



## COUNCIL MINUTES

May 14, 2020

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session via a virtual format streamed into the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, on May 14, 2020 at 7:31 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT	COUNCIL ABSENT	OFFICERS PRESENT
John Giles* Mark Freeman* Jennifer Duff* Francisco Heredia* David Luna* Kevin Thompson* Jeremy Whittaker*	None	Christopher Brady Dee Ann Mickelsen Jim Smith

(\*Council participated in the meeting through the use of video conference equipment.)

Mayor Giles conducted a roll call.

1. Review and discuss items on the agendas for the May 18, 2020 Regular and Special Council meetings.

City Manager Christopher Brady commented on Item 1-b, **(A resolution approving the budget for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2021)**, on the Special Council Meeting Agenda, as well as Item 9-b, **(A resolution approving a Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for fiscal years ending 2021-2025) (Citywide)**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda. He explained that the Fiscal Year (FY)19/20 budget was rolled over to the FY20/21 budget with changes identified for Public Safety. He added this is the budget Council will consider at the May 18, 2020 Special Council meeting

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson, Mr. Brady commented that the budget needs to be approved at this time and that is why Council was informed the previous year's budget would be rolled forward to FY20/21. He added each month, as staff identifies what is happening with revenues that impact the budget, staff will return to Council to adjust the budget.

Councilmember Thompson requested a line item report for each department budget for FY19/20 going into FY20/21 and what the Capital Improvement Program looks like this year. He also requested a list of funded open projects that will be moved forward to FY20/21.

Management and Budget Director Candace Cannistraro explained when Council adopted the tentative budget, there was a summary document of changes from FY19/20 going into FY20/21 that outlines, by department, any changes in the budget. She added the major change was in Public Safety due to the Public Safety Sales Tax.

Mayor Giles commented during a normal year Council sits through many meetings and budget hearings from departments. He stated what Council is doing on Monday is complying with state law and setting a ceiling on the budget. He asked if the plan is still to hear from the departments on specifics?

Mr. Brady replied that staff will identify adjustments throughout the year and added departments have been asked to identify 10% reduction plans and 5% for Public Safety. He remarked that as the need to take reductions is determined, the impacted departments will appear before Council; however, he does not anticipate that will happen until after summer. He stated March preliminary numbers are flat compared to the year before; and since April and May numbers are unknown, as is the length of the recovery, the best plan is to adopt last year's budget and come back to Council after summer break to discuss reduction plans.

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna related to Item 4-i, **(Approving and authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Airport Grant Agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in the amount of \$69,000. The funds will be used to reimburse Falcon Field Airport for operating expenses incurred during the COVID-19 public health emergency.) (District 5))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, Mr. Brady responded by saying these funds came to the State for aviation purposes and this is the allocation the State has distributed specifically to Falcon Field which did not come out of the City's allocation. He added that both Falcon Field and Gateway Airport received a significant amount of assistance from the State fund.

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson related to Item 5-d, **(ZON18-00483) (District 6) Within the 4800 to 5000 blocks of South Ellsworth Road (west side). Located on the west side of Ellsworth Road north of Ray Road (74± acres). Rezoning from AG, LI, and PEP-BIZ-PAD to LI-PAD, LC-PAD and RM-4-PAD. This request will allow for a mixed-use development. Jeffery Blilie, Beus, Gilbert, McGroder PLLC, applicant; Sun Belt Land Holdings LP, owner.))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, Mr. Brady explained that if a response is not received by the developer by Monday, June 1, the item can be continued at that time.

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff related to Item 5-a, **(Modifying rates for residential water utility services. Establishing a 30% discount rate off the water service charge for qualified low-income senior residents). (Citywide))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, Mr. Brady commented an ordinance related to utility assistance was approved by Council prior to COVID-19 that included a low-income senior discount of 30% off the service charge. He added this is a follow-up item to the Utility Assistance Program.

Councilmember Whittaker inquired about the low-income senior water discount and since the Federal Government has allocated \$90 million towards the impact of COVID-19, does

it make more sense to cancel the low-income senior discount and instead refund it using the COVID funding since that amount will be written off by the Federal Government?

Mr. Brady responded by saying the rate adjustment would be ongoing for many years and the \$90 million must be spent by December 2020 and used specifically for COVID-related impacts. He stated the Utility Assistance Program will aid those falling behind in paying utility bills, and \$125,000 has been allocated to assist individuals. He commented it is anticipated the demand for utility assistance will be much greater than the \$125,000 allocated.

