

SPECIAL COMMISSIONERS' MEETING - TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2022
ARPA COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brian Baird, Commissioner, at 10:00 A.M. Ron Deer, Councilman, Rob Henderson, Councilman, Kevin Walls, Commissioner, Ron West, Commissioner, and Jonathan T. Myers, Councilman, were present.

Consideration of Funding Grants for Local Food Banks

Mr. Deer stated the definition of food insecurity; a person is food insecure when they lack regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth to develop an active and healthy life. This may be due to the unavailability of food and/or lack of resources to obtain food. He stated food insecurity can have a wide impact, depending on each individual's circumstances. Some of the most common effects of food insecurity include:

- Serious health and mental health complications, people who are facing hunger may be forced to choose between spending money on food or medical care.
- There could be damage to a child's ability to learn and grow.
- Food insecurity causes difficult decisions to be made; such as choosing between paying for food, heat, electricity, rent, or transportation.

Mr. Deer stated there is food insecurity in Johnson County based on his research. He said there are many food pantries serving Johnson County. He suggested allocating \$100,000 of ARPA Funds for food insecurity by using a grant application process; with an award limit of no greater than \$10,000 per agency. He said this is covered under the regulatory ARPA Funds. Discussion was held and question were addressed.

Mr. Baird stated Emily Conwell, Grant Administrator, could assist with preparing the grant application form. He said the application process should be open for all who are qualified to apply.

Mr. Deer made a motion to allocate \$100,000 of ARPA Funds to be used for distribution to Johnson County Food Pantries who have applied and qualified through a grant process. Mr. Walls seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

Mr. Henderson stated he liked this idea and he believed the application process should be made reasonable in its requirements; noting it would not be necessary for applicants to supply pages and pages of data for approval. He said to keep in mind that certain organizations may be loosely organized, such as the Good Cheer Fund. Mr. Henderson said he would suggest keeping the grant application process fair and simple.

Mr. West stated once this is publicized there will be many we are not aware of who may qualify. He suggested a flat rate for distribution and not a prorated amount.

Mr. Walls stated these details could be discussed and determined once a sub-committee is selected to review and approve the grants.

Shena Johnson, County Attorney, stated this request would go before the Council in July via Ordinance.

It was unanimously decided the sub-committee would consist of Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Deer, and Ms. Conwell.

Mr. Walls stated this program may need to be revisited in the future if the grant process is successful more ARPA Funds could be used. Discussion was held and questions were addressed.

Consideration of Funding for Additional Compensation for County Employees

Mr. Baird stated this item has been discussed previously; however, things have changed. Mr. Baird explained compensation for County Employees is now a matter of helping with inflation and employee retention as well as compensating for time worked during COVID. He said he would like to do something that would help all employees not just a few. He suggested a one-time stipend for full time employees, part time employees, employees who worked from home during COVID, and those employees who worked in person to during COVID. He stated this request qualified under Regulatory ARPA Funds.

Mrs. Johnson stated the updated employee count as of last Friday was five hundred and seventy two (572) full-time employees and one hundred and fifty nine (159) active part-time employees. She said if the Committee chooses to pursue the avenue of pay retention rather than premium pay there would not be as many constraints.

Dan Hedden, Baker Tilly, appeared before the Committee via zoom and explained the options of paying employees with ARPA Funds, using either premium pay or retention pay. He said regardless of the decision that is made, you must check ARPA Funds guidance to make sure your decision fits within the guidance.

Mr. Baird said he would like to see \$1,700,000 allocated as additional compensation for county employees.

Mr. West stated he has always been supportive of county employees. He said Johnson County has been generous to their employees and their work efforts are recognized in ways such as, receiving paid holidays, paid personal days, receiving health benefits at a reduced premium; they are accommodated for any special needs they may have. Mr. West stated during the pandemic employees did not miss a day of work, they never missed getting paid, County Council gave a higher percentage of pay increases during COVID as compared to past years. He said while our County Employees were secure in their employment, citizens of Johnson County were losing their jobs, losing their businesses, single parents with children were suffering hardships because of the need to stay home; they could not work and they had no supplemental income. He said for this Committee to appropriate a \$1,700,000 stipend to County Employees would be a slap in the face to tax-payers in this County. Mr. West said inflation effects every person, not just County Employees; if you do this additional compensation you will be rewarding County Employees at the expense of citizens and tax-payers of Johnson County.

