

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held Monday, October 8, 2024

DISCUSSION: Reallocation of ARPA Funds

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:30 p.m. On site Council Chambers and virtually via Zoom.

In attendance were: Councilmembers Amy E. Knesel, Danielle P. McKinney, Jenni A. Pompei, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L.K. Weaver; and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

City Staff: Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Timothy George, Assistant City Manager; Chondria Andrews, Public Information Officer; and Bonita Anderson, City Clerk.

Others present: Dr. Lois Rosado, Konrad Herling, Michael Hartman, Tom Adams, Daniel Theis, Robert Goldberg-Strassler, and Bill Orleans.

Mayor Jordan began meeting with introductions. He highlighted that focus of work session would be allocation of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), covering projects that have been completed, committed, or are still in development. Council reviewed various projects and funding sources, discussing the possibility of an audit due to the substantial funding received. Key funding priorities included the pool project, with additional consideration given to the animal control facility and dog park improvements, emphasizing public safety and accessibility. Council also reviewed the need to allocate funds for other important initiatives, including a request from the Reparations Commission.

Mr. Salmerón noted that the city received over \$22 million in funding, which was designated for COVID-19 recovery, infrastructure rebuilding, and addressing community needs. The council implemented a rigorous process to gather public input and carefully allocated funds to address both immediate and long-term priorities. Given the significant funding received, the possibility of an audit was also discussed. The council reviewed specific allocations, including the pool project, which, while initially funded through ARPA, might now be supported by Program Open Space funding. Despite a limited remaining budget, the council examined additional project funding requests, with close to a million dollars in proposed initiatives to consider.

Mr. George highlighted the need to allocate all remaining funds by the December 30 deadline to ensure full use of the available funding. He emphasized the importance of demonstrating to the federal government that these resources were utilized effectively, as this could strengthen the city's eligibility for future large grants. The council reviewed the status of ARPA-funded projects, noting that over 80% have been completed, committed, or are actively progressing. Additionally, they are working on updating visual graphics to enhance public visibility of project progress and funding allocations.

Mr. George outlined the allocation and expenditure of available funds, focusing on completed, committed, and ongoing projects. He noted that of the \$22.8 million available, \$14.6 million has been spent on completed projects, \$2.2 million is committed to active projects, and \$1.4 million is dedicated to projects currently under development. The spending covers a wide range of categories, including recreation, resident support, health and mental health, small business assistance, infrastructure, public

safety, and premium pay for city staff. Additionally, the council discussed funds allocated to address lost and restricted revenue, with \$10 million allocated to cover lost revenue and \$12.8 million set aside for restricted revenue purposes. The session concluded with a discussion on the urgency to finalize funding decisions for remaining projects within the next 45 days.

Mr. Salmerón provided an overview of various projects and potential funding sources under consideration. Among the proposed purchases were portable radios for the police department, a camera scope to improve stormwater system inspections, and a GIS probe for infrastructure mapping. He highlighted the need to replace aging elevators, with potential funding from bond bills and grants. Additionally, he discussed plans for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, which included a \$200,000 contribution that would act as matching funds for a federal grant. The Reparations Commission request was also reviewed, with an estimated \$165,000 allocation needed, and \$30,000 already designated from the current budget.

Dr. Rosado discussed the allocation of funds for reparations work, stating that they had spent about half of the \$30,000 allocated for education. She emphasized the importance of doing the work well to avoid harm and build a healthier community. Ms. Weaver asked about the possibility of funding certain items on the proposal list through other grant programs or the city's regular budget. Mayor Jordan clarified that all items on the list could be funded through various sources, including the city's regular budget, capital budget, grant funding, and bond bills.

Ms. Pompei raised concerns about the rising costs of the animal control facility, noting that the initial estimates had gone up due to added requirements for office and storage space. Mr. Salmerón responded by mentioning that the team is now exploring the option of a commercial kennel as a more budget-friendly alternative. This commercial kennel would be established at the armory as a temporary solution to meet the city's animal control needs.

Mayor Jordan reviewed several projects and funding allocations, highlighting some "low-hanging fruit" initiatives like the Schrom Hills Park multi-use path, food recovery gift cards, and holiday baskets. He explained that the salary cost recovery component is a provision under the ARPA restricted funding, which aims to reimburse the city for expenses related to managing ARPA projects. Mr. Salmerón provided further clarification on this aspect, ensuring that the city is made whole for the costs incurred during the implementation of these projects.

Mayor Jordan raised questions about the Stream Valley Park storm project, emphasizing the necessity for engineering assessments before seeking construction funding, as noted by Mr. Salmerón.

Ms. McKinney further explored the connection between various projects and public safety, inquiring about potential partnership funding from neighboring jurisdictions and the feasibility of phased spending. She also addressed the possibility of securing State and Federal grant funding, while highlighting the importance of establishing long-term funding allocations for certain projects to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness.

Ms. McKinney addressed several projects and their potential implications for public safety, specifically considering the financial investment in code enforcement software, which would incur an initial cost along with annual maintenance fees. In response, Mr. Salmerón highlighted the benefits of utilizing GIS probes, radios, and cameras for effective stormwater inspection. Additionally, Ms. Pope requested a cost estimate for improved lighting, while noting that the Dog Park station was not regarded as a

critical public safety feature. This discussion underscored the council's commitment to prioritizing safety-enhancing projects within their budgetary considerations.

Mr. Salmerón emphasized the necessity of installing elevators in community centers to enhance accessibility for seniors and highlighted the importance of prioritizing public safety-related projects.

During the discussion, the potential relocation of the animal control facility to the armory was explored; however, concerns emerged regarding the timing of such a move and the possibility of wasting funds if the relocation occurred before completing the feasibility study for the armory. Mr. Salmerón acknowledged these concerns and committed to evaluating available options to ensure a solution that maintains continuity of service; while also addressing necessary improvements.

Informational items were discussed.

Mayor Jordan called to order a Special Meeting of the Greenbelt City Council.

ROLL CALL: All present

CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Weaver moved that Council go into a closed session in accordance with Section 3-305(b)(1) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland to:

- 1) to discuss the appointment, performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

The purpose of this meeting is 1) to discuss the City Manager's Evaluation Process.

Ms. Pope seconded.

ROLL CALL: All present, Mr. Roberts (Absent). The meeting ended at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonita Anderson

Bonita Anderson,
City Clerk