In response to further questions from Councilmember Whittaker related to moving the allocation to the General Fund, Mr. Brady explained that was considered; however, the guidance received indicated these dollars cannot be used for revenue replacement. He added since utilities are provided as essential services to residents and existing programs are used through non-profits, these payments would be eligible. He concluded by saying staff is conducting the program in a way that does not go outside the guidance of the Federal Government.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whittaker related to Item 4-h, **(Approving and authorizing the City Manager to accept up to \$480,881 from the United States Bureau of Justice Assistance through the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program FY 2020 Formula Grant. Funding will be used for Citywide purchases related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The final award will be forthcoming in the near future. (Citywide))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, Mr. Brady explained this came specifically from the Federal Government to Public Safety for reimbursement for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

2-a. Hear a presentation on the status of City of Mesa recreational facilities and discuss and provide direction on future plans for reopening limited facilities.

Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities Director Marc Heirshberg displayed a PowerPoint Presentation and commented throughout the pandemic staff has monitored several resources to guide decisions and plans. **(See Attachment 1)**

Mr. Heirshberg provided a list of links where residents can view recommendations from various sources, including the Governor's orders. (See Page 2 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Heirshberg outlined various phases of the Parks and Recreation Phased Reopening Plan. He commented City parks have been open throughout the pandemic and stated the Phase 1 reopening can occur sooner than June 1 if that is Council's direction. (See Page 3 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson related to cleaning and sanitation schedules of playgrounds and ramadas, Mr. Heirshberg explained staff will continue with regular cleaning that is done first thing in the morning and will monitor and utilize additional equipment and supplies that can help with this process. He remarked staff is also working with contractors on labor costs for more detailed sanitizing of playground equipment and picnic tables. He stated with the size of the park system and the amount of amenities, residents will need to recognize staff cannot return throughout the day to clean parks and some of the responsibility for that will be on park users. He

added throughout the pandemic there have been signs in parks to encourage residents to socially distance, wash hands, and use hand sanitizer.

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia regarding the type of cleaning, Mr. Heirshberg commented prior to COVID the parks were power washed and staff has now added a bleach solution to disinfect on a more regular basis.

Mr. Heirshberg responded to further questions regarding cleaning of playground and picnic areas by saying these areas are hard to clean as water runs into the wood chips creating other issues. He added staff is investigating other supplies and methods similar to a misting system and said playground spraying is excessive and labor intensive.

In response to additional questions from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Heirshberg explained the park cleaning is done by a contractor; however, throughout this process some staff were redeployed for this purpose. He commented as the reopening plan progresses and staff returns to normal duties, park maintenance contractors will help identify labor costs and work with park staff to identify what services and staff will be needed.

City Manager Christopher Brady clarified some of the additional costs can be recovered from the CARES funding through December.

In response to a question from Mayor Giles regarding the Phase 2 reopening and how the date is determined, Mr. Heirshberg explained that is just a term used for guidance of target dates and is not tied to the Governor or the White House.

Mr. Heirshberg provided an overview of the phased reopening of golf courses and community centers. He added these will be available on a reservation type system, and will include social distancing on fitness equipment, and increasing custodial and sanitation supplies. (See Pages 4 and 5 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson regarding guidelines for managing the time residents are using equipment, Mr. Heirshberg explained reservations will be for a specific amount of time with a buffer for cleaning, and staff will be monitoring the usage.

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna regarding group fitness classes and basketball courts, Mr. Heirshberg stated the goal is to implement fitness classes in Phase 2 and will work with fitness instructors on how they will modify classes and spacing with a nine-to-one ratio. He added that since basketball is a contact sport and is against Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, it will not happen in the immediate future; however, it is possible that other activities will be scheduled in gym spaces.

In response to questions related to Mesa Public Schools outreach, Mr. Heirshberg commented staff will continue to partner with schools on summer meals and summer camps. He said these will not be normal summer camps as there will be no field trips and daily limits will be greatly reduced. He explained that summer camps normally have 150 to 200 children throughout the day; this summer they will be limited to 32 children at each of the locations. He stated the Eagles Recreation Center will specifically be for adaptive camp for those that need those services.

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna related to Aster Aging and services for the elderly community, Mr. Heirshberg remarked that staff will continue to work with them and foresees a phased reopening plan, restricted access with limitations; providing early morning services for the general community, the elderly population in the middle of the day, and fitness and drop-in classes for the general public at the end of the day.

Mr. Brady stated that guidelines recommend vulnerable populations stay at home and the City will not offer any programs for seniors at this time.

In response to a request for information from Mayor Giles regarding return of programs and how to keep residents and staff safe, Mr. Heirshberg commented staff is working with purchasing and Mesa Fire and Medical to procure touchless thermometers and PPE. He stated for summer programs, staff anticipates a nine-to-one ratio with isolation between groups, regular handwashing throughout the day, gaps in between groups where staff wipes down surfaces, and limited movement between activities. He added parents are looking for childcare options so staff continues to work with neighborhood partners and communities to follow best practices throughout the industry and will continue to modify and adjust accordingly.

Mr. Heirshberg continued with the presentation and highlighted reopening of recreation programs. He stated staff will continue to monitor the situation; and as the spread of the virus lessens, staff will continue to add programming according to when guidelines are established and rolled out. (See Page 6 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Heirshberg highlighted reopening of sports fields and complexes, explaining all these facilities are currently closed; however, pending the Governor's orders, will reopen for practices but no games will be played. He added each user group will be required to provide a plan on how to limit group size and capacity restrictions, how they will encourage social distancing, and notification procedures if someone becomes symptomatic.

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson, Mr. Heirshberg commented Little League starts in February or March and he does not foresee any games or tournaments.

Mr. Heirshberg provided an overview of the reopening plan for special events and stated staff continues to discuss ways to modify events. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Heirshberg commented that all aquatics facilities are currently closed and is recommending a June 1 reopening for reservation only lap swim, swim lessons, and team rentals. He stated all teams have been asked to provide plans on how they are promoting social distancing and capacity restrictions. He added once those plans are received, staff will work with each user group to allocate space based on plans and need.

In response to a question from Mayor Giles, Mr. Heirshberg clarified that Kino and Skyline pools are the only ones that will open in Phase 1. He added swim lessons will be offered on a registration only basis and class size will be limited. He commented for lower level classes parents will be required to be in the water to receive direction from instructors to develop skills.

In response to questions from Mayor Giles, Mr. Heirshberg stated in the Phase 2 reopening staff is recommending opening Rhodes and Shepherd pools with a pre-registration for open swim. He stated after June 29 Kino, Skyline, Rhodes, and Shepherd pools will be open.

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson, Mr. Heirshberg replied in Phase 1 anyone can make a reservation for lap swimming, that it is not limited to teams.

Mr. Heirshberg continued by saying the Phase 2 reopening of the aquatics program would include not only Rhodes and Shepherd pools, but also the Flow Rider and all would be on a reservation schedule and include limited open swim. (See Page 11 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Heirshberg provided an overview of the status of other Valley cities' aquatics programs. (See Page 12 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Mayor Giles, Mr. Heirshberg explained staff considered the economic impact and the health realities and where we were headed back in March. He stated the City made the decision to lay off part-time staff, including lifeguards, site supervisors and others. He commented the demand for these services has changed so they are being increased to take advantage of the opportunity to save on expenses through summer and to come back stronger next year. He added that the department has also taken this opportunity to accelerate other repairs to get them done this summer while the facilities are empty, which makes it easier and cheaper for contractors.

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia related to promoting sanitation, Mr. Heirshberg confirmed staff will increase signage, add floor markers to maintain social distancing, and install plexiglass barriers for cashiers. He stated the department is pushing for additional hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies to ensure more frequent cleaning and to allow facilities to open.

Discussion ensued related to protocols if someone using the facility tests positive and the City's liability if it is suggested staff did not sanitize facilities correctly.

City Attorney Jim Smith commented there are certain risks when using park facilities and staff does everything to minimize exposure and mitigate risks.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Freeman, Mr. Brady explained when the pandemic started all the PPE and cleaning inventory was sent to Public Safety departments. He commented at this time the Public Safety departments have indicated they need a 30-day supply and anything above that amount is what is being dispersed to other City programs. He remarked without doing that, the deadlines would have to be pushed back until a supply is available. He added before employees can be brought back into the workplace there needs to be some assurances that cleaning supplies are available.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whittaker related to what metrics staff is monitoring to determine if facilities need to be closed again, Mr. Heirshberg suggested if there is a concern of another outbreak or if one occurs in the wider community as a whole, staff will return to Council to seek guidance.

Mr. Brady clarified the reopening was triggered by the Governor's declaration to open facilities and programs; and once the announcement was made about gymnasiums and pools, the City was under pressure from residents. He confirmed Mesa has some of the highest virus impacts of any city, but Mesa is following the direction of the Governor. He added if Council feels there needs to be a different metric than what the Governor is using, staff is open to the suggestion; however, no independent metrics have been established.

Councilmember Whittaker provided the opinion that the virus needs to be managed on a micro-geographic level rather than across the board. He commented that District 6 lacks any type of density for the most part and it differs from downtown Mesa where there is mass transit systems and buses running all the time. He added he is opposed to the phased approach but is suggesting that the situation be monitored as we open facilities and programs.

