

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Sonja Berndt <
Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2023 3:24 PM
To: Jomsky, Mark; PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Fwd: City Council Meeting 1/18/2023 Agenda Items 3, 4.
Attachments: Marquez Follow Up Letter.docx

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Mr Jomsky:

There's a problem with the correspondence I submitted. There is a long email I submitted of today's date. What is posted now is only the attachment to the long email I sent today which I am forwarding again now. That needs to be posted as well. The December letter to Marquez is only an attachment to today's email.

Thanks.

Sonja Berndt

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sonja Berndt <
Date: Wed, Jan 18, 2023 at 12:36 PM
Subject: City Council Meeting 1/18/2023 Agenda Items 3, 4.
To: Gordo, Victor <vgordo@cityofpasadena.net>, Hampton, Tyron <thampton@cityofpasadena.net>, Rivas, Jessica <jerivas@cityofpasadena.net>, Williams, Felicia <fwilliams@cityofpasadena.net>, Masuda, Gene <gmasuda@cityofpasadena.net>, Madison, Steve <smadison@cityofpasadena.net>, Márquez, Miguel <miguelmarquez@cityofpasadena.net>, <justinjones@cityofpasadena.net>, Jomsky, Mark <mjomsky@cityofpasadena.net>, pthyret@cityofpasadena.net <pthyret@cityofpasadena.net>
CC: André Coleman <andrec@pasadenanowmagazine.com>

Dear Mayor Gordo, Members of the City Council, and City Manager Marquez:

Thank you for agendizing the emergency situation involving the lack of basic shelter for our over 280 unsheltered residents during extreme weather. I echo the sentiments of Anthony Manousos and Jill Shook, co-founders of Making Housing and Community Happen in their correspondence to you on these two agenda matters today. The proposal of transferring \$100,000 from the General Fund to the Housing Department and \$75,000 from the General Fund to the Public Health Department, both for emergency shelter, will do very little to improve the dire situation our unsheltered neighbors face every day. I wish to add the following points:

1. Ms. O'Reilly-Jones from the Housing Department has publicly stated that it is "very unsafe" living on the street. In the last several months, we know that two unsheltered persons were murdered in our City. It is unknown how many additional persons died due to violence or the harsh conditions on the street.
2. The City Council approved rescuing the Rose Bowl Operating Company with \$21.5 million from the General Fund and General Fund reserves over the past two years to cover the annual debt payments the RBOC could not make related to the Rose Bowl remodel years ago. The City found funds in the General Fund and reserves to do that then. Surely it can find much more than \$175,000 to provide basic shelter

for our unsheltered residents, especially since the RBOC will not need a bailout this year because the federal government gave it a \$10 million shuttered venue grant.

3. As of last month, the City still had \$20 million in unallocated American Rescue Plan Act funds received from the federal government last May. Attached to this email is my letter to City Manager Marquez detailing how the \$26 million in ARPA funds received in 2021 were spent, primarily to backfill the General Fund and on capital expenditures. Almost nothing was spent on our most vulnerable residents. The unallocated ARPA funds received in 2022 should be spent on sheltering our unsheltered residents and providing services since that use would clearly fall within the federal government's intent for these funds: to address the needs of those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Our unsheltered residents have been disproportionately impacted because the number of existing shelter beds in our City had to be substantially reduced as a result of the pandemic.

4. The City's strategy/planning for our unsheltered residents has been (a) provide a few "most vulnerable" persons with short-term motel vouchers, despite the fact the Housing Department advises that it can take over a year for a person living on the street to obtain permanent housing; (b) hope for a mild winter; (c) hope that the unsheltered residents can survive on the street until permanent supportive housing is available in our city; and (d) hope for more federal and state funding. Community members have hosted community webinars on the need for a lot more interim housing and presented to the ED Tech Committee, a petition for more interim housing in our City signed by over 200 people. We have researched other interim housing models such as motels and tiny homes and presented our research to the ED Tech Committee, this Council and the Housing Department, submitted several Public Record Act requests, reviewed documents produced, and written numerous letters to this Council and to ED Tech. The possibility of a tiny home interim housing community in our City was agendized in ED Tech last March. While it was discussed at that time, staff was asked to provide additional information which it never publicly presented.

5. Finally, City representatives have publicly stated that there is no site for a tiny home community to shelter our unsheltered residents until they obtain permanent housing. This statement must be considered with the following facts:

- Housing Director Bill Huang advised me in June of 2021 that the Housing Department would not spend time exploring a tiny home community in our city until a council member says that it can be located in his or her district.
- One of the city-owned sites presented by staff to ED Tech last March that is located in District 4 was discussed. No reasons were given why it could not be used for a tiny home community, and it was dropped from any public discussion.
- Staff was asked last March to compile a list of leased city-owned property where the leases were soon to expire, but that list was never presented publicly (if it was ever compiled).
- Planning Department staff advised me that the city's "GIS site" has the ability to show specific parcels of land throughout the city in aerial view. City representatives cannot honestly state that there is no site for a tiny home community in our City when it has failed to diligently search for one.

In conclusion, while the Council should approve the staff requests on these items, much, much more can and should be done urgently to provide for our unsheltered residents. Thank you for your time and consideration of this correspondence.