Mr. Henderson stated this is a tough discussion. He said he feels this is a way to help people and their families in our County. He stated there is a prescribed way within ARPA regulations that would allow this to be done. Discussion was held; questions were addressed and ideas were discussed.

Mr. Henderson made a motion to appropriate an amount not to exceed \$1,700,000 payable in 2022 to be used for additional compensation for County Employees who are eligible for premium/retention pay under the ARPA guidelines. Mr. Walls seconded the motion, which carried 5-1; Mr. West voted no.

Consideration of Funding for Certain County Roads

Mr. Walls stated that \$3,000,000 had been previously appropriated by the Committee as the amount set aside for County Roads. He stated the County Highway Department had identified \$1,500,000 of road repair needed within subdivisions; he noted there was a caveat that these roads be located outside White River Township and within a subdivision.

Mr. Walls said there are another seventeen (17) roads that need a pacer reading; these seventeen (17) roads are outside the subdivisions mentioned above. He stated for transparency reasons it is important to note, these roads are not included within any subdivisions; the remaining \$1,500,000 will be used for the additional seventeen (17) roads that have been identified for needed repairs. He said he could get specifics on the type of repair that is planned if additional information is needed. Discussion was held and questions were addressed.

Mr. Baird stated the consensus of the Committee was to move forward using the \$1,500,000; all agreed.

Mrs. Johnson stated she would update the Ordinance to reflect the additional \$1,500,000.

Update on Hospital Road Campus Project

Mr. Walls presented the Johnson County Health Department Campus - Conceptual Layout to the Committee. He stated that he and Wes Harrison, Project Manager, had worked on this together. Mr. Walls said he would like for the Committee to review the layout and then reach out to himself or Mr. Harrison with questions, concerns, and suggestions.

Mr. Harrison approached the podium and gave a brief overview of the Health Department Campus - Conceptual Layout. He stated this is *a* way to do this project; maybe not *the* way, but it is a good start.

Mr. Walls stated this project will be phased over a number of years and different needs will arise. He said he believes first on the agenda will be the Health Department, the Coroner's Office and Community Corrections. Discussion was held and questions were addressed.

Mr. Baird stated everyone could send their future Agenda ideas and or concerns to Mrs. Johnson; the Agenda for the next meeting would be determined by Mr. Baird.

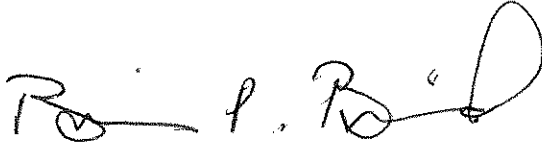
Mr. Henderson stated he had a question for Mr. Hedden; one of the facilities mentioned in the Health Department Campus - Conceptual Layout is a Mental Health Facility. He said ARPA guidelines mention Mental Health Facility and Equipment are eligible for ARPA Funds. He asked was it possible in a Campus setting to use a mix of regulatory ARPA Funds along with other funding such as the General Fund. He also asked, if this is possible, can you pro-rate costs based on the percentage of use.

Mr. Hedden stated there is a broad latitude to use ARPA Funds for Mental Health purposes. To the extent if there is pro-rated cost associated with using a particular building; this would need to be written into your justification of costs for the dollars that are allocated or pro-rated toward this project. He said it is important that you refer to the ARPA guidance and make sure there is nothing that says you cannot do this; if there is nothing stating you can't do it, then you write it into your job description, provide written justification, and then make it part of your budget. Mr. Hedden stated you are allowed to use other dollars from other funds toward this project.

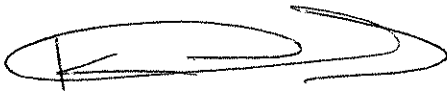
AJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Walls moved to adjourn. Mr. Myers seconded the motion, which unanimously carried.

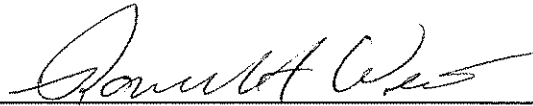
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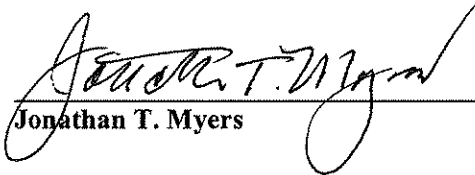
Brian Baird



Kevin Walls



Ron West



Jonathan T. Myers

Rob Henderson



Ron Deer

Attest:

Pamela J. Burton
Auditor