Mr. Brady reported staff has started running an analysis by zip code with ratios by population and the data can be shared with Council.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Brady explained any employees that were laid off as a result of closing facilities would be brought back once those facilities reopened. He added there were some full-time employees in Arts & Culture that were laid off and he does not anticipate bringing them back until later in the year.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whittaker regarding staff use of PPE, Mr. Heirshberg commented use of PPE will depend on the level of interaction staff has with the public.

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson related to Mesa Arts Center (MAC) programs reopening, Mr. Brady explained staff is focusing on recreation programs. He stated the MAC spaces are small and it is an economics and logistics issue, and with only 10 people per class and does it make sense for an instructor in terms of cost. He indicated programs within facilities are limited and that would apply to Arts & Culture as well.

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna related to the food program, Mr. Brady commended Parks and Recreation staff on the incredible job they have done addressing food security which has been the number one concern of residents during the pandemic. He stated the food program will need to be scaled and employees in the organization will need to be identified to assist in taking over some of those responsibilities.

Mayor Giles commented now that certain activities are not prohibited because of State action, Council is on the front line of regulating them. He expressed appreciation for the approach Council is taking to roll back services and being sensitive to public health and consequences; and if there is an outbreak, Council will need to respond aggressively. He added these are things Council can do to bring economic activity and quality of life back to the community.

Councilmember Thompson encouraged caution when deciding to shut facilities and programs if an outbreak occurs.

Mayor Giles confirmed consensus of Council to move forward with the recommendations for the Parks and Recreation Phased Reopening Plan.

Mayor Giles thanked Mr. Heirshberg for the presentation.

2-b. Hear a presentation and discuss a new library pick-up/drop-off program, and an overview of the Mesa CARES Community Resource Call Center.

Library Director Heather Wolf displayed a PowerPoint Presentation and provided an overview of the Park and Pick-Up Service, and an update on the Mesa CARES Community Call Center. **(See Attachment 2)**

Ms. Wolf explained that while library buildings have been closed, the library's databases and digital collection have been available 24/7. She commented that librarians have also been creating new virtual content, a virtual story time on social media, and a new section of the website called "At Home Activities for Kids" that has many lessons parents can use at home to explore various topics with children for preschool through second grade. She added librarians are also providing résumé consultation via email and hope to add more virtual content for adults in June.

Ms. Wolf pointed out that while there are many digital resources available to residents, staff understands there are obstacles for some residents to access these resources. She stated some parents are hesitant at this time to encourage even more screen time since children are already using computers for homework and online activities. She added staff is also hearing from many residents that still prefer to read an actual book so staff has spent the last few weeks researching best practices on how to provide book pickup while still keeping customers and staff safe. (See Page 3 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Wolf commented the new library service will be familiar to those that have used grocery store pick-ups, that books can be checked out over the phone, and that staff will bring the checked-out books to the customers' vehicles. She expressed her appreciation to Mesa Fire and Medical for hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes which is making this program possible. (See Page 4 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Wolf provided an update on the Mesa CARES Community Resource Call Center, which has been staffed by library personnel since April 6. She stated the focus has been to identify resources and provide up-to-date information to the community via phone and through the Mesa CARES website. She reported staff has helped connect the community to resources for food, utilities, housing, health care, internet access and volunteer opportunities. She added the Call Center services have been expanded and now includes the Small Business Reemergence Plan. (See Pages 5 and 6 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Wolf described the Small Business Reemergence Plan and stated staff is answering questions about the program, as well as the on-line application. She added staff is reviewing applications for completeness and legibility; and if they find missing documentation or information, the business owner is contacted to complete the application.

Ms. Wolf summarized Call Center statistics and stated from April 6 to May 10, 640 calls were received; and once the Small Business Reemergence Program started, the call



volume accelerated. She explained Call Center staff also placed 213 calls to applicants to alert them to missing documentation and information. She added of the applications received, 266 were in English, eight in Spanish, and two prepared by Call Center staff. (See Page 7 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Wolf expressed appreciation to Community Services, Development Services, Downtown Transformation, and Economic Development for their support, as well as numerous other City staff. She said this has truly been a Citywide effort.

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia related to outreach on virtual content, Ms. Wolf stated the Summer Reading Program will still kick off the end of May but will be completely online this year. She explained over the last couple of years the program has included tracking reading minutes online but were supported with in-house programs. She added this year that part will be missing, but staff will still be working hard to promote reading over the summer to prevent the summer slide. She concluded by saying staff will be promoting the programs through social media and the website.

In response to a question from Mayor Giles regarding the Park and Pick-Up Service, Ms. Wolf explained following this presentation an email will go out to all library cardholders about the new service. She commented patrons will need to go online and place a hold on books; and once the notification is received, the patron can go to the library during Park and Pick-Up hours. She added at that time the patron will provide their library card number and a library staff member will bring the book out and place it in the vehicle.

