing for the first two years of a five-year contract; \$2,000,000 for Building E; \$2,000,000 for the city-wide financial system replacement; up to eighty (80) hours of paid leave for employees impacted by COVID-19, as well as an additional forty (40) hours for certain safety personnel.

Mrs. Junkala-Brown said that staff was seeking Council's consideration of ARPA funding for the following items which were eligible under Revenue Loss, and which also supported a request previously approved by City Council:

- Purchase of 120 smart phones and cases (\$80,798.12) to support the previously approved acquisition of 151 body camera units;
- Disaster Recovery Site Cloud Software (\$275,000). There was an estimated annual renewal of \$200,000, which was not an eligible use of ARPA funding and would need to be budgeted annually in the General Fund; and
- Cybersecurity Enhancements (\$300,000) for the remaining three years of the City's five-year Cisco Enterprise Agreement.

Numerous individuals commented on the need to address homelessness in the city and provided other suggestions for use of ARPA funds.

Phil Moore, resident, asked that Council consider placing monies towards the homeless and homeless shelters and look toward affordable housing in the future. He suggested purchasing a building to serve as a shelter and leasing it to non-profit organization that could provide the services.

Bishop Merton Clark, Truth Revealed Ministries, commented on the fire that occurred at their cold night shelter. He said there was a serious need for a homeless shelter, especially a cold night shelter, in Palm Bay as no other cold night shelters existed in the city.

Jeff Njus, Daily Bread, Inc., supported any efforts to assist the homeless. He reminded Council that the City of Melbourne had set aside \$2.5 million to the Daily Bread towards

addressing homelessness. Mayor Medina asked if Melbourne had gone through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Mr. Njus said he understood that there would be an RFP process that could possibly be piggybacked by other cities, but he hoped that funds would not be distributed piecemeal. He added that Melbourne specifically stated that funding would be geared towards Daily Bread. Mayor Medina asked Mr. Njus' vision for Daily Bread. Mr. Njus said he wanted to have an outreach center at a better site than where the organization was currently located. A site had not been determined, but he was working with realtors, and was very open to being in Palm Bay due to the ability to expand and because of the number of homeless individuals. Mr. Njus said his focus was not to have a large homeless shelter but targeted flexible housing that would provide emergency and bridge housing. The center would be available twenty-four (24) hours a day. The second aspect of his vision was building more housing. Mr. Njus added that this facility would not be another Circles of Care, but partnerships would have to be made to address mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Bill Battin, resident, said that all ARPA funds should be used for tangible purposes, so you know exactly where the monies were being spent. He suggested utilizing surplus city property and those sale proceeds would then be used for the Road Maintenance Fund. Another option for ARPA funds would be to lower the City's debt.

Kera Beard, resident, felt this was an opportunity to work with mobile shelters, especially as the homeless population constantly moved around. She said that the lack of affordable housing was a huge issue.

Mayor Medina asked if staff had looked at any city properties that may be used for a facility. Mrs. Junkala-Brown said some of the challenges were that any sizeable properties were in the middle of single-family homes, many sites were much smaller, and some were previously reserved for drainage but were not ideal. After speaking with organizations that provided services, they preferred sites that were located near bus routes, daycare facilities, etc. and she was not aware of any properties that would fit those criteria.

Mayor Medina felt a motion should be entertained for the requests made by staff that were eligible uses for ARPA funding.

Motion by Deputy Mayor Johnson, seconded by Mr. Felix, to allocate ARPA for the following requests:

- Purchase of 120 smart phones and cases (\$80,798.12) to support the previously approved acquisition of 151 body camera units;

- Disaster Recovery Site Cloud Software (\$275,000). There was an estimated annual renewal of \$200,000, which was not an eligible use of ARPA funding and would need to be budgeted annually in the General Fund; and
- Cybersecurity Enhancements (\$300,000) for the remaining three years of the City's five-year Cisco Enterprise Agreement.

Ms. Sherman clarified that the \$200,000 renewal for the Disaster Recovery Site Cloud Software would be for two (2) years for a total of \$675,000 (\$275,000 for the software; \$400,000 for the two-year annual renewal) and the renewal did qualify as eligible use.

Mr. Felix withdrew his second to the motion.

Motion by Deputy Mayor Johnson, seconded by Mr. Felix, to amend the motion to include the \$200,000 annual renewal for two (2) years totaling \$400,000. Motion carried with members voting as follows: Mayor Medina, Yea; Deputy Mayor Johnson, Yea; Councilman Foster, Yea; Councilman Felix, Yea.

Mayor Medina asked about the RFP process regarding the homeless aspect. Deputy Mayor Johnson said he was a big supporter of affordable housing and he had spoken with staff a few years ago about voluntary inclusionary housing as it did not require any funding due to House Bill 7103 from 2019. He asked if this bill was similar to House Bill 1339. Mrs. Junkala-Brown said the bills were similar except one was mandatory and the other was voluntary. Deputy Mayor Johnson said that as this option required no funding, then more funding could be allocated elsewhere.

Mr. Felix felt that was a great idea, but he wanted to address the immediate issue of homelessness and emergency transitional housing. He said that Council needed to figure out and make a commitment of how much should be set aside for this current crisis. Deputy Mayor Johnson said he just wanted to get things going now so that when the city was ready for affordable housing, everything would already be in place. Ms. Smith advised that there were provisions and state statutes related to affordable housing and staff would have to create an inclusionary housing ordinance that may provide incentives for a developer to set aside part of their project for affordable housing, such as impact fees, density, etc.

Mayor Medina asked Council's vision for moving forward.

Mr. Felix asked the specifics of the contract for the senior center. Ms. Sherman said the building was being leased to the Greater South Brevard Citizen Center, Inc., a not-for-

profit organization which paid \$10.00 per year for a five-year term. Mr. Felix said his vision was to see something similar. He said the city should provide the infrastructure and form a partnership with a not-for-profit organization, then potentially have for-profit entities contribute to the cause, and charities could provide the services.

Mayor Medina felt the city should partner with an organization that already had their own contributors and resources through an RFP process. He was unsure of the idea of buying or building a facility and as costs could be significantly higher than the \$2 million being discussed tonight. Mr. Felix said an example would be the vacant hotel on Palm Bay Road, east of Babcock Street. It could be used as transitional housing and ran by a non-profit organization. He asked if that property was for sale. Mrs. Junkala-Brown had spoken with the owner of that property in the past and did not believe it was for sale.

Mr. Foster said his concern was that if this Council made a decision today, then a future Council could take a different route and undo everything that was put into place. He preferred the RFP process with \$3 million set aside for the homeless or a homeless shelter and \$48,000 could be used immediately for emergency shelter purposes during the upcoming winter, such as vouchers. He did not want to just hand out money but wanted agreements in place to show where the monies were going. Mayor Medina and Deputy Mayor Johnson felt that a \$1 million allocation was more appropriate.

Ms. Sherman said there were many options as stated by Council and staff would structure an RFP scope for Council's review before moving forward. Mrs. Junkala-Brown said that without a scope for the RFP, she suggested utilizing the Request for Applications (RFA) process in which applicants would provide their proposals as to how they would use the funds and would be eligible uses.

Mayor Medina suggested a hybrid program that would include a mental health component as part of the continuum of care. Mr. Foster expressed concern with including mental health as it involved HIPAA laws and he felt that was a service that should be handled by health professionals. He did not want the \$3 million to go to one organization, but possibly two (2) or three (3) organizations that could tackle the homelessness issue. This was Council's opportunity to invest in people. Mr. Felix said that \$1.5 million could be allocated towards a shelter; \$500,000 for mental health services; and \$1 million for affordable housing and working with developers for same. Deputy Mayor Johnson said he did not want to lock in any dollar amounts until the RFP process was completed as the numbers could be less. There was further discussion on options of how to proceed with an RFP or RFA.

Mrs. Misconi explained that funds to non-profits were specifically exempted from the procurement process, but there was an option for Council to allocate funds to non-profits without going through a formal procurement process. She suggested a Request for Information (RFI) which could be informal. It could be a one-page form sent out to the non-profit organizations requesting what projects they could do and how much it would cost. It could be done in a short timeframe and the data would assist Council in determining how much should be allocated for the project.

Ms. Sherman said that if Council was agreeable to a dollar amount, staff would present an overview of the process at a future Council meeting. However, a dollar amount was needed for staff to move forward. Council concurred to proceed with an RFI.

Susan Connelly, resident, suggested that Council set aside a specific dollar amount, not spend anything immediately, tap into the resources through the Florida Chamber and utilize what they already have in place.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at the hour of 8:38 P.M.

Rob Medina, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Terese M. Jones, CITY CLERK