

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND
CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

City Hall

1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island IL

City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor

6/15/2022 - Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Thoms called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

2. This meeting will also be conducted by audio and video conference without the requirement of a physically present quorum of the Rock Island City Council due to the disaster declaration issued by Governor Pritzker.

3. Roll Call

Mayor Thoms asked Deputy City Clerk Naomi Sanderson to call the roll.

Present: Mayor Mike Thoms, Alderpersons Moses Robinson, Randy Hurt, Judith Gilbert, Jenni Swanson, Mark Poulos, and Bill Healy.

Alderman Dylan Parker arrived at 6:25 p.m.

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager Todd Thompson, City Attorney Dave Morrison, City Clerk and ARPA Program Manager Samantha Gange, Deputy Clerk Naomi Sanderson, and other City staff.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Thoms led in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Moment of Silence

Mayor Thoms requested a moment of silence. A moment of silence was observed.

6. Public Comment

Mayor Thoms asked if anyone in the public wished to speak.

Rock Island resident Gary Siegel addressed Council and said as important as this meeting was, more notice should have been communicated to the public. Mayor Thoms noted that no decisions were being made during the meeting. Mr. Siegel said regardless more notice should have been given.

7. Develop ARPA Guiding Principles

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Program Manager and City Clerk Samantha Gange introduced the first topic. She said the meeting was a work session meant to establish the guiding principles. City Manager Thompson said the ARPA funding represented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to address needs in the City. He said staff has worked together to design a process that will be proposed to assist Council and the public to determine what the community needs are. He noted that guiding principles are parameters that help inform the way organizations make decisions, and that it is important to develop an evaluation method for proposed projects.

Ms. Gange said guiding principles are not projects, and should incorporate overall City goals as well as the mission and vision. These guiding principles will consist of four to six sentences that influence decision-making on projects. She provided some examples of guiding principles from other municipalities. She noted that public input is important and will be sought out in a July online survey, which will be well-advertised. The public will also have paper forms available at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center and the Library for those without Internet access and other opportunities to contribute. She added that before the plan is implemented, City Council will hear from stakeholders and residents. Ms. Gange discussed a public survey draft she displayed for Council, and what would be important about it.

Ms. Gange discussed the next steps and the timeline for the ARPA program. City staff was provided a project form that is due June 23rd, and Council will score each project based on a scoring rubric/matrix. On June 27th Council will be provided with the spreadsheet of staff-recommended projects. She said based on the overall plan, there will be funding recommendations or “buckets”, for which the public will be able to provide recommendations. She explained the different phases for the work, including Phase I from May to July, Phase II in August, and Phase III in September. She noted the definitions for the scoring matrix displayed for Council.

Aldersperson Poulos asked if the pending project dashboard will show the funding or potential funding amount from outside sources. Ms. Gange replied it would, and she would place it on the dashboard. Aldersperson Poulos asked if it would at least be identified that there are other outside funding

opportunities. Ms. Gange said yes, and she would provide him with the project form that department directors have in which leveraging is identified. Alderperson Poulos asked if it was possible to identify if a funding opportunity is a matching grant or something that might help Council make financial determinations. Ms. Gange said she would make sure that was included.

8. Public Survey Discussion

Ms. Gange discussed what ARPA funds had already been allocated. Council allocated \$2.5 million for the downtown project, as well as a portion of the ARPA Program Manager salary, and a Communications Specialist. Alderperson Gilbert asked if the decision had been made that only City departments are submitting projects. Mr. Thompson replied that was not the case, and added that external agency funding could be on the project list, and Council could rank it. Alderperson Robinson asked how long the survey would be out. Ms. Gange said it would hopefully be available for the full month of July. Mayor Thoms asked if one needed to be a Rock Island resident to complete the survey. Ms. Gange said no, and the survey does ask what a person's relationship to the City is. Alderperson Swanson asked if there was a way to track repeated survey entries. Ms. Gange said there could be a way to track IP addresses to determine duplicates.

Alderperson Hurt asked if there was a way to insert a survey or information link into a water bill. Alderperson Swanson noted that the bill for July had already been generated and sent, so timing was an issue. She added that she could hand out paper copies of the surveys on weekends, and expressed concern that many people would fill out the same survey. Information Technology Director Tim Bain addressed Council and said they may need to make a decision about methods of collecting information. Alderperson Poulos said he did not want to see the same information stacked, and also the results to be as genuine as possible. Mr. Bain asked if an email address would be collected from survey participants. Ms. Gange confirmed yes. Alderperson Robinson asked Mr. Bain if the City had the resources to store the collected survey data. Mr. Bain discussed various choices for data collection.