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff, Ms. Wolf verified if the person picking up the order has the correct library card number, those items can be picked up. She stated the library's direct line is not currently being answered as all library staff are manning the Call Center line and the only staff at the library are those helping with the Park and Pick-Up Service. She added once the Small Business Reemergence Program is completed, some staff will be shifted back to the library.

Mayor Giles thanked Ms. Wolf for the presentation.

2-c. Hear a presentation on the City's existing programs for homeless prevention and services, and hear a presentation, discuss, and provide direction on staff recommendations for future federal funding allocations to supplement these existing homelessness programs, and provide direction on two new proposed program concepts in response to COVID-19: 1) Operation Off the Streets-for Everyone's Health and Safety; 2) emergency homeless housing through an asset acquisition.

Deputy City Manager Natalie Lewis introduced Assistant Police Chief Edward Wessing and Police Officer Aaron Raine and displayed a PowerPoint Presentation. **(See Attachment 3)**

Ms. Lewis highlighted Homeless Prevention and stated the programs that have been approved for funding equal about 5,220 households and includes eviction prevention, utility assistance, and vouchers that Mesa United Way will use for emergency shelter. (See Page 3 of Attachment 3)

Ms. Lewis provided an overview of Housing and Vouchers that have assisted 284 households, and includes rapid rehousing, which is a good tool for people that may have lost their jobs during COVID to help get them back on their feet. She commented on supportive housing and traditional Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers, which are project-based vouchers at both La Mesita and Escobedo, and an additional \$1.5 million that has been set aside for a regional solution to homelessness. (See Page 4 of Attachment 3)

Ms. Lewis detailed the emergency shelters category and stated enough providers have been funded to assist 951 households, which could be single men, families, women, or domestic violence victims. (See Page 5 of Attachment 3)

Ms. Lewis highlighted outreach and wraparound services that will connect 20,000 people to services such as meals, showers, shelter placement, job support, medical services, crisis intervention, and will include all age groups. (See Page 6 of Attachment 3)

Ms. Lewis commented the City will receive \$1.1 million in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds in early June, and the recommendation is to use these dollars and supplement existing programs to quickly and efficiently get those dollars appropriated and out to the community. She added there is also \$2.2 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds that staff is waiting on guidance from Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Chief Wessing stated the Police Department has worked on a new program called Operation Off the Streets with a \$500,000 budget to ensure residents are healthy and safe. (See Page 9 of Attachment 3)

Chief Wessing highlighted several challenges including those identified by Council and residents, such as urban camping and unstable populations. He commented there are more homeless in our community now than in the past, at least in a more visual way. He explained since the Ninth Circuit Court affirmed the *Martin v. City of Boise* case, the City must ensure there is ample shelter space in order to enforce urban camping. He added the homeless population is at risk, particularly during COVID, so it is very important to get them off the street to keep the community healthy. (See Page 10 of Attachment 3)

Chief Wessing explained the homeless population has increased over the last two months as resources that would normally be available are shut down, which is both a public safety and a health issue. He remarked under-utilized special police units will be reassigned to work on enforcement operations, specifically hot spot areas where homeless populations are located. (See Page 11 of Attachment 3)

Chief Wessing stated the proper PPE has been obtained for officers that are going into areas where social distancing is not possible. He confirmed these officers' mission in their assigned divisions will not be compromised and in the event their division has a need, there will always be the option to return to their normal function. He explained there will be weekly and monthly reporting to show the number of contacts and demonstrate success stories. (See Page 12 of Attachment 3)

Chief Wessing announced street crime units, community action officers, and bike unit officers will be the primary enforcement component of the operation. He added it is difficult

to get service resistant segments of the population into resources, but when they are willing to accept resources staff will be working through the Community Court system, as well as with Police Officer Aaron Raine in Police Resources.

Chief Wessing explained the plan is to have a very heavy presence in the first 30 days and then evaluate the program at that point. He stated part of the daily mission of patrol officers will be to monitor homeless hot spot areas with the idea to rally resources from around the City as needed. He reported after 60 days, staff will move forward in a maintenance phase; and as issues arise, they will be addressed as quickly as possible and resources assigned.

Ms. Lewis commented part of the service acceptance model is to rent up to 100 hotel rooms in Mesa: one hotel in West Mesa and another in East Mesa. She stated there will be officers on duty to help with security, and staff will work closely with Community Bridges to ensure stabilization of services, including connecting these residents to Feeding Mesa.

