



COUNCIL MINUTES

March 25, 2021

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session Meeting via a virtual format streamed into the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, on March 25, 2021 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

John Giles*
Jennifer Duff*
Mark Freeman*
Francisco Heredia*
David Luna*
Julie Spilsbury*
Kevin Thompson*

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

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-a. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide final funding recommendations for the FY 2021/2022 and prior years' available funding for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and Human Services Programs.

Community Services Director Ruth Giese introduced Housing and Community Development Director Michelle Albanese and displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 1)**

Ms. Giese stated the funding recommendations for Fiscal Year (FY) 21/22 includes Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and the Human Services Programs. She mentioned today's funding review only includes normal annual Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allocations and Human Services funding. She advised that other funding related to the pandemic and rescue plan are still being reviewed and recommendations to allocate those dollars will come forward to Council later this month.

Ms. Giese remarked that the annual funding process began with a kick-off meeting where agencies were invited to come and learn about the funding application process, Council priorities, scoring, and expectations. She said the application period was open between October 20 to November 24, 2020. She reported the initial orientation provided an overview of each funding source and applicable regulatory requirements. She added that additional training sessions gave applicants the ability to get technical assistance and information on how to submit the application. (See Page 2 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Giese advised the Housing and Community Development Advisory Board (HCDAB) and staff reviewed and scored all the applications based on Council priorities. She commented presentations by the agencies were presented to the HCDAB in February and staff presented and sought approval from the Community and Cultural Development (CCD) Committee in March. (See Page 3 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Albanese provided an overview of the CDBG funding sources and anticipated approximately \$4.2 million in available funding. She commented Public Services covers emergency shelters, home-delivered meals, or crisis services; non-public services include capital improvements, infrastructure, and shovel-ready projects; program administration costs allow staff to administer the funding process and covers contract administration, agency technical assistance, and compliance. (See Page 4 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Albanese highlighted the HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program and stated there will be approximately \$1.5 million available and the eligible categories will cover items such as shelter to permanent housing, as well as rental and utility deposit assistance. (See Page 5 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Albanese reviewed ESG funding and explained emergency shelter funding is capped at 60% of the allocation. She mentioned rapid rehousing includes transitional housing and homeless prevention includes navigation services. She stated the \$520,000 available in Human Services funding is comprised of General Fund dollars and A Better Community (ABC) utility donations, adding the eligible services include homeless prevention assistance, as well as crisis needs, youth programs, and education or other City Council priority programs. (See Page 6 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Albanese detailed the methodology for the funding recommendations. She advised staff performed a comprehensive review of all agency requests amongst the different funding sources, looked at overall scores, and City Council priorities.

Ms. Albanese said for federal funding sources, larger agencies were considered who have the capacity and experience of administering federal programs, and those that are most closely identified in the HUD five-year consolidated plan. She indicated for the human services dollars, concentration was kept on smaller or newer agencies that might not have the capacity to do the federal reporting but do deliver critical services to the community. (See Page 7 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Albanese reviewed the funding allocations for FY21/22 CDBG Public Services and identified the programs that each agency runs which total \$633,672 for the categories. She remarked the CDBG Housing & Public Facilities funding covers the brick-and-mortar projects and is the largest funding category at \$1.5 million. She pointed out there has been an increase in the number of requests for emergency assistance over the last year, adding when COVID hit everything was put on hold and staff are now ramping up and ready to move forward. She explained the options for the remaining funds in this category include doing a mid-year funding cycle and allocating additional programs and services, or funding specific programs or services. (See Pages 8 and 9 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Albanese highlighted the three programs recommended for funding under the HOME Investment Partnership Program. She commented the Community Bridges Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA) is transitioning chronic homeless into stable housing for one to two years, and the City of Mesa (COM) TBRA Program is similar with the addition of moving into

permanent housing. She noted the recommended funding is \$1.3 million. (See Page 10 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Albanese stated the ESG is solely for homeless services and programs and provided a breakdown of the three agencies that applied and the programs being offered; two of which are homeless shelter emergency services and rapid rehousing services totaling \$320,772. (See Page 11 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Albanese shared the total contributions of human services dollars broken out into categories and percentage of the budget. (See Page 12 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Mayor Giles related to why the funding recommendation is less than the total amount available, Ms. Albanese commented the difference in the recommended and allocated amounts is the program administration costs.