Alderperson Hurt asked what the plan was for advertising in the newspaper regarding the process. Ms. Gange said the goal is to have the information in the newspaper the week prior to the pop-up at the Red, White & Boom event on July 3rd, but there will also be a press release. Alderperson Robinson noted that the City typically only has small notifications in the newspaper, and asked if it was possible to take out a full ad. Alderperson Gilbert said that is expensive. Alderperson Swanson asked if signage could be created with a QR code or a link on it and posted at strategic locations in which residents frequent. She also suggested dedicating computers at the Library for residents to take the survey. Ms. Gange said that could be done. Alderperson Robinson said he thought the Red, White & Boom event would have the greatest impact to reach residents for the survey. Alderperson Swanson noted both the Tuesday evening concert series and the Genesius Guild shows in Lincoln Park as other opportunities to reach residents.

A resident in the crowd spoke and noted that Alderpersons should take a strong hand at the survey, as they know their residents. [remaining dialogue incomplete]

Alderperson Gilbert said she has a compiled list, but it is small compared to resident lists. She said the City does not have an easy way to communicate with residents. Alderperson Healy mentioned a number of locations within the City including the golf courses and Fitness Center as examples of ways to reach residents. Alderperson Healy noted that having surveys available on the primary day on June 28th would be a good idea. Mr. Siegel in the audience said every Councilperson should have a town hall meeting in their district.

9. Discussion of Priority Projects

Ms. Gange reviewed recommendations to Council from the software team. She said the team had discussed releasing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant that would assist the City in determining software solutions. Alderperson Gilbert asked what the range of cost would be to hire said consultant. Alderperson Gilbert asked if that would be categorized as lost revenue under ARPA. Mayor Thoms also asked about the budget for the project. Mr. Bain said the project is estimated at \$2.25 million total depending on the scope to implement some software solution, of which a portion is consulting. Alderperson Robinson asked if that would consist of bringing the systems together. Mr. Bain said it would, but is a large undertaking that would require a larger explanation to Council.

Mayor Thoms said decisions on this may need to be made sooner, and asked Council if there were any not in favor of working towards a software solution. No Council members objected.

Public Works Director Mike Bartels provided an overview of time-sensitive projects that may be eligible for ARPA relief funds, including rehabilitation for the Water Treatment Plant dome. Alderperson Parker said it concerned him that the Enterprise Fund was not paying for this project, especially if the two other tanks also require maintenance. He asked if the revenues were sufficient for maintenance of the water system. Mr. Bartels replied they were not, and most municipalities are not. He added that the reason was that the department already had projects in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that were dedicated and slated to begin work in 2022 and in future years, and if the dome project was slotted in, the other projects may be pushed back as well as the possibility of having rates increase. This is why the \$1.3 million allocation was being requested. Alderperson Gilbert asked whether or not this was one of the two Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-mandated projects. Mr. Bartels said it was noted on their last inspection in 2021 that the EPA required replacement of old isolation valves, and is considered an EPA Attachment A project. Alderperson Poulos asked if this was for one dome, and Mr. Bartels confirmed it was.

Alderperson Robinson said this was approved in December 2021 and asked if it was budgeted. Mr. Bartels said the contract for the engineering work was the portion of the project that was approved.

Mr. Bartels next discussed an intersection reconstruction on the Rock Island Parkway. This would involve installing traffic signals, turn lanes, and pavement reconstruction. He noted there was an award of \$1 million from the state in the form of a Highway Improvement Grant. He noted that the project came in about \$300,000 more than the original engineer's estimate, and Alderperson Gilbert asked how much of the project would be covered under Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) funds. Mr. Bartels said \$1,000,010 of MFT funds are allocated, as well as \$160,000 of stormwater funds and \$128,000 from Augustana College as payment for a separate project. Alderperson Gilbert asked if this project fell under lost revenue for ARPA, and Mr. Bartels said the understanding was street projects were not eligible. Mr. Thompson said both the parking garage and software upgrades would qualify under revenue loss.

Alderperson Poulos asked why monies for the Augustana College area improvements were being diverted from that area to 85th Street West. Mr. Bartels replied that money is not being diverted, as the project near Augustana was already completed. Alderperson Gilbert asked about the \$1.5 million left unallocated on the downtown TIF (Tax Increment Financing) fund with no specifically attached project. Community and Economic Development Director Miles Brainard said the funds were allocated for streetscaping improvements specific to public right-of-way improvements. He added it was not the intention to use the funds for the parking garage project, as the garage was allocated its own funding amount. Alderperson Gilbert discussed the \$10 million pot of lost revenue funds for the

City, and asked how short the funding was for the Schwiebert Docks project. Mr. Bartels replied \$600,000. In reference to a brief Council discussion of eligible projects, Ms. Gange noted there may be a grant opportunity to help match some of the \$1.3 million for the water tank project.