Councilmember Thompson disagreed with using sworn officers as they could otherwise be on the streets fighting crime and keeping the community safe. He stated if there are only one or two sworn officers that are working with Code Compliance or other City departments where they are going out into an urban camping environment that is acceptable; however, the full cost of a sworn officer is such that their time could be better utilized in the community. He agreed that sworn officers are needed to ensure the safety of staff that are doing the outreach, but having 49 members and lieutenants that are part of this enforcement group is a bad utilization of enforcement personnel, especially when District 5 and 6 are still underserved in patrol officers.

In response to questions posed by Councilmember Duff, Chief Wessing explained the hot spots have been identified and most are from direct contacts with Councilmembers, as well as members of the community. He stated as staff works through this project, Council will be contacted regarding issues in each Council District. He reported walking patrols will be implemented to contact businesses and business owners primarily from Country Club to Pioneer Park to listen to their concerns. He added staff will evaluate the success of the program as part of the operation moving forward.

Mr. Brady identified why this program is possible at this time, stating this group of officers have available time since their activity level is not as high as it has been in the past. He clarified this is not something we can keep at this level of effort outside of the pandemic but feel this is justified at this time. He added the Police Department offered to assist in redeploying some of their staff which is a good solution since they are the best trained, the best protected, and have the equipment and resources to assist in this effort.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Freeman related to the locations of the hotels that would offer wraparound services, Ms. Lewis clarified the City would not be purchasing hotels, but would be leasing rooms for two months while working with the Police Department. She said to preserve the privacy and safety of clientele in these facilities, the locations are not disclosed; however, they can provide that information to Council after the meeting.

Vice Mayor Freeman expressed his approval for the program and stated he feels police officers are trained to handle a multitude of different types of calls. He stated that he would

like to see statistics and analytics on the program as it proceeds. He commented West Mesa, District 1, and probably all the Districts, have hotspots, and reaching out to the homeless population and extending services is critical. He added at the end of the day, Council has a responsibility to reach out to everyone in the community.

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia related to how data and analytics played a part in developing this program, Ms. Lewis explained that sometimes staff works very hard with an individual who wants to get help, they make progress and graduate from the Community Court program, yet are still homeless. She stated one of the problems in the past has been capacity of sheltering, so staff is excited about this program. She clarified these hotel rooms are meant to be a launch point and not meant to house people for a significant amount of time. She added this assists in providing wraparound services to get them more stabilized, ensure they stay healthy during COVID, and to find other resources in the community so when COVID is over they are in stable, long-term housing. She said from a statistics perspective, staff will be looking at how many homeless are contacted, how many choose this service, how many choose no services, how many went through Community Court; and if they went through Community Court, were they housed.

Chief Wessing expanded by saying the Police Department has been data-driven for many years. He commented staff looked at the number of people that were successful in the program and the overall reduction of calls for service and arrests of those individuals that were successful, and it was a significant reduction. He remarked the results encouraged staff to utilize this model further. He reported the department will be tracking statistics on a weekly and monthly basis throughout the operation, using the statistics to allocate resources as necessary in the areas of enforcement, education, services provided by navigators, and other resources provided by the City.

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna regarding wraparound services and the role of non-profits, Ms. Lewis explained services will start with triage through Community Bridges to determine the services needed. She commented one of the hotels staff is looking at has kitchenettes which will ensure these individuals can stay isolated to the extent possible and use the Feeding Mesa program to make sure they receive food and nutrition. She added there are other services and partnerships with Save the Family, Mesa United Way and others.

In response to further questions from Councilmember Luna regarding partnering with healthcare agencies, Ms. Lewis stated if an officer or staff member believes an individual is sick or needs testing, there is a number that helps connect them to Circle the City, transportation is provided, Circle the City tests them, and ensures they receive the necessary medical care.

Chief Wessing explained there are protocols that were established early in the pandemic, and if staff identifies individuals who may be symptomatic or indicate they may be infected, there is a process in place to handle those types of contacts. He clarified that if a staff member makes contact with individuals and they are closer than the six-foot social distancing recommendation, they are mandated to wear masks, eye protection, and gloves in order to mitigate and eliminate any potential exposure.

Ms. Lewis further clarified the process for ensuring the safety of homeless families and that one of the hotels has suites for families.

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff related to the approach taken for a homeless person that does not want services but are also not breaking the law, Chief Wessing replied if police officers are not able to establish probable cause that a crime occurred or establish a reason to enforce a criminal statute, then the individual cannot be forced to leave. He stated the hope is with continual contact some individuals will leave on their own.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whittaker on the allocation of CARES funding, Ms. Lewis clarified the \$6.9 million is from separate buckets of dollars and is not part of the \$90 million Coronavirus Relief funds. She added this program is the first budget impact to CARES funding.

