

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Ashley Lucht, Matt Francis, Maurice Matte Jason Williams Brian Borah Dallas Wheatley

City Staff Present: Councilor Bryn Oakleaf, Mayor Kristine Lott, John Rauscher, Ray Coffey

Call to Order by: Ashley Lucht

Meeting Start Time: 5:36 PM

II. Public Comment

None

III. Council Liaison Updates

Mayor Lott - values discussion for TIF funding was had.

Councilor Bryn Oakleaf: Municipal Infrastructure Commission had a discussion. VTrans discussion.

IV. Discussion: American Rescue Plan Act and Tax Increment Financing Funding Outreach

Mayor Lott - TIF and ARPA won't be in next budget, but will need to start planning / talking about it. Efforts have been made to reach out via Front Porch Forum / City Updates. Mayor wants to know how to address the coming funds to the community.

Members generally agreed to call the ARPA funds a "one-time investment" (unassigned reserve, from the federal gov't, not because of city operations).

Mayor Lott clarified TIF funds - when downtown was redeveloped, voters agreed to take on debt to support infrastructure to allow for private investment. Revenue from the growth had been going to payoff debt. Debt is going to be paid off, therefore, revenues of around \$800k / year will go to the city. City wants input from community on how to spend funds ie: invest in capital projects, new programs, current operations that need to be shored up, etc.

JW - Instead of giving the public a 'free for all', it may makes sense to make 'buckets' of ideas of where money would go to generate better/concrete input.

AL - frame the 'buckets' as ideas - capital improvements, underfunded mandates, capital improvement, programs, etc, instead of nitty gritty details.

How will the decision be made? That will help inform what to do with the funds.

DW - Make sure communication includes examples of what the money is specifically going to be used for.

AA and AL discussed releasing/making public a tool she created that gives examples of what funds can be used for.

DW - How will it be decided the percentages /dollar amounts of what the funds used for. City Council approves the budget and puts it to the voters.

AA - Make it clear during budget process what these funds are going towards.

Shouldn't get super specific since the city staff knows on the ground what's going on.

Mayor and City Staff asked department heads to come up with initiatives/priorities and costs.

MM - Public should know that if the money isn't spent, tax rate would go down.

Mayor Lott clarifies that money doesn't have to be spent in first year, could be spread out over years.

Communication should be at an easy reading level.

Mayor Lott - include in budget presentation, election day pamphlet

MM - could it be included as a survey on the March ballot?

BO - utility bills

DW - QR code on posters around town

Surveys should be in multiple languages, Parks survey worked with individual interpreters.

MF: How was ARPA response?

Mayor Lott - listening sessions were productive, good results, results will be discussed later

V. Discussion: Fiscal Year 2024 Goals

Mayor Lott: Historically, the mandate is to keep tax increase level with COLA. City is having capacity issues, compounded by inflation.

Are there areas where services should be cut? Can reserves help supplement any cuts / investments?

Are there different ways to measure affordable tax rate?

Is 5% too high - would need to dip into 'reserves aka ARPA funds to maintain level services.

Revenue doesn't keep pace with inflation as is.

Discussed future meetings.

VI. Adjourn

Motion by: MRF

Second: MM

Meeting End Time: 6:56 PM

DRAFT