Aldersperson Robinson asked why the Parkway project was time-sensitive. Mr. Bartels replied that in April, the Council dedicated the funds and committed to the project. He added the contract is held by the state, it has been awarded to a contractor, and a pre-construction meeting is pending. Mr. Thompson noted that there may still be a surplus from the previous year's budget, and said there will be a sufficient amount to cover the Schwiebert Dock project from reserve funds.

Aldersperson Healy asked when payments would be due on the parking garage. Mr. Bartels said if the work would start in August, payment would come to Council in September. Mr. Brainard added that the money put forward for the downtown area was a match to the grant, and if the match is changed, it may be scrutinized by the state. Aldersperson Swanson said her biggest concern was that the Federal Reserve would raise the interest rate again as they had done that day, and the longer projects are delayed, funds may need to be pulled from other sources. Aldersperson Robinson said he was concerned about the software project, as he felt the cost would be higher than expected.

Aldersperson Gilbert said if funds are allocated towards the Parkway, software, and parking garage projects, perhaps a pause should be put on other lost revenue projects. Mr. Thompson noted that it would not be his intention to bring forward any additional individual projects after the aforementioned, and a comprehensive review would be made of all projects. Aldersperson Gilbert asked if the voting would be on individual projects or overall. Mr. Thompson said the next stage would involve ranking of projects and Council would have a framework of which projects to approve. Aldersperson Poulos asked for clarification on whether or not decisions on these projects would be made tonight. Mayor Thoms said staff is looking for approval to search for a software consultant, and whether or not to approve proceeding with engineering and other processes.

Mr. Bartels noted that the Parkway project had already been approved in April 2022. Aldersperson Swanson said she would approve all projects mentioned. Alderspersons Parker, Poulos, and Healy concurred. Aldersperson Robinson said the City needs to keep track of what is being spent, as many projects are time-sensitive. Aldersperson Gilbert agreed with that assessment and reminded Council how many infrastructure projects needed to be completed in the downtown, and added that a discussion of this has yet to take place. Ms. Gange said Jack Cullen, Downtown Director for the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce, would be coming before Council on July 27th to provide an update on downtown developments.

Ms. Gange returned to the subject of guiding principles for the ARPA program. Aldersperson Gilbert said she was confused when she started reviewing the parameters provided by Mr. Thompson, as some of them worked as guiding principles, but others seemed to direct how money was spent. Ms. Gange said that was for Council to decide, but specific projects are not guiding principles. She discussed the contents of two displayed easels showing Council feedback from one-on-one meetings. She noted that the contents were meant to provide a framework for an overall approach. She added that the guiding principles would assist her, City staff, stakeholders, and businesses to understand Council expectations.

Aldersperson Robinson asked how public input would be incorporated into the principles. Ms. Gange replied that guiding principles would drive the public input survey, which in turn will allow the public to rank them according to importance. Aldersperson Robinson asked if the input was weighed in favor of Council or the public. Ms. Gange said that would be up to Council. Aldersperson Swanson asked if the public was expected to name specific projects on which to spend the money. Ms. Gange replied no. Aldersperson Gilbert asked if there would be further discussion that evening on survey question one. Ms. Gange said there could be.

Ms. Gange initiated further discussion on the topic of sustainable infrastructure. She said 6 out of 8 elected officials identified some type of capital need within City facilities to serve residents and reduce future liability issues. Alderperson Hurt said he preferred the statement of infrastructure to benefit all residents and reduce future liability issues. Alderperson Parker said a discussion should take place regarding equity, as parts of the City have been historically disenfranchised or underserved, and they should be prioritized over other parts. He introduced the principle of projects benefitting all residents for discussion. Alderperson Gilbert said that was a good point, and one that is missing from the scoring matrix, as underserved parts of the City should receive extra points for the scoring. Mayor Thoms noted that scoring should also consider what serves the most people, such as thoroughfares. Alderperson Robinson said certain parts of the City have not had repair work done in a long time.

A discussion ensued regarding whether or not to identify infrastructure for all residents or focus on a particular group. Alderperson Parker said the point is to identify certain projects as a priority for certain census tracts or people that live in underserved neighborhoods. Alderperson Hurt said that would force a narrowed guideline for services. Alderperson Swanson said she was focused on broadband access, as there are some neighborhoods that are not receiving the MetroNet service for a variety of reasons, but those are the areas that may need it most. She added there should be broadband access everywhere in the City. Alderperson Hurt said he did not disagree with other Alderpersons that there is a need, but felt the concepts discussed at this meeting should be broad-based and generalized, and then can be narrowed later.

