



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
City Hall, 215 SE 7th Street, Suite 255
Topeka, KS 66603-3914
Tel: 785-368-3710
www.topeka.org

Date: June 11, 2024

Time: 1:00pm

Location: 1st Floor Conference Room, Cyrus K. Holliday Bldg 620 SE Madison (*a virtual attendance option is available*)

Committee members Present: Spencer Duncan (Chair), Marcus Miller, Michelle Hoferer

City Staff Present: Interim City Manager Richard Nienstedt, Public Works Director Braxton Copley, Planning Director Rhiannon Friedman, Fire Chief Randy Phillips, Senior Grant Program Administrator April Hazen-Shaffer, Budget Manager Josh McAnarney

1) Call to Order

Committee member Duncan called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

2) Approve April 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Committee member Hoferer made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Committee member Miller seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

3) Unassigned Reserve Fund Projects

[On March 5, 2024 the Governing Body reviewed a recommended list of projects that would utilize \$8,662,000 of the unreserved funds. The item was moved to the March 19, 2024 Governing Body meeting for further discussion and action. Councilmember Neil Dobler had requested the establishment of a fund comprised of excess unassigned General Fund reserves balance. Within his proposal, he suggested each funding request be considered, individually, by the Policy & Finance Committee prior to being separately considered by the Governing Body.

Some of such items are being brought before the Policy & Finance Committee today.]

Hotel Topeka ADA Path, Loading Dock Repairs, Sidewalk Repairs

Public Works Director Braxton Copley introduced the item. This project budget is \$125,600. Trip hazards and loading dock repairs were identified as critical needs in the property condition assessment. In addition to that, one of the highest priorities listed in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assessment was to

have an accessible route from Topeka Boulevard to Hotel Topeka. Currently, a person would be required to walk on the street to get to the sidewalk.

MOTION: Committee member Hoferer made a motion to approve the request to allocate the requested unassigned reserve funds toward these repairs. Chairman Duncan seconded. Approved 3-0-0.

Hotel Topeka Smoke & Fire Damper Actuator Replacement

Public Works Director Copley introduced this item. The project budget is \$59,500. There are currently 36 sleeping rooms with faulty fire and smoke damper actuators that need to be replaced. Staff has cut the electrical feed to those dampers so that they have failed in a closed position. This will remedy the worst of the worst possible life safety issues.

The access panels are approximately six (6) inches by six (6) inches, and the actuators and dampers are almost 24 inches, so there is no way to replace them or do any meaningful work on them. Part of the project scope and cost includes cutting out the drywall to put in access panels that would be sufficiently sized so that, in the future, work could be done on the actuators.

Committee member Hoferer inquired if these dampers and actuators are in current rooms that are being occupied? Director Copley confirmed that there have been about 23 events, annually, where the hotel has seen 90% or greater occupancy and the rooms have been used. The critical life safety issue has been addressed by cutting the electrical feed, so the dampers fail in the closed position. The quality of life issues arises because the closed position means makeup air from the atrium can no longer be pulled into the room.

Chairman Duncan inquired about the timeframe for getting this addressed once passed? Director Copley estimated that it could be about a month. Committee member Hoferer stated she felt this should be a priority.

MOTION: Committee member Hoferer made a motion to approve the expenditure. Committee member Miller seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

Fire Department - Portable Radio Lease

Fire Chief Randy Phillips introduced this item. The Fire Department is currently in year two (2) of a five (5) year lease purchase for the replacement of the portable radio system that are used on emergency calls. This item was approved by the Governing Body as it was included within the Unassigned Reserve Funds package. Approval of this request will provide some additional funding over the next three (3) years within the Operating Budget. It will also save about \$2,000 in interest over the term of the lease by making the lump sum payment rather than the

annual lease payments for the term through 2027. The requested amount of \$605,000 pays the lease off, in full, through 2027.

Chairman Duncan inquired about the previous lease, asking if it had been for ten (10) years and asked what would happen when this 5-year lease would end? Chief Phillips stated the radios that they had originally, which was a new digital system, had were purchased by Shawnee County as part of a City/County project. Those radios were over 10 years old, and this lease would allow for them to be replaced. These radios would be a minimum of an additional 5 years beyond that, so it would be at least 2032, or after, before the radios would need to be replaced again.

