WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, September 14, 2022, to discuss the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund Recommended Spending.

Mayor Jordan started the Meeting at 7:31 p.m. The Meeting was held virtually via Zoom in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 25 Crescent Road.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Colin A. Byrd, Judith F. Davis, Ric Gordon, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L. K. Weaver, and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Tim George, Interim City Manager; Debi Sandlin, Interim Assistant City Manager; Bertha Gaymon, City Treasurer; Willis Shafer, Director of Public Works; Greg Varda, Director of Recreation; Dale Worley, Director of Information Technology; Brian Kim, Assistant Director Public Works; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Assistant to the City Clerk.

ALSO, PRESENT WERE: Michael Hartman, Bill Orleans, and others.

Mayor Jordan explained that tonight's work session was about going through the priority list of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund to identify where to use the funding.

There was a discussion regarding the Greenbelt Aquatic and Fitness Center Pool. Ms. Sandlin stated that the infrastructure of the pool is aging. Mr. Shafer explained that staff had identified a concrete column that had been deteriorating. Two engineering firms have evaluated the pool structure. Four deck support columns had rotted due to the harsh environment, the structure rebar rusted, and concrete had popped loose from its piers. Mr. Shafer noted that the west-facing wall has no soil support and has cracks in the surface.

Based on a question by Mayor Jordan, Mr. Shafer answered that the engineering firm would develop a scope of work through the Request for Proposal (RPF) process or receive quotes from engineering firms. The City would be involved in the inspection process. The project will not affect the indoor pool.

Based on a question asked by Mr. Roberts, Mr. Shafer answered that the north face wall has vertical and horizontal cracks. He stated that the rebar would be cleaned or replaced, and the four columns needed to be rehabilitated and reconstructed.

Ms. Pope inquired about the timeframe and cost of the project. Mr. Shafer stated that he would like the project started by December so it could be completed by Memorial Day next year. He provided Council with an estimate of $413,000 and will have the firm address the separation between the wall and the top deck. Ms. Pope advised adding additional funding just in case extra work needs to be done.

Mr. Varda explained that the area of concern at the pool is the outdoor pump room directly behind the rebound wall, which doesn't affect the indoor pool. There is no public access to this area.

Ms. Davis requested that this item be added to the quick list for ARPA spending that Council will vote on at the next Regular Meeting.

Based on a question asked by Michael Hartman, 2 Ct Gardenway, Mr. Varda answered that the *pool has a zero-depth entry and has wheelchair access.*

Lore Rosenthal, 2 Ct Gardenway, stated that she didn’t see the connection between ARPA funding and this project and suggested that the City use Capital Project funding. Based on a question asked by Mayor Jordan, Mr. Shafer explained that ARPA funding could be used for Recreation facilities. Mr. Kim added that anything that promotes outdoor activities is an acceptable use of ARPA.

Based on a question asked by Mr. Roberts, Mr. Varda explained that staff was aware of the situation last Spring and notified the Interim City Manager. Mr. George added that staff conducted a tour during the Spring and was assured that it wasn't an imminent needed but need to be fixed. He noted that staff was informed about the structure of the north wall when the engineers explained about the deteriorating columns and the wall itself.

Based on a question asked by Mr. Roberts, Ms. Gaymon explained that all the Capital Projects, Building Capital Reserve, and Replacement Funds were funded in the fiscal year 2023 budget using ARPA funds.

Mayor Jordan presented a proposal for a Tree Canopy Restoration Fund for $150,000. He explained that the proposal is to provide grants to multi-family residential development (including HOAs, COAs, Co-ops, and apartment developments) to assist with remediating tree canopies damaged from the increasing number of severe storms.

There was a discussion regarding the Tree Canopy Restoration Fund. Mr. Roberts expressed that he did not favor the proposal and that the City shouldn't be funding ground improvements for apartment complexes. Ms. Davis stated that this request would help across the City and suggested limiting the amount of the fund to $100,000. Mr. Gordon indicated that the apartment complex could split the cost with the City. Mr. Shafer advised that the price was $350 per tree by Casey Trees, and the City could negotiate the price. He noted that the City would be working with one vendor and would select a vendor through an RFP process. Ms. Rosenthal, a Greenbelt resident, stated that this was a good idea and recommended using a grant from Prince George's County Sustainability Division to plant trees.

