



Richland County
Coronavirus Ad Hoc Committee

MINUTES

April 6, 2022 – 3:00 PM

Council Chambers

2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

Paul Livingston District 4	Gretchen Barron - Chair District 7	Chakisse Newton District 11
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Committee Members Present: Gretchen Barron, Chair, Paul Livingston, and Chakisse Newton

Others Present: Overture Walker, Jesica Mackey, Michelle Onley, Anette Kirylo, Tamar Black, Leonardo Brown, Patrick Wright, Lori Thomas, Aric Jensen, Angela Weathersby, Randy Pruitt, Stacey Hamm, Justin Landy, Kyle Holsclaw, Bill Davis, Dale Welch, Abhi Deshpande, Steven Gaither, Karen Pendleton, Dante Roberts, Michael Byrd, Michael Maloney, John Thompson, Justin Martin, Jennifer Wladischkin, Bryant Davis and Hans Pauling

1. **Call to Order** – Ms. Barron called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00PM.
2. **Approval of Minutes: February 15, 2022** – Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to approve the minutes as distributed.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **Adoption of Agenda** – Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to adopt the agenda as published.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **Items for Discussion:**

- a. **Review of Funding Priorities for American Rescue Plan Act** – Mr. Leonardo Brown, County Administrator, stated there was a survey done. There were a number of respondents to the survey. The respondents spoke to the following ten categories:

1. Services for abused and Neglected Children (66%)
2. Street improvement (65%)
3. Mental Health (64.39%)
4. Support Service (63.93%)
5. Transitional Housing (63.15%)
6. Emergency Shelters (61.85%)
7. Permanent Housing (60.99%)
8. Broadband Infrastructure (60.78%)
9. Services for Victims of Domestic Violence (60.52%)
10. Veterans (57.44%)

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The Council, through the committee, discussed a list of items , which was discussed at the work session:

- Youth Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Small Business
- Mental Health
- Workforce training
- Student loan payments
- Trust funds and incentives
- Water and sewer infrastructure
- Senior Assistance
- Broadband
- Food Insecurity
- Home repair
- Homelessness
- Public safety/Crime Prevention

He noted there were previous discussions about the importance of providing technological resources to address our citizens being able to interface with the County, when they are unable to meet in-person. He noted this does not represent all of the needs the County has. He noted the difference between the needs and the recommendations that have been made to provide clarity. Years ago, the County identified a number of areas that were important to be funded. Some of those are represented in the recommendations and considerations. He noted the DSS Center was on the list, which supported a number of these initiatives. He stated the Emergency Operations Center was not listed, but is also a need. Another initiative is identified is the wastewater in Lower Richland and Northwest areas. We have done Phase I of the process, but there is Phase II and III that needs to be done, which totals approximately \$112M. He noted he did not include all the needs because there are infrastructure funds we hope to obtain to address wastewater treatment. There is broadband funds that could become available. We did not put all the requests in the document because we want other resources to be tapped into. When we look at the priorities, it is a combination of things the community, Council and the Administrator spoke to. When we look at the recommendations, we need to determine if we want to support these things, and at what level.

Ms. Newton inquired about what has already been spent, including what we put aside for non-profits. If we were to make recommendations, what would be the balance? She also inquired about the level of assurance of the other funds we might be eligible for. Some of the priorities are based on those potential funds.

Mr. Brown responded the distribution is as follows:

- Lump Sum Distribution - \$1.150 million
- Employee Stipends - \$7.8 million
- Recreation Project Tennis Courts - \$325,000
- Alvin S. Glenn Safety and Security Projects - \$3.3 million
- Mental Health Program – Sheriff - \$81,000
- Utilities Bad Debt – From Lost Revenue - \$1 million
- Consulting - \$100,00
- Vaccination Gift Cards - \$25,500
- Grant Management Software \$687,000
- HVAC - \$5.2 million

He noted the total amount allocated was a little under \$20M, leaving approximately \$60M that has not been obligated. If all the recommendations were approved, we would have a little less than \$10M for any other projects or support using ARP dollars. He stated we believe we would be eligible for the rural infrastructure funds, but it is a competitive process, so we do not know if we would get the funds in a timely fashion. For the broadband, the State's focus is the rural areas that do not have connectivity.

Ms. Newton stated she is concerned the State's funding and priority would not reach a county as large and generally prosperous as Richland County.

- b. **Other Items** – Ms. Mackey noted, if the list was approved, they would have about \$10M left over. She inquired if they would address some of their previously discussed concerns (i.e. food insecurities and housing) from the \$10M.

Ms. Barron stated, from the \$10M, they discussed \$2M going to non-profits. They would have to determine what else they would like to do with the funds.

Ms. Mackey inquired, with input from the community survey and committee/Council, is there a synopsis of the top 3 – 4 areas we need to focus the \$8M on.

Ms. Barron responded there is a collective list, but it has not been prioritized.