Ms. Albanese commented Human Services funding priorities are in the areas of crisis services, homeless assistance, education, and youth mentoring. She reported the recommended programs support emergency food assistance, domestic violence shelters, shelters for parenting youth, suicide prevention, youth mentoring, homeless relief services, weekend food bags, community legal services, and others. She noted the total of \$520,000 covers direct program and services costs. (See Pages 13 and 14 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Giese presented the timeline which covers a 30-day public comment period beginning March 22, Council approval on April 5, and final recommendations submitted to HUD in mid-May. (See Page 15 of Attachment 1)

Councilmember Thompson commented that one of the concerns in his District is not only domestic violence and the survivors but also teen suicide. He added he would rather see a reduction in some areas to bolster funding to organizations like Teen Lifeline or House of Refuge due to the increase in domestic violence and teen suicide during the pandemic.

Councilmember Luna mentioned Human Services funding is very competitive and he appreciates the discussion regarding the agencies that have the infrastructure in place to acquire federal funding. He suggested agencies be advised that they may not receive federal dollars related to Human Services but could for a different service.

In response to a question from Councilmember Spilsbury regarding the funding for homeless navigation services, Ms. Giese stated Community Bridges requested \$220,000 for navigation services and the recommended award is \$176,000.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Spilsbury on whether the City knows if the agencies are receiving other funding, Ms. Albanese said within the application process the agencies are asked to provide not only their proposed budget, but also any other committed or tentative funding they have requested from other agencies.

Ms. Giese followed up by saying the methodology used to come up with the percentage of award is based on the scores given which starts at 100% and goes down from there until the funding runs out. She explained all agencies who scored 80% or higher were funded.

In response to a question from Councilmember Freeman with respect to the goals for the TBRA Program, Ms. Albanese stated when an agency applies for funding, each application has the

regulatory requirements and asks for the desired outcome. She remarked for the TBRA Program, the goal is to transition individuals from emergency shelters to transitional housing, with the hope of progressing to a more permanent assistance program. She advised individuals on rental assistance are free to rent within any community in the COM if the home fits within the rental limits that HUD sets.

In response to a question by Councilmember Heredia regarding the process and timeline for the COM receiving additional CARES dollars, Ms. Albanese announced in the first round of funding just over \$1 million was allocated to five different agencies. She indicated approximately \$9.5 million COVID relief dollars for ESG and CDBG is in process and will be coming to Council within the next few months for approval.

In response to a series of questions posed by Councilmember Heredia, City Manager Christopher Brady advised the preference is to seek agencies that can provide the types of programs and priorities important to the COM and ask them to develop proposals that meet Council priorities.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Duff regarding whether the allocation for navigators has increased from last year, Ms. Albanese noted additional navigators were added for the court program and three navigators are proposed for the mobile outreach program.

Vice Mayor Duff expressed her support for the recommendations as the awards are close to what was requested and fit the priorities of Council.

In response to an inquiry from Councilmember Thompson about veteran homelessness, Ms. Giese reported on April 1 the Housing Governing Board will be provided an update on the Veterans Affairs Supporting Housing (VASH) vouchers. She mentioned staff are working through all possible means to house as many veterans as possible and continue to utilize those vouchers.

In response to a question posed by Mayor Giles inquiring about the unfunded portions of the strategic homeless plan, Deputy City Manager Natalie Lewis acknowledged there are some components that remain unfunded; however, the process today assists staff to continue moving in the right direction in transitioning people to the next level based on their recovery and readiness.

In response to a question from Mayor Giles, Ms. Albanese commented the TBRA is moving individuals from homelessness to transitional housing and then into more permanent stable housing. She remarked last year CDBG funded an additional \$900,000 for eviction prevention and foreclosure prevention.

Mayor Giles thanked staff for the presentation.

It was moved by Councilmember Luna, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to approve the funding recommendations for FY 2021/2022 and prior years' available funding for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and Human Services Programs.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

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

NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

1-b. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide direction on Mesa's Active Transportation projects.

Transportation Department Director RJ Zeder introduced Deputy Transportation Director Erik Guderian, who displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 2)**

Mr. Zeder stated the 2020 Mesa Moves Bond Program included projects that fell into the categories of regional roadway improvements, arterial road reconstruction, and active transportation. (See Page 2 of Attachment 2)

Mr. