

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION  
September 26, 2022 - 5:00 p.m.**

**City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor  
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL**

9/26/2022 - Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Pro Tempore Swanson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

**THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED BY AUDIO AND VIDEO CONFERENCE WITHOUT A PHYSICALLY PRESENT QUORUM OF THE ROCK ISLAND CITY COUNCIL DUE TO THE DISASTER DECLARATION ISSUED BY GOVERNOR PRITZKER.**

**ROLL CALL**

Mayor Pro Tem Swanson asked Deputy City Clerk Josh Adams to call the roll.

Present: Alderpersons Judith Gilbert, Mark Poulos, Bill Healy, Alderperson Jenni Swanson acting in the role of Mayor Pro Tem, and Mayor Mike Thoms (virtual).

Alderperson Moses Robinson arrived at 5:02 p.m. and Alderson Randy Hurt joined the meeting virtually at 5:30 p.m.

Absent: Alderperson Dylan Parker.

Staff: City Manager Todd Thompson, City Attorney Dave Morrison, Deputy City Clerk Josh Adams, and other City staff.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Pro Tem Swanson asked if anyone in the audience or virtually wished to speak. No one volunteered.

**AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) UPDATED PROPOSED FUNDING  
RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTATION**

City Manager Todd Thompson gave an introduction and announced the updated ARPA funding recommendations being presented were based off of feedback from the Special ARPA meeting as

well as individual meetings with Council members and the Mayor at the end of August. He said the goal for the evening was to review and discuss the updated revisions and additions to the plan and make any other changes that Council suggests. If there is a general consensus from Council on the overall ARPA plan, it would be included on the October 10, 2022 agenda for endorsement through a resolution. He noted it is an endorsement rather than an approval because Council will still need to vote on each project before it can be implemented or before funds can be expended.

City Clerk and ARPA Program Manager Samantha Gange addressed Council regarding the revisions to the ARPA Plan. She provided an update on the fleet and said the funding amount had not changed, but that part of the funds would be allocated for 3 ambulances and the remaining \$266,000 would be discussed at a later time to determine what additional fleet is needed. She noted the snow fleet would be put out to bid and the amount could change depending on the the bids received.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked Public Works Director Mike Bartels to address Council regarding a question about how many snow plows the City currently had and how many needed to be replaced. Mr. Bartels responded there are approximately 12 snow plows and about 8 of those are in need of replacement. He noted the \$334,000 of ARPA dollars that is allocated towards snow fleet is the deficit of what was budgeted for CY 2022. In response to another question from Aldersperson Gilbert as to whether the amount budgeted for the snow plows was out of the Fleet Amortization Fund, Mr. Bartels responded affirmatively and noted the fund would be depleted after the purchase of the snow plows.

Next Ms. Gange discussed the update to infill housing and new housing incentives. The infill housing was originally allocated under restricted funds and market rate housing under unrestricted. After discussion with Community & Economic Development Director Miles Brainard and City Manager Todd Thompson, it was decided that it would be more advantageous for the City to pool these funds together under the unrestricted category to allow for more flexibility and time to plan.

Ms. Gange provided an update on the allocations under the previous category of nonprofits and said the nonprofit category was broken down into two groups at the previous ARPA meeting: Mental Health and Homelessness. Also from that meeting, the consensus of Council was to form focus groups for these two categories as well as Tourism. Additionally, based off of the individual meetings with the Council and the Mayor, there was a consensus to add the Botanical Center, Backwater Gamblers, QC Arts, and MLK Center Fun Day to the proposed funding recommendations.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked if the organizations had to apply for the funds. Ms. Gange responded that they did not apply for the funds as they were added based on the recommendation and consensus of the Mayor and Council.

Aldersperson Robinson asked how the specific organizations and funding amounts were determined. City Manager Thompson responded these organizations have come up repetitively and the Mayor discussed adding these organizations with Council members, which resulted in a consensus of support to provide funding. The dollar amounts for each organization are based on the projected need, but adjustment to the amounts may be needed as the process continues and more details are provided.

Aldersperson Robinson remarked several other organizations have come to the City in the past with requests for funding, yet these four organizations were chosen without an application process. He opined the justification for these requests appear to be earmarked with no conclusive plan.

Aldersperson Gilbert indicated agreement with Aldersperson Robinson and said it seemed these organizations were just picked by the Mayor and others without a formal selection process or background data on the impact these organizations have on the City.

Aldersperson Robinson remarked there are buildings the City owns and manages that are also in deficits.

In response to another question from Aldersperson Robinson about whether or not these four organizations were eligible under ARPA restricted funds, Ms. Gange confirmed that all four were eligible under restricted funds according to the guidelines set forth by the U.S. Treasury Department, but she classified these in the unrestricted category to allow the City flexibility in disbursing the funds.

Mayor Thoms remarked City Council has been consistently discussing leveraging ARPA dollars, whether that be with monies or another type of return on investment such as tourism dollars in future years to come. He noted the four organizations fall under both the tourism and non-profit categories as they also provide services and programs to the underserved populations.

Aldersperson Robinson said he would like to see measurements and data from these organizations on their contributions to the City. Mayor Thoms indicated agreement and City Manager Thompson added that all projects would still need to be vetted through City Council and would include detailed plan information and data as well as an agreement for how the funds would be spent.

Aldersperson Gilbert opined she had concerns about paying off the debt of an organization like the Botanical Center when the City cannot pay its own debt and several City-owned buildings don't get funded through the budget.

Aldersperson Robinson expressed his concerns about eliminating the non-profit designation and allocating the funds to specific organizations with minimal information of what the money will go towards and no leveraging of funds. Mayor Thoms responded we could still leverage the funds. He added that the non-profit designation was not eliminated but made specific to homelessness and mental health and that the consensus of Council members was to not create an application process for non-profits.

Aldersperson Robinson indicated support for additional funding for MLK Fun Day as it brings in people, has potential to grow even bigger, and is a staple in Rock Island.

Aldersperson Gilbert noted City events that were not held this year such as Ya Maka My Weekend and Gumbo Ya Ya. Mayor Thoms responded those events were not held because of a lack of funding but rather that there wasn't anybody to organize the events and bring in the music talent.

Ms. Gange indicated data was included in the justification for Backwater Gamblers as to their impact on the City. Alderspersons Gilbert and Robinson asked if those numbers were correct. Aldersperson Poulos responded the numbers are based on what was provided by the Tourism Bureau or Visit Quad Cities and remarked on the various local and national water skiing tournaments they hold in Rock Island and potential to hold larger events in the future.

Aldersperson Gilbert requested the direct information provided by the organizations be sent to Council. Ms. Gange responded with the exception of Backwater Gamblers, the other organizations were verbal conversations with the executive directors. She noted the justification for each organization is included in the ARPA plan and provided project examples given by the Botanical Center and QC Arts. She said any information she has she will share with Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Swanson noted the cruise ships that have been docking in Davenport recently and said none of the tourists appear to be visiting Rock Island. Aldersperson Healy said he had conversations with some of the tourists from the cruise ship who visited the Botanical Center.

Mayor Thoms indicated Visit Quad Cities can provide all of the data as to where tourists spend their

time and money and the impact it has on each City as well as the region.

Aldersperson Robinson said ARPA funds are a once in a lifetime opportunity and questioned whether or not the plan reflects this and provided an example of the MLK Center Fun Day.

Aldersperson Gilbert opined adding the four organizations to the ARPA plan without a process appears as though the City is doing business behind the scenes.

Ms. Gange said the ARPA process has included several meetings with directors and Council members to determine how to allocate these funds and that everyone has had the opportunity to provide ideas and feedback. She noted the current plan reflects the direction that was given and asked Council how they would like to move forward.

In response to a question from Aldersperson Robinson about how the projects in the plan were added, Ms. Gange responded the projects included in the plan are based on detailed forms the directors had to complete as well as feedback from individual meetings with Council and the Mayor. City Manager Thompson also added several projects to the list that primarily pertain to public safety after feedback from the public about the need to address the violence.

