

**JOURNAL OF SPECIAL COMMISSION WORK SESSION**  
**November 17, 2022**

Special City Commission Work Session  
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

**CALL TO ORDER:** 4:00 PM

**CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bob Kelly, Joe McKenney, Rick Tryon, Susan Wolff and Eric Hinebauch.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; Interim City Attorney David Dennis; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler, Deputy Finance Director Kirsten Myre, Grant Administrator Tom Hazen, and ARPA Project Manager Sylvia Tarman; Fire Community Risk Reduction Manager Katie Brewer; and Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**KC Beall**, not a City resident, Peace Place Director of Administration, expressed appreciation to the Review Committee for its efforts with regard to reviewing the applications and the City Commission for its efforts with regard to the opportunity to apply for funding. Ms. Beall added that the funding would make a huge difference to Peace Place, children and families in the community.

**Rob Beall**, not a City resident, expressed appreciation to the City Commission for its efforts with regard to funding Peace Place and considering its mission. He explained that he is a parent of two children who attend Peace Place and it provides respite care for children with special needs. Peace Place further provides children the ability to communicate, classroom support, IUP assistance and behavior intervention. Peace Place staff analyzes behaviors, helps children interact with other children and adults, allows kids to mentor other children and helps build relationships. Peace Place is held back because of the space limitations in the current building. In order to continue to grow and help reach out to more families, Peace Place needs its own place, and the award will fund the renovation of an existing downtown location.

**1. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) SUB-AWARDS**

Finance Grant Administrator Tom Hazen reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:

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### AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT SUB-AWARDS



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### Background



- September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – First Discussion of Issuing Sub-Awards
- September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – Introduction of the ARPA Sub-Award Application.
- October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Revised Application Presented
- October 8<sup>th</sup> to October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Application posted online and press release issued requesting public comment on the document.
- January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – Need for Scoring Matrix in Application Identified (added on January 22, 2022).
- February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 – Posted Final Application and Began Accepting Applications.
- May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022 - \$3 Million Cap established.
- July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – Application Closed and Review Began.

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### Received Applications



- 34 Applications totaling \$10,464,425.81 submitted.
- Average Application proposal - \$307,777.23.
- Applications ranged from \$48,000.00 to \$1.3 million.
  - 31 Non-Profit Applicants and 3 For-Profit Applicants;
  - 16 Proposals – Disproportionately Impacted Communities;
  - 16 Proposals – Negative Economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic;
  - 2 Proposals – Health Emergency.

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### Preliminary Screening



- All project proposals were reviewed for completeness and eligibility.
- 10 Project Proposals were not advanced to the Review Committee for evaluation. Primary reason:
  - Did not meet the statutorily mandated “test”:
    - Did not prove a negative economic impact “caused or exacerbated” by COVID-19; and/or
    - Did not propose a project that was reasonably related to that harm in cost or scope.

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### Review Committee



- July 19<sup>th</sup> Work Session – Introduced the Sub-Award Review Committee.
  - Katie Brewer – Community Risk Reduction Manager, Great Falls Fire and Rescue;
  - Kirsten Myre – Deputy Director, Finance Department;
  - Robin Beatty – Paralegal, City Attorney’s Office;
  - Tonya Schumaker – CDBG Administrator;
  - Tom Hazen – Grant and Project Administrator.
- Committee met on August 16<sup>th</sup>, to discuss process and receive 24 applications.
- Met on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss scoring and recommendation.

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### Review Process



- Scoring was based upon the matrix contained within the Application.
  - Project Description – 15 points;
  - Need for the Project and ARPA funds – 40pts;
  - Project Management – 10 points;
  - Readiness to Proceed – 15 points;
  - Project Budget – 10 points;
  - Partnerships/Collaborations – 10 points.
- Used Scoring Sheet Approved by Commission during September 6<sup>th</sup> Work Session (Included in Packet).

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### Scoring Results



- After applications were individually scored, every committee member submitted the top 15 scored applications.
- Points were assigned to each application based upon position in top 15.
- All lists were collected to create an overall ranking.
- Results reflected agreement in large part among the committee.

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### Funding Selections



- 14 Projects Selected Totaling \$2,884,557.00
- Once Overall Ranking created the Committee began at the top and worked its way down the ranks until the \$3 million was exhausted.
  - Projects selected for funding were primarily identified by rank.
  - 12 of 14 selections were based upon rank.
- Committee selected against funding based on ranking on two occasions:
  - Neighborworks Great Falls – Down Payment Assistance (NWGF had already received funds); and
  - Habitat for Humanity – Re-Store Remodel (Insufficient allocation remaining to fund program and limited ability to partially fund).
- Selected United Way and TBID Projects based upon priorities.

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Recommended Awards						
App. No.	Company Name	Project Title	Project Cost	Running Total	No. of Votes	Committee Score
1	Alliance For Youth	Provision of emotional health support services to youth and their parents	\$287,278.00	\$287,278.00	5	70
2	YWCA	Housing Support	\$75,000.00	\$362,278.00	5	63
3	Helping Hands	Operational Support	\$48,900.00	\$411,178.00	5	56
4	Great Falls Voyagers	Rehabilitation of baseball playing surfaces and seating area	\$600,000.00	\$1,011,178.00	5	44
5	NeighborWorks Great Falls	Affordable Housing	\$496,810.00	\$1,508,088.00	5	43
6	Great Falls College MSU	New Educational Program	\$197,350.00	\$1,706,338.00	5	40
7	Peace Place	Building Renovation Project	\$378,000.00	\$2,084,338.00	4	37
8	Discovery Family Counseling Services	Providing therapy to youth in GF	\$49,000.00	\$2,133,338.00	5	30
9	Meal Option	Addressing Negative COVID Impacts through MM7	\$228,980.00	\$2,362,318.00	5	29
10	United Way	Facility	\$45,000.00	\$2,407,318.00	5	27
11	Opportunities Inc.	Facility improvements	\$97,790.00	\$2,505,108.00	5	26
12	Great Falls Speech Rise Childhood Language Disorders Clinic	Speech Therapy Outreach	\$70,884.00	\$2,575,992.00	5	25
13	Cascade County Historical Society	Tech upgrades to outreach capacity	\$56,585.00	\$2,632,577.00	5	23
14	Great Falls Tourism Business Improvement Board	Master Plan for Tourism Downtown GP	\$219,000.00	\$2,851,577.00	5	10