Mayor Jordan read a comment from Zoom's "Question and Answer" feature from Dr. Rosado, a Greenbelt resident, stating that this is a great idea. However, most HOAs have tree replacement in their budgets and Council should be careful with the proposal. Mayor Jordan noted that the storms have been impactful around the City. The Council would go above and beyond the limited funding for some of the County's programs.

Ms. Davis requested adding $50,000 to the list for the Reparation Commission. Mayor Pro Tem Weaver expressed her concern with the ARPA fund timeline, and Mr. Gordon suggested allocating funds for the Reparation Commission during budget season.

Council reviewed the Potential Spending Projects.

Ms. Davis requested to combine the following potential spending projects with an estimated cost of $ 1 million #25, Create a network of safe walking/biking paths; #34, Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan Implementation & Traffic Calming; #41, Bus Stop Safety & Accessibility Plan Implementation; and # 52, Design & construct streets, sidewalks, curb gutter, ADA *improvements.*

Mayor Jordan noted that there was no discussion from Council. However, it kept #34, Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan Implementation & Traffic Calming; #41, Bus Stop Safety & Accessibility Plan Implementation; and #39, Conduct a Phase 1 environmental study on the PG Scrap property, on the potential spending project list.

There was discussion regarding #26, Design & Install HVAC upgrades at Youth Center – Additional Area, Community Center – Lower Level & Greenbelt Aquatic and Fitness Center, and #42, Install air purification systems in City-owned buildings. Mr. Shafer explained the difference between #26 and #42, which included that the HVAC system (#26) is in multiple locations and brings in fresh air. Therefore, he suggested removing #42 from the list.

Based on a question asked by Mr. Byrd, Ms. Sandlin explained that the potential spending project list is grouped by color by project similarities.

About the HVAC discussion, Mr. Roberts stated there were upgrades to the Community Center HVAC System 7-8 years ago. Mr. Shafer explained that the Community Center's lower level could be transformed into multiple office spaces and significant HVAC improvements are needed. Mr. Roberts expressed his objection to having office space in the Community Center. Mr. Kim noted that the lower level also includes the mechanical room and two chillers would need to be replaced. Ms. Davis pointed out that the City Council will determine the Community Center's lower-level usage after the Space Study's completion. Mayor Jordan agreed that the work needs to be done, but the proposed estimated cost of $850,000 is relatively high. Ms. Pope noted that the City has an opportunity to take care of the aging infrastructure. Ms. Rosenthal asked if HVAC is the same as air purification and how many of the City buildings have this.

In regards to #52, the Design and construction of streets, sidewalks, curb, gutter, and ADA improvements, on the potential spending projects list, Mr. Hartman stated that there was no proposed estimated cost. He didn't want this item to be dropped off the list because the City needs to fix the lack of continuous sidewalks which are barriers.

About the HVAC discussion, Ms. Davis suggested adding Springhill Lake Rec, or another facility to #26.

Mayor Pro Tem Weaver agreed with Ms. Davis and consolidated #25, Create a network of safe walking/biking paths, and #52, Design and construct streets, sidewalks, curbs, gutter, and ADA improvements with #34, Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan Implementation and Traffic Calming, on the potential spending projects list.

There was a discussion regarding #44, Healthcare vouchers for low-income families. Ms. Pope inquired if the County provided healthcare services and if they could use the healthcare providers in Greenbelt. Mayor Jordan stated that the City needed to define low-income. Ms. Davis and Mr. Gordon suggested a proposed estimated cost of $500,000.

Council agreed to remove #40, Aging infrastructure in the City should be given priority, and #43, Green infrastructure improvements, from the potential spending projects list.

There was additional discussion regarding #44, Healthcare vouchers for low-income families.

Mr. Roberts inquired how long the City would provide healthcare and how many residents will the City be able to assist. Mayor Jordan requested that staff research and provide Council with a follow-up report. Based on a question asked by Mr. Gordon, Ms. Sandlin answered that it's possible that staff can identify a grant for this project as a potential other project that still needs to be funded.