Ms. Gange asked for direction on the ARPA plan and how Council would like to move forward.

Aldersperson Healy remarked it appears the City is doubling up on the tourism dollars by allocating \$250,000 towards tourism specifically as well as the four organizations specifically identified. Ms. Gange responded the organizations identified fit into both the Tourism and Nonprofit categories. City Manager Thompson noted Tourism was a specific category identified by the federal government as ARPA eligible and investing in this category brings in long-term dollars to the City. He said City Council could implement an application process for organizations if that was the general direction and consensus of Council.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked with regards to the focus groups and the dollars allocated towards those specific categories, how the organizations would be chosen or how it would be decided to allocate the funding without an application process. Ms. Gange responded the focus groups are designed to find what the unmet needs and gaps are and then solutions as to how the gaps can be addressed. Funds could also be leveraged as well as potential partnerships identified with the various stakeholders.

Mayor Pro Tem Swanson said the focus groups include stakeholders who are experts in that specific area who are knowledgeable of how to identify the issues and gaps as well as what organizations have the resources to provide specific programs or services. She said she was not in favor of an application process.

Aldersperson Healy provided an example of the donation cards he has for his business for those in need to complete for a possible donation. He said he is unable to grant all of the donation requests, but does his best and that people get upset if he is unable to meet their request. He opined the application process for ARPA funds is a slippery slope as the organizations that do not receive funding or do not get their entire request funded get upset.

Aldersperson Robinson reiterated the need and importance of leveraging funds and requiring a match and not just bailing out organizations.

Mayor Pro Tem Swanson remarked she believed the funding for these four organizations was not a bailout as these organizations have long-term skin in the game and have invested money into the City of Rock Island. She provided an example of the Botanical Center and its future plans.

Aldersperson Gilbert said she requested at the beginning of the ARPA discussions that any organization who is seeking funds be required to provide three to five years of impact data and details on what the funds will be used for as well as how they are leveraging the funds through economic impact and a dollar match.

Mayor Pro Tem Swanson said Ms. Gange could collect the data and information from the four organizations and provide to Council members. She requested the funds allocated towards these organizations be put back into the revenue loss designation. Once Council receives and reviews the information, they can revisit whether or not to fund these four organizations.

Ms. Gange provided an overview of the updated funding recommendation for City Hall renovations. She said several members of Council indicated the need for an updated Council Chambers as well as the City Manager and Mayor's Office area. Because this recommendation was just recently added, the dollar amount cannot be determined as quotes have not been received.

Aldersperson Robinson said he would like to see City Hall renovations used out of General Funds and not ARPA.

Aldersperson Healy remarked the Council Chambers are substandard compared to others in the region.

Next Ms. Gange provided an update on the Police Hiring, Retention, and Recruitment allocation. She said the numbers are preliminary, but this would assist the Police Department with retaining and recruiting officers as they will soon be down 10 officers total.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked if the bonuses allocated for each category be paid after the completion of each of those three years. Police Chief Richard Landi, who joined the meeting virtually, responded affirmatively and said his intent was to distribute these funds throughout the three year period. He hoped that the number of applicants would increase by the time the three year period expires. He noted contract negotiations would be underway soon and that along with the ARPA funds, would make them more competitive with other police departments.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked if the \$10,000 amount allocated towards a lateral recruitment was competitive with others in the area. Chief Landi responded he believed so and said Moline is also implementing a program for lateral recruitments and this is a way for Rock Island to remain competitive. He said the numbers can be reevaluated and restructured if needed after every year depending on recruitment numbers. He noted the benefits of a lateral recruit and said they recently had a lateral recruitment from Missouri. City Manager Todd Thompson said Council would vote on a refined and final version with clawbacks prior to implementing.

Aldersperson Healy remarked he was in support of allocating additional funds on top of what is already allocated for police retention and recruitment.