Chairman Duncan inquired about next steps after the first 5-year lease ends in 2027. Chief Phillips stated that when the lease ends, it would be over. Another 5-year lease program for the replacement of the radios were included within the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in 2028. Chief Phillips stated that prior to his term as Chief, a 5-year rotating lease program for the radios had been added into the CIP. And then the next 5-years were to replace the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). As these are personal protective equipment items that, by standard, are normally used for 10-years and then replaced.

Chairman Duncan summarized that by paying now, it would save the City \$52,000.

MOTION: Committee member Hoferer made a motion to approve the request to allocate the requested unassigned reserve funds toward the lease of new radios. Committee member Miller seconded. Approved 3-0-0.

4) ARPA Grant - Review and Discussion of Redistribution of Funds

Chairman Duncan stated that, reviewing the latest information provided by the Finance Department, it appeared that a few more agencies had been able to pull their awards and bring the remaining amount to under \$1M.

Chairman Duncan provided some clarifications regarding the process, as he has received some questions from groups regarding what the plans will be for distributing the unspent money. He stated that the first and primary goal at this point, and during the next few months, is to continue the commitment to the groups who were thought to be worthy of the dollars to get that money. If, by October, there are remaining dollars, he would like to have a deeper conversation about how to redistribute those funds.

Budget Manager Josh McAnarney shared that ChildCare Aware was able to complete a withdraw of \$134K, the day prior. So their remaining balance to distribute is \$237K. They have indicated they plan to make the rest of their draw-

down in late December. Staff does not anticipate any warning signs, and feel ChildCare Aware will be able to have their money fully withdrawn in time.

Chairman Duncan inquired about the reports. He expressed that his goal for today was to review the recipients who have remaining funds to and to discuss what forms of communications have been made with them.

Oasis Grocery Group:

Mr. McAnarney stated the original scope was for them to buy freezer equipment. Of their \$628K award, they have been given about half of that money. However, they have not yet opened a purchase order for that equipment. With the money being required to be obligated before the end of the year, staff is concerned with this item. Chairman Duncan stated he had received an email from them earlier in the week. They are planning to apply for another grant that will help them finalize what the full cost of the equipment will be. Chairman Duncan stated he would contact them to request that they send their reports as contractually obligated to do so.

North Topeka Outreach:

Chairman Duncan inquired about the follow-up process requirements from the Federal Government. He asked if the agencies had been providing their quarterly reports? Mr. McAnarney noted the North Topeka Outreach group has not kept up on their reporting. He suggested it may be helpful for a Committee member to reach out to them. Staff did not have any other concerns about the other agencies.

Interim City Manager Nienstedt suggested that, in the future, a clause is added to grant contracts that lays out consequences for what happens with money not spent within a certain period of time.

Public Comment was received:

Sandra Lassiter thanked the committee and the City for the process and noted she has been intentional with keeping in touch with the staff.

Deputy Mayor Christina Valdivia-Alcalá provided comments toward the process and expressed gratitude toward the applicants toward their thoughtful approach in how to utilize the funding, and toward staff in this process. She suggested finding a way to share the success stories about how these dollars were used as this is funding that will never be seen again. Chairman Duncan appreciated the suggestion and agreed that sharing stories and successes of the agencies and being able to highlight the partnership with the City and the ARPA funding that made those community successes possible.

Danielle Twemlow, community member, commended the successes that have come from the dollars. She stated that when organizations see increased funding, positive changes follow and she would like to see that in the future, budgeting and other processes are done city-wide for allocating funds. She reflected on the various types of data that could be collected to show the impact from each of the programs. She was also interested in the redistribution of unused funds, and would like to see them be given to social service agencies or programs.

5) Other Items

Chairman Duncan stated a meeting would be scheduled for mid to late July. In addition to reviewing any updates to this ARPA process, he would like to do a first-run review of the 2025 Legislative Priorities.

6) Adjourn

Chairman Duncan adjourned the meeting at 1:30pm.

The video of this meeting can be viewed at: <https://youtube/px4OucapUFE>