

SPECIAL CALLED
COMMISSIONERS/COUNCIL MEETING

Jefferson County Public Safety Center, 620 Green Road, Madison, IN 47250

DATE 12-21-2021

Commissioner Bramer called the meeting to order. Those also in attendance were: Commissioner Robert Little, Commissioner Ron Lee, Councilwoman Pam Crozier, Councilman Chris Shelton, Councilman Ray Denning, Councilwoman Heather Foy, Councilwoman Judy Smith, Councilman Gary Copeland, Councilman Ray Black and Auditor Heather Huff.

The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the draft plan of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds that was submitted to Barnes and Thornburg for their review. Barnes and Thornburg provided justification for each of the categories.

The following topics were discussed:

Negative Economic Impact- Barnes and Thornburg advised that providing loans and grants to businesses and nonprofits is an acceptable use of the ARP money. Money could also be provided to County fire departments to complete projects, fund equipment, training, etc. Later in the meeting, Councilwoman Pam Crozier stated that the County Council will work together to provide suggested guidelines to the Commissioners for the nonprofits to apply for grants. Councilwoman Heather Foy made a suggestion that the guidelines should not be made to micromanage nonprofit requests or be restrictive. Foy mentioned that many grants that nonprofits apply for do not typically cover brick and mortar or funding for staffing, and with the loss of funding during the pandemic, those items are just as important to fund, as well as projects.

Premium Pay- The County is still working to develop a plan to provide money to county essential employees. The commissioners are looking into using a tiered approach on payment to employees.

Lost Revenue- The commissioners are reviewing an agreement from Stifel for Andrew Lanam to begin looking at the County's lost revenue from the pandemic. The lost revenue could provide funding to the Highway, 911, EMA and Sheriff's departments.

Water Infrastructure- Barnes & Thornburg advised that the water infrastructure projects are considered an eligible use of ARP funds. Councilman Ray Black made a statement to suggest that the commissioners provide \$2.5 million to the City of Madison for the water infrastructure project to decrease the rates for taxpayers. Commissioner Bramer would like to see the finalized rate study from the City of Madison before any money is allocated towards the project. The Mayor and the City of Madison Utilities Manager, Brian Jackson were in attendance. Mayor Bob Courtney explained how the rate study needs a dollar amount from the County before rates can be finalized. Councilwoman Pam Crozier spoke about the debt service with the overall project. By providing the \$2.5 million towards the project, there will be a \$3.7 million savings on the overall debt. Sherman, Barber and Mullikan, the company handling the rate study for the City, provided an estimated overall 77.9% increase in water rates. If the City is able to receive the \$2.5 million from the County, the increase that residents could see drops to 67.9%.

Warren Auxier, Treasurer of Kent Water Company, was in attendance and provided his findings to the Council and Commissioners on what he believes the water rates could be. Discussion followed on what potential rates could be.

City Councilman, Patrick Thevenow asked the commissioners to commit \$1.25 million of the first draw of the ARP funds. The commissioners suggested that the City provide different amounts to the company handling the rate study and present what the cost savings would be for providing the different commitment amounts.

The ARP money must be obligated by 2024 and completely spent by 2026. The commissioners and council will hold joint sessions to further discuss the allocations and funding requests. Councilman Ray Denning made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Robert Little seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Commissioners

Council

ATTEST: _____