Alderperson Gilbert said the scoring matrix leaves out ARPA eligibility guidelines. Ms. Gange noted that is why she has her position to assist Council in determining the guidelines, and she would not bring projects forward that are not eligible. Alderperson Swanson said if the focus is too narrow, problems will develop with the public. She added that each project should be looked at by where it would be the most equitable and have the most impact. Alderperson Robinson said the key point is to let the data speak to inform Council what the focus of spending should be. Mr. Thompson noted that another reason guiding principles were important is they will provide guidance to staff as to whether or not more programs should be developed. Alderperson Healy said whatever is done should have people in mind, whether they currently reside in the City or eventually will. Council arrived at a consensus to name the first guiding principle as infrastructure projects should benefit residents and reduce future financial liabilities.

Ms. Gange next discussed housing and neighborhoods as a subject for another guiding principle. Alderperson Parker suggested identifying another principle as funding decisions should align with community needs. Alderperson Poulos said he was trying to determine what portion of the community would benefit from certain proposals. Mr. Thompson and Alderperson Parker offered their interpretation of that idea for projects. Alderperson Gilbert said several projects on the proposed list seemed like wish list projects.

Ms. Gange discussed stable and effective government as a topic. Alderperson Gilbert said the projects should demonstrate collaborative partnerships to accomplish specific goals as well as multiple sources of funding to accomplish the project. If the partnerships and funding are achieved, the project should score higher. Ms. Gange agreed, and Mayor Thoms added that setting up the City for success could be added to that. Alderperson Gilbert suggested the principle of projects should demonstrate tangible and intangible returns on investment. Alderperson Healy added that in a survey that provides an ability to participants to see forward thinking. Alderperson Gilbert provided examples of tangible benefits, such as increased population, property and sales tax increase, and added jobs.

Ms. Gange noted the next subject as collaborative partnerships. Alderperson Swanson cautioned against the term collaborative partnerships, as it is broad and may not be a guiding principle. Ms. Gange said it could be reworded to indicate a leveraging of funds instead. She suggested a statement of maximize funding opportunities. Alderperson Parker suggested finalizing the statement

as strategically leveraging funds to maximize projects. Alderperson Poulos offered the addition that as long as funds will be leveraged for projects within the ARPA-prescribed deadlines.

Ms. Gange moved to the subject of economic recovery and growth. She noted that many Alderpersons chose investing in sectors of the local economy including small businesses and residents that were hit hardest by the pandemic as a priority in this category. Alderperson Hurt suggested as a principle invest in economic development and small business retention. Alderperson Swanson suggested including retention of businesses as well as attracting them. Alderperson Gilbert said many businesses are still struggling to recover. Mayor Thoms suggested not identifying only small businesses. Council arrived at the guiding principle of investments should be made in economic development and attract and retain businesses.

Ms. Gange discussed various subcategories provided by Council members during individual meetings and which guiding principle under which they may fall. Alderperson Gilbert asked if participants would be ranking the guiding principles in the survey. Ms. Gange said the current draft of the survey only pulled examples from other cities. Alderperson Gilbert said if the City wishes to identify what is important to fund, then the survey questions should be different. Alderperson Swanson said the first survey will include the five guiding principles. Alderperson Healy asked if each principle could be divided into ten categories for the public to choose a specific subject. Ms. Gange said that could be done.

Alderperson Poulos asked if the first guiding principle could have reducing current operating expenses and future liability issues added. Ms. Gange said that could be done. Alderperson Poulos said guiding principles should be specific. Mayor Thoms said he viewed this as similar to setting goals with objectives, as goals are broad and objectives are specific. Alderperson Swanson suggested adding reducing future financial liabilities to the first principle. Alderperson Poulos and Council concurred.

Alderperson Gilbert said she concurred with Alderperson Healy, and suggested providing survey takers the five guiding principles and give them ten choices of products that can be ranked. Alderperson Healy said that would provide more information. Ms. Gange suggested ranking the survey and have guiding principles guide them. Alderperson Gilbert asked if the City would correlate the collected demographic data with the rankings. Ms. Gange replied yes, and it would be good information to have during the second round of public input to help target a specific area. Alderperson Gilbert asked if the staff department project forms were the same as what was showed during individual meetings with Council. Ms. Gange replied it was not.

Ms. Gange asked Council if they had additional questions. Alderperson Gilbert asked what the timeline was for hiring a communications specialist. Human Resources Director Rob Baugous said it interviews would take place at the June 27th meeting, and decisions would be made afterward.

10. ARPA Process - Next Steps

[There was no specific break in action items, and all minutes are listed above]

11. Motion to Adjourn.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Hurt moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 voice vote. Aye: Hurt, Gilbert, Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, and Robinson. Nay: None. Absent: None.

The meeting concluded at 8:17 p.m.



Josh Adams, Deputy City Clerk