Mr. Brady commented staff has received the needed guidance on the \$90 million CARES funding and in the next week Council will receive an update on the recommended allocation. He reported large portions of the funds have been identified through the Small Business Reemergence Program, and the Food Security Program, and staff will return to Council with proposals on other programs.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Freeman related to a reference in the presentation to purchase a hotel, Mr. Brady responded that due to *Martin v. City of Boise*, staff needs to ensure shelters are in place in order to enforce urban camping and trespassing violations. He added renting out hotel rooms is a possible solution. He commented one thing to consider is does the City look at more than renting rooms, and does it make sense to partner with A New Leaf and consider a sheltering program that is more permanent and using CARES funding for a long-term solution beyond December.

Ms. Lewis stated this is the concept stage and no plans have been made at this point. She explained other cities across the country are looking at this option because it provides both a short-term fix for COVID isolation and can lead to a long-term solution. She confirmed Mesa has 189 emergency shelter beds and is always looking for more capacity.

Mr. Brady clarified in this program, A New Leaf would provide the management, oversight, and additional services.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Freeman related to more social services in Mesa and what other communities are doing, Mr. Brady clarified there are some communities that are bringing the homeless into Mesa for shelter. He commented one solution is having facilities that are exclusively available for Mesa so there is always capacity. He added there is a lot of discussion going on between Mesa, Phoenix, and Tempe on how to persuade other communities to step up.

Mike Hughes, A New Leaf CEO, explained Mesa has a unique opportunity with the CARES funding received, and he and his staff believe a partnership with the City could help create something more permanent. He remarked the organization has been looking across the entire geographic area for a 50 to 60 bed hotel/motel with kitchenettes and efficiencies that would work for single men, single women, and childless couples. He indicated this would include working with other agencies on workforce management and development, financial literacy, permanent supportive housing, and group activities.

Mr. Brady commented the City could continue to lease out hotel rooms across the City for the next four to five months, or staff can look at resources to address this short-term need and acquire an asset that will allow the City to continue to provide these services beyond December. He recognized the City has a unique opportunity with resources coming in from both the CDBG and HOME funds, as well as the CARES funding, that is providing the ability to acquire an asset that would benefit the City beyond the period of the pandemic. He pointed out the City purchasing a hotel is not the solution and that the City would need a partner that is in the business of caring for and delivering services to this population.

Councilmember Thompson provided the opinion if you build it they will come, so if you offer more facilities, more meals, and more subsidies for the homeless, you are going to start getting more homeless people. He stated Council should be focusing on the citizens of Mesa and how to keep them safe and from becoming homeless. He remarked on enforcement, saying navigators should be assisting the homeless; and if enforcement is needed then bring in law enforcement.

Chief Wessing clarified officers are not being pulled from their duties on the street for this program, but are specialized units being gathered in a pool-type format and will not be out in force at one time. He commented this unit will be managed in a taskforce model where much of the work will be done in the course of their normal responsibilities, which is why there is such a large number of specialized officers. He explained the program is called Operation Mainline and the goal is to continue the model after the COVID pandemic has passed; however, staff believes there is an enforcement need at this point. He replied untrained and unsworn staff cannot be sent into these areas because there is a public safety concern.

Mr. Hughes remarked that as a long-time Mesa resident and former elected official, he realizes the concerns voiced by Councilmember Thompson and would like to state that there is no way the homeless issue can be resolved with a program like this. He believes 75 to 80% of people that are in the library are homeless; downtown businesses are very frustrated with the homeless population, and this program could provide some kind of centralized opportunity.

Councilmember Thompson voiced concern that the City's regional partners are not doing a whole lot to address the homeless issue and do not offer the services that Mesa does. He added that you don't drive into downtown Gilbert and see large numbers of homeless because there are no services in downtown Gilbert for the homeless community. He stated they do not have light rail, and do not have the facilities to feed the homeless so they are not going to gravitate to an area where there are zero services provided. He stressed that he hates to see Mesa bearing the burden for the East Valley.

Mr. Brady verified staff will continue to work with A New Leaf and determine how our non-profits are providing these services and how many beds should they make available to those outside of Mesa. He said there are cities that bring their homeless to shelters here in Mesa, which is a concern.

Councilmember Thompson commented that he understands the court ruling, but asked if the City can partner with Chandler, Gilbert, Apache Junction, or other communities to have

a facility in one of those communities instead of Mesa. He stated Mesa cannot just continue to build and offer services when other cities are not offering these programs.

Councilmember Luna remarked Council may want to look at the City geographically if the goal is to purchase a facility. He reported that A New Leaf has a 50-year history providing services to this community and he would support working with them based on their reputation. He expressed concern with the continued operational costs as we move forward.