Sonja K. Berndt
Pasadena

Cc: *Pasadena Now*

RECEIVED

2023 JAN 18 PM 1:48

SONJA K. BERNDT
Pasadena, CA 91107

CITY OF PASADENA

December 11, 2022

Miguel Marquez, City Manager
City of Pasadena
Pasadena, CA
(By email to miguelpmarquez@cityofpasadena.net)

Re: Decisions Regarding Pasadena's 2022 American Rescue Plan Act Funds

Dear City Manager Marquez:

Thank you for your time and your consideration of the concerns our group expressed to you at our meeting on November 29, 2022. There was an additional concern that time did not permit us to present, that of providing a meaningful opportunity for public engagement in determining how to allocate this year's tranche of American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") funds. We urge the City to allocate substantially more of these funds for the benefit of our vulnerable and marginalized residents than was allocated with last year's tranche of ARPA funds.

Twenty million dollars of the second tranche remains unallocated. Earlier this year, the City Council advised community members that the plan for allocating these funds would be prepared when you began your tenure with our City. Additionally, earlier this Fall, Vice Mayor Wilson requested that you update residents about the status of ARPA funding in the City Manager's newsletter.

A. Background

Our City received a total of \$52.6 million in funding from the federal government pursuant to the ARPA -- \$26.3 million last year and \$26.3 million this year. The ARPA funds must be spent within the following four eligible uses identified in the statute:

- (1) to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts,** (2) to provide premium pay to essential workers, (3) to provide government services to the extent of eligible government revenue losses, and

(4) to make necessary water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure investments.

(Emphasis added.)

Last year's federal guidance specifically stated that "[t]he ARPA provides a substantial infusion of resources to meet pandemic response needs and rebuild a stronger, **more equitable economy** as the country recovers." (Interim Final Rule, p. 7, emphasis added.) Additionally, last year's federal guidance identified a very broad list of services and programs that could be funded with ARPA funds to address critical needs in disproportionately impacted communities.

Last year, community members pushed back on the staff recommendations for allocating the \$26.3 million in ARPA funding. I have attached the staff report with last year's recommendations. As you will see, most of the money went to backfill losses in the General Fund and for capital improvements. Despite the federal guidance for expending these funds as noted above, the City Council approved less than 10% for programs that targeted our underserved residents who were disproportionately affected by the pandemic. While some members of our City Council stated that the General Fund benefits all residents, that statement rings hollow given that the Housing and Public Health Departments receive so little from our General Fund while the City bailed out the Rose Bowl Operating Company with \$21.5 million from the General Fund and reserves over the past two years

B. The Council Needs to Provide Community Members with a Meaningful Opportunity for Public Engagement on Allocations of ARPA Funds Received this Year and Substantially More Funding Should be Allocated for Programs Serving our Marginalized and Disproportionately Impacted Residents

As mentioned, \$20 million of this year's ARPA funds have not yet been allocated. Last year, community members requested a meaningful opportunity to provide input on how our City's ARPA funds should be allocated. In the end, however, community members were given only four days' notice of the recommended allocation plan before it was adopted by the City Council on August 16, 2021 and received only a very limited time for public comment.

This year, the Community needs to have a meaningful opportunity, preferably in a town hall format, to discuss critical community needs that meet ARPA funding

eligibility criteria and should be met with this year's ARPA funds. For example, our City has a critical need to provide substantially more interim housing, with case management services, for our nearly 300 unsheltered residents. Additional funding is also needed for affordable and supportive housing programs.

I anticipate that City staff and some Council members will point out that the Housing Department already received \$3 million of the \$26.3 million this year for affordable housing, when the FY2023 budget was adopted. (See page 3 of the C. Kurtz FY2023 budget transmittal letter.)

However, this fact must be taken into consideration with the following facts:

- Per the Housing Department section of the FY2023 operating budget, specifically page 5, you will see that the Housing budget for FY2023 is \$1.35 million lower than FY2022, **even with the inclusion of the \$3 million of ARPA funds** (funding decreases “primarily due to sunsetting of COVID-19 related grants.”)
- Had staff not recommended allocating \$3 million of ARPA funds to the Housing Department for FY2023, the FY2023 budget would have been **\$4.35 million** less than FY2022, **a huge decrease in year-over-year budgets**. Moreover, that \$3 million allocation does not even begin to fill the huge \$8.3 million gap in the Housing Department's budget for FY2023 as compared to last year's revised budget.

C. Conclusion

For the stated reasons, the community should be given a meaningful opportunity to discuss with the Council how this year's ARPA funds should be allocated. Additionally, substantially more funds should be allocated for programs serving our poor and marginalized residents who were disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Thank you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Sonja K. Berndt

Cc: Ms. Heavenly Hughes, My Tribe Rise
Other Community Members

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Robert B m>
Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2023 12:49 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Bad Weather Shelter

Some people who received this message don't often get email from

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Hello,

My name is Robert Bruce and I am a Pasadena volunteer with our unhoused neighbors. I am writing to urge the city to please take steps towards opening or reopening a bad weather shelter. Until one is opened expanding the motel voucher program would help immensely, in addition to increasing funding to the PORT program.

Thank you.

-Robert Bruce

Pasadena Volunteer

--

Robert Bruce

1/18/2023
Item 3 and 4

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Allison Henry
Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2023 3:21 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse; Porras, Susana
Subject: 12-18-22 Agenda: Comment re Items 3&4

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Greetings Council and Mayor,

My name is Allison Henry and I am a D3 resident. I write in strong support of the additional funds needed to fund motel vouchers through Friends in Deed for our unhoused neighbors. I am disappointed that again this type of funding request comes late. We are not allocating enough funds ahead of time. Shelter space is hard for organizations to obtain and motel vouchers need to fill this important gap. Our homelessness crisis is only going to get worse not better due to the high cost of housing.

We need a more comprehensive approach to bringing people in from the street and not one where we have to add motel voucher funding to a special meeting agenda. Reacting is not the same as planning.

Thank you for your consideration.

Allison Henry