



MINUTES
City of McDonough
Special Called City Council Meeting
McKibben Chambers City Hall
136 Keys Ferry Street
April 25, 2022
6:00 PM

The Special Called Meeting of the City Council of the City of McDonough was held on Monday, April 25, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Vincent called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The City Clerk called roll for the meeting, as follows:

Mayor Sandra Vincent	Present
Mayor Pro Tem Rufus Stewart	Present
Councilmember Jamal Burt	Absent
Councilmember Benjamin Pruett	Present
Councilmember Scott Reeves	Present
Councilmember Vanessa Thomas	Present
Councilmember Kamali Varner	(Arrived after start of meeting)

Others in attendance were: City Attorney, Mr. Jim Elliott; City Clerk, Ms. Christy Taylor; Police Chief, Mr. Ken Noble; Fire Chief, Mr. Dave Williams; Community Development Director, Mr. Charles Reese; Facilities and Assets Management Director, Mr. Steve Morgan; Finance Director, Mr. Frank Milazi; Human Resources Director, Mr. Nick Calhoun; Technology Services Director, Mr. Steve Sikes; Waste Water Plant Manager, Mr. Jeremy Newton; Water Treatment Plant Manager, Mr. Steve Cox; Stormwater Supervisor, Mr. Brandon Williams; Water Distribution and Sewer Collection Supervisor, Mr. Billy VonDenBosch; City Planner, Ms. Diane Johnson; and Executive Assistant, Ms. Joani Clemons.

Mayor Vincent called for a motion to approve the Agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Stewart motioned and Councilmember Reeves seconded. The vote was five in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Vincent, Mayor Pro Tem Stewart, Councilmember Pruett, Councilmember Reeves, Councilmember Thomas. Councilmember Varner had not yet arrived when the agenda was approved, and Councilmember Burt was not present at the meeting.

Councilmember Thomas gave the Invocation; and Mayor Pro Tem Stewart led the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no public comments.

Department Heads, Plant Managers and Supervisors from the City of McDonough presented proposed projects for the utilization of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds, as follows:

Community Development Director, Mr. Charles Reese offered a Power Point presentation depicting how ARPA Funds could be utilized to provide assistance to small businesses and to assist low or moderate income households and communities.

Highways and Streets Department Supervisor, Mr. Gerald Brown made a presentation regarding utilizing ARPA Funds to purchase a Caterpillar 420XE backhoe loader, at a cost of \$128,000.

Human Resources Director, Mr. Nick Calhoun presented a request to utilize ARPA funds to bolster pay for first responders. After some discussion, the City Attorney advised that he will explore options for bonuses for essential workers under the ARPA Rules and provide that information to Mayor and Council as well.

Technology Services Director Mr. Steve Sikes discussed the possibility of utilizing ARPA Funds to expand broadband; and Mr. Elliott advised that he would look into exactly how the funds can be expended as related to expanding existing broadband.

Fire Chief Dave Williams discussed using ARPA Funds to purchase Lexipol Software, at a start-up cost of \$32,000, with annual costs of \$10,400 for program maintenance. ARPA Funds would cover the first three years of maintenance, after which the City would absorb the annual maintenance costs. Chief Williams noted that the software, which provides a library of state-specific public safety policies could potentially be utilized by the Police Department.

Waste Water Plant Supervisor, Mr. Jeremy Newton presented Mayor and Council with two proposed projects to be considered for the utilization ARPA Funds. The first proposal was to rehab/rebuild two sand filters, at a cost of \$209,907. Additionally, Mr. Newton presented proposals for construction, engineering and inspection costs related to the pump station at Turner Church Road and sewer upgrade construction at Kalves Creek. Costs associated with the pump station and sewer upgrades total \$1,250,241.

Water Distribution and Sewer Collection Department Supervisor Mr. William VonDenBosch presented a proposal that ARPA Funds be used to replace lines, rehab manholes and replace hydrants and valves at an approximate cost of \$747,000.

Stormwater Supervisor, Mr. Brandon Williams presented information on how APRA Funds could be utilized to develop a Master Plan for Stormwater. He approximated the associated costs to develop and implement the Master Plan to range from \$200,000 to \$1,000,000,000.

Water Plant Supervisor, Mr. Steve Cox gave a presentation on using ARPA Funds to expand the water treatment plant, as was previously approved by Mayor and Council in December of 2020. Mr. Cox noted that the costs for the expansion would total \$4,605,000, which could be paid over two years, at approximately \$2,124,438.00 per year.