Aldersperson Poulos noted police officers lose time on their pension funds when they transfer departments as the state statute does not allow the funds to be transferable as other pension funds in the state are. In response to a question of clarification from Aldersperson Gilbert, Aldersperson Poulos responded that Tier II participants are vested at 10 years of service. For example, if an officer transfers to another department, the only way they can be considered vested is to transfer the time over and pay what the other contributions were with interest at six percent per year. He said it makes it expensive for an officer to transfer pensions from department to department. The lateral recruitment bonus will help with covering this deficit.

Next, Ms. Gange presented the updated ARPA budget. The budget is broken down into phases based on calendar year. For example, all of CY 2022 projects are Phase I projects. The goal is if

Council endorses the overall plan, to start implementing the CY 2022 projects into the budget and submit to Council for approval.

Ms. Gange presented information on the focus groups. Requests for volunteers to serve on a focus group would be received through Friday, but for the most part focus groups are formed. She said Alderperson Hurt volunteered to serve on the Mental Health Stakeholder Focus Group, Alderperson Swanson on the Homelessness Stakeholder Focus Group, and Alderpersons Gilbert and Parker on the Tourism Stakeholder Focus Group. The next step is to send a Doodle poll to each of the groups members to determine a date and time to meet in October. Ms. Gange said she would provide the discussion topics and questions ahead of time and each meeting would be advertised and open to the public.

In response to a question and clarification of the focus groups, Ms. Gange responded the data on the City's homeless population would be provided during that focus group. She indicated the goals of the focus groups are to determine the unmet needs and gaps and what resources are currently available and what are needed as well as discuss possible solutions or programs that could be implemented. She noted there could be an opportunity to identify a partner as well as leverage funds.

Next Ms. Gange presented a Citywide map of ARPA projects that included census tracts and asked if Council members had any further questions.

Alderperson Hurt (virtual) indicated agreement with Alderperson Healy and Poulos on additional funding for the retention and recruitment of police officers. He said he supported funds for the Botanical Center and the amount could be amended to just include the \$92,000 mortgage payoff. Council could review any additional funding amount for projects based off of the data.

Alderperson Gilbert asked City Manager Thompson if he could provide Council with the amount of funding the City has provided these organizations in the past. City Manager Thompson responded affirmatively.

City Manager Thompson asked Council if there is a general consensus on endorsement of the overall ARPA plan with the exception of the four organizations, which would be removed from the plan.

Alderpersons Healy and Robinson said they were not in favor of allocating funds to these organizations without having data and detailed information on the projects. Ms. Gange noted sub-recipient agreements would be implemented with any organization or business that receives ARPA funds. City Manager Thompson added the agreements would include clawbacks as well as reporting requirements to the City as to the status of the projects. Because funding for these four organizations was proposed at the end of the ARPA process, they did not spend much time on specific dollar amounts and detailed information if Council didn't want to move forward with these funding recommendations.

Ms. Gange indicated she would provide an updated ARPA plan with the four specific organizations removed to Council as well as collect more detailed information and data on these four groups.

In response to questions from Alderperson Hurt and Alderperson Gilbert on quotes for the City Hall renovations, Ms. Gange responded both individuals providing the quotes are in Rock Island and it would be a few weeks before she had an update. City Manager Thompson indicated they have asked for a few different quotes on renovations and could build into the budget for next year.

Alderperson Robinson said he would like to see this project come from General Funds.

Alderperson Gilbert asked what the potential plans were for the \$1 million allocation to street repairs and said she would like to see something done with residential streets. Mr. Bartels addressed

Council and noted \$1 million doesn't go far with street repairs. He said they could look at a few options including a pavement patching contract so every Ward would get a benefit or they could fund a project from the Capital Improvement Plan.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN.**

Aldersperson Poulos made a motion to adjourn; Aldersperson Gilbert seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 6-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Alderspersons Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, Gilbert, and Pro Tem Swanson. Nay: None. Absent: Parker.

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. Gange', is located in the middle-left portion of the page.

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Samantha Gange, City Clerk