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# M E M O R A N D U M

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**DATE:** July 16, 2021  
**TO:** Aaron Oppenheimer, City Administrator  
**FROM:** Connie DeKemper, Director of Administrative Services  
**CC:** Kristin Vander Kooi, Finance Director  
**RE:** **Phase 1 ARPA Grant**

**Background:**

The City of Sun Prairie has received \$1,813,958.39, the first tranche, of funds from the federal government to disburse for the following purposes:

- Support urgent COVID-19 response efforts to continue to decrease spread of the virus and bring the pandemic under control;
- Replace lost public sector revenue to strengthen support for vital public services and help retain jobs;
- Support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses; and
- Address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the inequal impact of the pandemic on certain populations.

Staff has reviewed the above purposes and have developed projects that can be completed rather quickly enhance City infrastructure, set the stage to provide assistance to the hardest hit of our community, and provide assistance to meet the compliance requirements of the funding.

**Phase 1:**

The following is a summary of projects that the City can immediately begin:

Enhance City Infrastructure

The installation of air filters to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 virus is an immediate project that is allowable based on the grant guidelines. The City is proposing to fund the following air filter projects:

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| • Air filter Installation for the Library                     | \$29,000      |
| • Air filter Installation for the City Hall Building          | \$75,000 est. |
| • Air filter Installation for the Westside Community Building | \$20,000 est. |
| • Air filter installation for the Colonial Club               | \$9,000 est.  |

The rehabilitation of the shelter at Wetmore Park is a high priority for the parks, recreation and forestry division. Wetmore Park resides in the City's qualified census tract and serves the City's low-income and minority populations that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The City's parks have seen a very high usage during the pandemic due to the restrictions on travel and the risk of gathering indoors. Due to this additional use, the ARPA guidelines allow the funding of park improvements in specific areas to address both the

need to social distance and the inequity of the effects of the pandemic on the City's hardest hit communities.

- Wetmore Park shelter rehabilitation \$500,000 est.

Staff is proposing to remodel the front counter on the first floor and second floor of City Hall. The reorganization of the finance division and the city clerk's division was designed to allow for the collection of all monies on the first floor of City Hall. Staff is proposing moving the counter on the first floor out so that there is a sight line to both entrances of the first floor. The design includes the installation of Plexiglas across the entire front counter. The second floor will no longer need counter space so the remodel includes removing the counter and enclosing the lobby to create a conference room. This will provide additional space to meet with stakeholders outside the staff offices maintaining a secure area for City staff. This project is currently in 2022 of the Ten Year Capital Improvement Plan.

- Plexiglass installation on the first floor front counter \$12,000
- Enclose the second floor lobby \$57,000

#### Set the Stage to Provide Assistance to the Hardest Hit of our Community

Providing assistance to the hardest hit of the City's community has been a priority for the Council. It is necessary for the city to determine who and where the low-income, minority populations are and what assistance is needed. Staff is proposing to complete several studies that will provide an opportunity for community interaction and data analysis to determine where these populations are so that the funds can be focused where they are needed. The following studies are proposed to gather this information:

- Equity Audit (to study the delivery of services by the City to low-income and minority communities); \$50,000 est.
- Community Needs Analysis \$50,000 est.

The ARPA guidelines include hiring personnel to promote the distribution of funds to the City's hardest hit communities. Staff is proposing to hire a social worker in 2021 funded by the grant to assist in the implementation of the Community Needs Analysis and the development of the programs recommended by the Analysis. This position could be eliminated at the end of 2024 or if effective, employment could be extended and funded through general revenues.

- Social Worker (2021) \$45,000 est.

#### Compliance Requirements

Staff is proposing to contract with a firm for grant administration to ensure that the City remains in compliance with federal regulations. The City does not generally receive federal grants and is not familiar with the compliance requirements. While the auditors will be a good resource, they will be completing our single audit and have to remain independent of the City. This was approved at the July 6, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting.

- Contract for Grant Administration (three years) \$200,000 est.

The proposed Phase 1 spending are items that can be implemented due to the simplicity of the project or are necessary to implement further programming. The second phase builds on the analysis completed or includes the development of programs, contracting for services and implementation of programs.

**Phase 2:**

The following projects are being proposed but need additional information, data analysis and/or partners to assist in the development of the programs:

Staff is proposing a small business assistance program and contracting with Dane County Buy Local for administration and implementation of the program. Staff is working on the guidelines of the program and will be bringing a contract for Council approval in the near future.

- Small Business Assistance Program \$200,000 est.

Staff is reviewing the needs of the neighborhood navigators to assist in providing services to our hardest hit communities. Once this analysis is completed, staff will be bringing a proposal to Council that will assist the navigators in their mission.

- Enhance Neighborhood Navigators \$50,000 est.

Staff is in the process of developing a mental health improvement program. This will take additional work to develop the guidelines and contract with a partner for implementation. The program design requires additional information that will be provided by the studies in phase 1 and expertise that the social worker may provide.

- Mental Health Assistance Program \$275,000 est.

Additional Information

Staff has reached out to Dane County to see if we can partner with them in any way. While Dane County is willing to provide assistance to help us build our own programs, they are stretched thin to implement the programs that they are doing. One of the items we discussed was rental assistance because we want to make sure that we were not duplicating efforts. Dane County has indicated that there are other ARPA grant programs that they will be using to provide rental assistance. Additionally, they are beginning to provide this assistance prospectively in that they are willing to fund three months in advance. They also indicated that if they should run out of money, which was unlikely, the State of Wisconsin has funding that they would like to provide to Dane County for this use.

Staff is proposing to partner with Tenant Resource Center to assist in needs that they might have. TRC is intending to focus on evictions and counseling. Staff is reaching out to TRC to develop a program that may provide assistance in these areas. A rent counselor is approximately \$60,000 annually.

Staff will be reaching out to Sunshine Place/Dane County to work on a financial assistance program. This program is designed to assist in the funding of necessities such as food, utilities, or medical expenses.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff is recommending that the Committee of the Whole approve the Phase 1 proposed grant expenditures/programs.