Finance Director, Mr. Frank Milazi addressed Mayor and Council about the use of ARPA Funds, and he advised the Governing Body to be conscious of the City's ability to sustain any projects once the ARPA Funds have been expended.

Mayor Pro Tem Stewart said he would like to see ARPA dollars utilized to focus on repairs for low-income housing, road and sidewalk improvements, and assistance for local businesses.

Mayor Vincent noted that Councilmember Burt had expressed his concerns to her regarding park upkeep.

Councilmember Reeves suggested that ARPA Funds be used to provide five new entrance signs at designated locations; maintain landscaping in the medians; promotion of small businesses; digital information signs; and additional landscape improvements and environmental enhancements.

Councilmember Varner suggested that ARPA Funds be used to help mitigate the economic impact on low to moderate income families by supporting the Labor Trade Council, housing rehabilitation for low-income, reopening the splash pad and adding greenspace at Avalon Park, and addressing lighting issues in District IV.

Councilmember Thomas suggested ARPA Funds be utilized to provide improvements to the parks throughout the City. Her suggestions included renovating and revitalizing existing playground equipment, resurfacing basketball courts and walking trails, and making enhancements in an effort to create an atmosphere where citizens are able to be outdoors more.

Councilmember Thomas also suggested using ARPA Funds for street lighting projects, contracting vendors to provide landscaping and beautification projects throughout the City, funding summer programs for low-income youth.

Councilmember Pruett suggested that a Public Safety Training Facility be funded through ARPA.

Mayor Vincent provided a copy of the list of projects that Henry County has published as to how they plan to utilize ARPA Funds; and she noted that some of the projects proposed by Council will fall under the County's jurisdiction according to the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) Agreement as well.

She said she believes the City should consider using ARPA dollars to assist small businesses that were negatively impacted by the Covid pandemic. She suggested using ARPA funds to satisfy the small business loans that were offered through the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and in addition she discussed the possibility of setting up a fund to offer low-interest loans to entrepreneurs.

Mayor Vincent also discussed using ARPA funds to re-establish healthy grass at the parks, since staffing shortages that resulted from Covid caused the parks to become overgrown with weeds. She discussed the need to help with the remediation of the housing issues in the Blacksville Community and the immediate need to address the issue of homelessness throughout the County.

Mayor Vincent further shared her support for the use of ARPA Funds to address issues with the City's water systems, as well as to provide premium pay for first responders and essential workers. She said that the City has received requests for funding from non-profit organizations as well, and if that is the direction of the Council, there will be an open application process for those wishing to apply.

After the presentations, Mayor Vincent called on Council to provide their input on the best use of the funds. Discussion ensued. Councilmember Varner offered four areas of focus to be considered, as follows: Water/Sewer Infrastructure; Low-Income Housing Rehab; Small Businesses in the City of McDonough; and Non-Profits.

Councilmember Pruett and Councilmember Reeves reiterated their support of premium pay for public safety and essential employees.

Councilmember Thomas shared her support of water and sewer infrastructure; however, she stated her belief that federal funds are available to support those efforts in addition to ARPA dollars. She said she believes the focus should be on parks, sidewalks, lighting and other issues throughout the City; and she said she also supports premium pay for all essential employees who worked throughout the pandemic. Discussion continued.

Councilmember Pruett pointed out that if the City uses ARPA Funds to address the issues with the water and sewer infrastructure, then there will be no need to utilize bonds or loans to make the improvements.

Councilmember Reeves reiterated the responsibility of the Council to ensure public safety and provide water and sewer services to the citizens of McDonough, and he said he believes those areas should take priority. Discussions continued.

As a result of the discussion, Mayor Vincent distinguished the following categories for the Council to consider in determining the areas of focus for the use of ARPA Funds:

Sidewalks and Street Lighting
Parks
Small businesses of the City
Low-income housing rehab
Public Health

Clean Up Efforts
Water / Sewer / Stormwater
Premium pay for essential workers
Non-profit Organizations
Public Safety Facility

Mayor Vincent adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Christy L. Taylor,
City Clerk

OPEN MEETINGS COMPLIANCE NOTICE: This is a Special Called meeting of Mayor and Council of the City of McDonough duly noticed pursuant to the requirements of the Georgia Open Meetings Law (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1, et seq). Notice of the meeting was published at City Hall, on the City's website, and notice was provided to the *Henry Herald* on April 20, 2022, as required by law.