**Next Steps**

- Commission Meeting.
- Tailored Contracts.
- Drawdown Procedure.
- Quarterly Reporting.
  - Summary to be presented to the Commission.
- All Funds Spent by September 2026.
- Final Report by October 2026.

Mayor Kelly commented that the one thing the Commission does not want to do is second-guess the Review Committee’s methodology or considerations; however, it may have questions on procedure to clarify the thinking of the Review Committee. He requested that Grant Administrator Hazen explain the ARPA application process.

Grant Administrator Hazen explained that the main priority was maintaining transparency and communication between the City and the applicants. There were several ARPA applications received and Q&A Sessions were posted on the City’s website. The first priority of any valid application was the establishment of a COVID related application and was paramount in order to be considered eligible or moved on for evaluation. Grant Administrator Hazen added that he was available via telephone and email if applicants had a question relating to the application prior to the application closing date.

Commissioner Wolff received clarification that Grant Administrator Hazen has already notified a couple of organizations that did not receive funding and will reach out to organizations that did not make it to the recommendation list to review why the application was not scored or did not fall within the top 15.

Commissioner McKenney received clarification that the Committee took into consideration Commission priorities for funding including homeless, drug and alcohol treatment, housing and mental health services.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that Grant Administrator Hazen, Finance Director Melissa Kinzler, City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson reviewed the recommendations from the Committee. He inquired about the Committee selecting against funding based on ranking for NeighborWorks Great Falls (NWGF) and Habitat for Humanity, as well as the selected United Way and TBID Projects.

Grant Administrator Hazen responded that if the Committee had decided purely on scoring, it would have resulted in NWGF receiving approximately \$1 million of the \$3 million cap. While affordable housing is a priority of the Commission and grant award process, the Committee decided that a concentration of funds into just one priority would result in several other funding opportunities and priorities in the community falling short.

The Committee had to decide where to place Habitat for Humanity after NWGF was moved down, and its application was approximately \$200,000 over the entire project. Its budget was not the most in-depth

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breakdown of the project and the Committee did not see a way to break it down in such a way that it would fund or meet the priorities of the projects.

United Way was on the edge of eligibility based on ranking and the TBID was within the fundable window after making the other two adjustments. United Way submitted multiple applications and the Committee determined to fund the early education program because it was directed at an area of activity that had limited funding, was a good opportunity, easier to track, administer and the most effective use of funds for a sub award. The TBID designed a master tourism plan for the downtown area that would maximize tourism into the City and was a great method of funding in the tourism industry for the downtown area.

Commissioner Tryon commented that the City needs to go above and beyond with regard to being completely transparent with the entire ARPA application process. He expressed concern that the funding selection with regard to NWGF and Habitat for Humanity has the appearance that an organization that scored higher in the ranking process was bumped out and an organization that would not have scored as high received funding.

Grant Administrator Hazen responded that the Review Committee used as guidance the priorities of the Commission and City that have been in place since the discussion of what to use ARPA or CARES funds for first began. When the Committee members looked at how the raw scoring fell into place, they determined that it was better served to meet those priorities going in a different direction.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that the recommended awards are the approved list of organizations that would receive funding. The Commission has discretion to have more discussion if need be; however, City staff is prepared to move forward into the formal approval process.

Commissioner Tryon suggested that the Commission determine whether the recommendations would be considered as a package or individually, if other applications that did not receive funding would be considered, and reconsider allocating the \$3 million to community partners because of the urgent needs of the City.

Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson responded that this process is similar to the budget process when staff makes a recommendation and allocating \$3 million to community partners was the consensus of the Commission at a previous work session.

Commissioner Tryon commented that allocating \$3 million to community partners was the consensus of the Commission at a previous work session; however, since that time, the costs for approved ARPA projects for the City have increased significantly. One option discussed at a previous work session was to potentially decrease the \$3 million that was previously approved for community partners.

Mayor Kelly responded that the Commission could discuss that option at an upcoming Commission Meeting; however, making that change would depend on whether the majority of the Commission wants to go back on its commitment to the community partners.

Commissioner McKenney inquired about the recommendation to fund the Great Falls Voyagers.

Grant Administrator Hazen responded that tourism was identified as a priority for ARPA funds by the City and the Department of Treasury. The Centene Stadium is important to the community through the

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professional baseball, high school organizations, concerts and tourism. The stadium affected approximately 100,000 individuals per year according to the Voyager's application.

Grant Administrator Hazen expressed appreciation to the Commission for its guidance and patience over the course of the past 14 months.

The Commission expressed appreciation to Grant Administrator Hazen and the Review Committee Members for their efforts with regard to the ARPA application review process and for all of the applicants who submitted applications.

Mayor Kelly stated that Great Falls was one of three communities in Montana that received direct funding for ARPA and CARES and most other communities had to apply to access funding. The idea that the City was able to control these funds locally should not be wasted and is a great opportunity for the City to direct funds to the needs it sees in the community. He suggested that the funding proposals topic be added soon to an upcoming regular Commission meeting.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal special work session of November 17, 2022 at 4:56 p.m.