Mr. Brown noted the community survey was divided into categories, and the top five were services for abused and neglected children, street improvements, mental health, support services, and transitional housing. He noted, from Council, the top concerns were mental health, youth services, senior assistance, work training homelessness and public safety. He noted DSS is going to cover a number of these items.

Ms. Mackey requested a “fact sheet” that shows how the public’s input and Council’s ideas have been married. She noted it would be helpful when making decisions on these items.

Mr. O. Walker inquired if affordable house was included under housing and, if so, have we thought about earmarking funds for an affordable housing trust fund.

Mr. Brown responded it was discussed, but the funds would have to be used. Putting them in a trust where the funds would sit would not be an eligible use. The remaining funds could be used to support affordable housing, but it would depend on how we decide to spend the funds.

Mr. Livingston inquired about the timeframe for the funds be used.

Mr. Brown responded the funds have to be obligated by 2024 and expended by 2026.

Mr. O. Walker inquired if it would be problematic to earmark funds for tuition assistance.

Mr. Brown responded we would be relying on the entity to which the funds are provided. The entity would have to meet the requirements and spend the funds accordingly with the proper documentation. It would depend on how much we want to dedicate.

Ms. Thomas stated, with the tuition assistance, it would have to be focused. It would have to be related to the COVID pandemic. There would have to be some income qualifications, and we would have to work carefully with the groups to ensure we follow all the rules of compliance to ensure they are impacting a group that was negatively impacted by COVID.

Mr. Brown stated, at a future meeting, he will have the state lobbyist attend.

5. **Items for Action** -- Ms. Barron stated this list is what they requested Mr. Brown to bring to the committee. The committee could decide if it is an all-inclusive or an a la carte list.

- a. **Fifth Judicial Circuit – Solicitor’s Office Data Management** – Mr. Brown noted previously there were concerns about the division of costs as the Solicitor’s Office oversees two counties. He stated there is an amended request that reflects Richland County’s portion.

Mr. Justin Martin, Analyst with the Solicitor’s Office, stated they want to get a new case management system to handle the increase of data from phone dumps, body camera footage, interviews, and surveillance videos. Their current case management system does not have the capacity to store all these items in a central repository. A new system would allow them to be more streamlined.

Mr. Brown noted, some of the technology items, we would have to look at addressing in the coming years. The Solicitor’s Office currently has the opportunity to address their future needs before their needs become critical issues that have to be addressed all at the same time.

Ms. Barron inquired how we anticipate maintaining the expenses after the ARP funding is expended.

Mr. Brown stated we have 5 years to incorporate the ongoing maintenance into the budget.

Mr. Livingston inquired if the request is for \$1.2M.

Mr. Martin responded the request is \$618,585.20 for years 1-4.

Mr. Livingston inquired if year 5 would have to be budgeted from the General Fund.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Martin stated they are hoping to secure grant funding to offset the costs in year five.

Mr. Livingston inquired if the cost in year 5 is \$114,400.

Mr. Martin responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Newton stated for clarification, the \$618k represents Richland County’s 80%.

Mr. Martin responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Newton inquired if Kershaw County agreed to pay the remaining 20%, or if there is another funding source identified.

Mr. Pauling responded they have the funding from Kershaw County and other sources.

Ms. Barron inquired about the Body Worn Camera Grant and the IPS Grant. She inquired if those grants are for Richland County, Kershaw County or both.

Mr. Pauling responded the Body Worn Camera Grant is for Richland County and the IPS Grant is for both, as it is for the 5th Circuit.

Ms. Barron inquired about Kershaw County's contribution.

Mr. Pauling responded they are requesting 20% of the total amount, and they are looking for additional funds as well.

Ms. Barron stated she wants to revisit this item once they have more information regarding Kershaw County's contribution.

Mr. O. Walker stated the Solicitor works for both counties, and he could not divorce himself from Kershaw County.

Ms. Barron stated she wants the Solicitor to have what he needs to do his job, but one of the guidelines we have to follow is the funds have to go toward Richland County residents.

- b. **Department of Social Services - Construction/Renovation for New Family Services Center** – No action was taken.
- c. **Third-Party Partner for Community American Rescue Plan Act Grant Management** – No action was taken.
- d. **County Administrator's American Rescue Plan Act Funding Consideration/Recommendations** – No action was taken.
 - i. Richland County Sheriff's Department - LenCo BearCat Armored Vehicle
 - ii. Richland County Sheriff's Department - Maintenance of Cessna
 - iii. Richland County Sheriff's Department - ShotSpotter
 - iv. Information Technology - Geographic Information Systems Division - Cybersecurity Upgrades
 - v. Information Technology - Geographic Information Systems Division - Geospatial Infrastructure Improvements and Enhancements
 - vi. Assessor's Office - EagleView Imagery
 - vii. Emergency Services - Emergency Medical Services Vehicle and Equipment Obscence Replacements
 - viii. Emergency Services - Fire Service Bunker Gear

7. **Adjournment** – Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Barron, to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:55 PM.