Mr. Brady explained this concept would be to acquire the asset and have an agreement with A New Leaf to manage and operate the facility. He remarked the City would commit to supporting A New Leaf with future funding from CDBG and other services. He clarified if the City does not have a partner who can manage, operate, and provide wraparound services to the community, it is not worth pursuing.

Mayor Giles reported prior to the COVID outbreak, the Governor and other leaders were committed to facilitating homeless solutions. He added that currently Phoenix is bearing an even larger burden than Mesa and other cities bear a lesser burden. He stated there is a lot to be done to help neighboring communities realize they need to step up.

Mayor Giles commented on the challenge law enforcement has with some of the rougher motels located in West Mesa, adding they are often a magnet for criminal activity. He provided the opinion that he is not ready to say yes or no to committing COVID dollars to the purchase of a motel, since that would depend on the site and the deal; however, he is open to exploring using the money in a way that will have a more sustainable impact.

Mayor Giles discussed the enforcement issue, stating calls for service and motor vehicle accidents are down leaving some groups within the department able to do more because they have additional capacity. He confirmed while other calls for service are down, the homeless presence in the City is up, so reallocating some of these resources makes a lot of sense.

Mayor Giles commented that other Cities are adopting ordinances that cover allowable services in parks and discourage well-intentioned people from bringing food and other items which encourages the homeless population to encamp in parks. He remarked that he is interested in pursuing an ordinance similar to what they have in Phoenix that regulates what activities can occur in parks with regard to distribution of food and other items in order to motivate individuals that want to receive services to seek a more appropriate place.

Mr. Brady explained that staff is looking into best practices and whether they are specific to parks or broader to neighborhoods; however, the concern is that individuals with good hearts do not recognize the problems and challenges they are creating by handing out food to the homeless.

Councilmember Duff conveyed her support and requested the hotel be near public transportation, health care, and other services people need to function. She agreed with the idea that if you build it and they will come, but added the homeless are already here, so either house them or have them on the streets.

Mayor Giles requested if it was the consensus of Council for staff to proceed with Operation Off the Streets for the health and safety program and to explore using available funding for the acquisition of an asset? He clarified this is not approving the acquisition, just to direct staff to return to Council with a proposal.

Councilmember Thompson expressed the opinion that he prefers the City does not own another asset but does support the program.

Mayor Giles requested a thumbs up from Councilmembers if they are in favor of the Police Department proceeding with Operation Off the Streets.

Mayor Giles declared unanimous support for Operation Off the Streets.

Mayor Giles expressed approval for staff returning to Council with a proposal for acquisition of property. He recommended a blighted property be acquired to redevelop the property in future years.

Vice Mayor Freeman voiced concern with purchasing a hotel or motel and what the long-term economic development would look like and wants to ensure that it does not impede economic development in District 4. He expressed his tentative support for the project but would like to see the outcome.

Mayor Giles explained that the Police Department will not be able to enforce City ordinances on urban camping if we have a shortage of beds. He added the way the City is doing that right now is by paying for hotel rooms for individuals and that is not a sustainable and affordable approach to the problem.

Mayor Giles thanked staff for the presentation.

2-d. Hear a presentation and discuss a proposed utility assistance program to be administered by Mesa CAN to be funded by CARES stimulus funding.

This item was continued to the May 18, 2020 Study Session.

3. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

3-a. Judicial Advisory Board meeting held on February 5, 2020.

3-b. Economic Development Advisory Board meeting held on March 3, 2020.

3-c. Housing and Community Development Advisory Board meeting held on February 19, 2020.

It was moved by Councilmember Duff, seconded by Councilmember Luna, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Giles-Freeman-Duff-Heredia-Luna-Thompson-Whittaker

NAYS – None



Carried unanimously.

4. Current summary including meetings and conferences attended.

Councilmember Thompson –	Police Week Eastmark Food Drive
Councilmember Luna –	Facebook Live Program Food Distribution at Red Mountain United Methodist Church Falcon Field Commemorative Airforce Flyover Facebook en Español for Police Department Small Business Grant Application Process (CARES Small Business Re-Emergence Program)
Councilmember Duff –	Mesa Family Takeout Night - Wednesdays
Councilmember Heredia –	Digital Summit in Spanish - Small Business Program Census Taskforce Student Video Contest at Porter Elementary
Mayor Giles –	Eastmark Food Drive Mayors Youth Committee Zoom Graduation Small Business Digital Summit

Vice Mayor Freeman expressed his appreciation to the City of Mesa essential employees.

5. Scheduling of meetings.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the schedule of meetings is as follows:

Thursday, May 18, 2020, 5:00 p.m. – Study Session

Thursday, May 18, 2020, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Session

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

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JOHN GILES, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of May 2020. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

dm  
(Attachments – 3)