There was discussion regarding the #33, Upgrade and improve existing ballfields. Mr. Varda explained that the ballfields are located in flood plains and are heavily used. He stated that management of the ballfields is difficult because the ballfields are open. If the fields aren't monitored, the areas will be destroyed. Based on a question by Mayor Pro Tem Weaver, Mr. Varda answered that most of the upgrades would be to Braden Field and the Little League Field, but Schrom Hills Park needs work, too. Mr. Roberts stated that the City needed more ballfields and suggested building a park in Greenbelt West. Mr. Shafer indicated that enforcing and managing the ballfields would be challenging. Mayor Jordan requested that staff identify which ballfields will be upgraded and break out the costs for each ballfield.

There was discussion regarding #27, Implement Space Study recommendations. Mr. George explained staff had received a final draft from the consultant and that the staff would present the report at the next Regular Meeting.

There was discussion regarding #31, the Citywide Broadband Feasibility Study. Mr. Worley explained that the consultant would assess the effectiveness of building a network. In addition, he stated that the consultant would look at current and future technology. Council decided to place this item on hold at this time.

There was discussion regarding #35, Outdoor amenities (Youth Center and Springhill Lake Rec Center) and archery (behind the horseshoe pits). Mr. Varda explained that archery classes are trendy, and there is a makeshift archery range on Braden Field behind the Youth Center. He noted that this project would enhance the outdoor amenities at Springhill Lake Rec Center and upgrade Candy Cane City with cornhole, ladder ball, two horseshoe pits, and an outdoor pavilion. Ms. Davis requested additional outdoor amenities at Schrom Hills Park. Council decided to add Schrom Hills Park to the request for outdoor amenities.

Based on a question asked by Ms. Rosenthal, a Greenbelt resident, Mr. George answered that the PIO office is revamping the ARPA site on the City's website to include the list of ARPA projects, the amount, the City Department that is handling the project, the status of the project, and next steps. In addition, the ARPA document will also include the funds that were allocated.

There was discussion regarding services for the homeless population. Ms. Davis asked what kind of services CARES currently offers to help the homeless and whether the staff can provide additional benefits to meet the needs of the homeless. Mr. Gordon noted that the closest homeless shelter was in Beltsville. Bill Orleans, a Greenbelt resident, suggested that Council explore rent control to prevent homelessness.

There was discussion regarding #32, Develop marketing campaigns to highlight post-COVID-19 resiliency. Ms. Sandlin stated that the marketing campaign is to "Shop Greenbelt Shop Local" to help retailers rebound from COVID. It would be an ongoing campaign. Mayor Jordan requested to increase the proposed estimated cost to $100,000.

Council agreed on the following potential spending projects, #50, Electric bus for Recreation and Public Works, and #38, Install solar charging stations for mobile devices at City Parks and Visitor Centers.

There was discussion regarding #29, Implementing remaining security system improvements (Access Control, CCTV. Monitoring). Mayor Pro Tem Weaver and Mayor Jordan expressed their concerns regarding the proposed cost of $1,000,000. Mr. Shafer explained that the funds would be used to complete the Youth Center, the Community Center, the Greenbelt Aquatic and Fitness Center, and the Springhill Lake Rec Center. Mr. Worley also suggested integrating the City's building alarm system with the door system.

Council agreed to remove #48, Desk renovation (COVID) social distancing, from the potential spending projects list.

Council agreed on the following potential spending project, #28, Design and construct outdoor pavilion improvements/upgrades at Buddy Attick Lake Park.

There was discussion about #58, public art/sprinklers. Mr. Varda explained that the staff is waiting on the Neighborhood Design Center design for Greenbelt Station and doesn't think it includes a splash pad. Instead, he recommends any project that can consist of public art. Mayor Jordan requested that the City allocate some funding toward public art. Ms. Sandlin stated that another jurisdiction had a competition for public art with local artists. Mr. Byrd noted that he liked Ms. Sandlin's idea regarding the contest with public art and wanted to know how the City could model that idea.

The Meeting ended at 10:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Assistant to the City Clerk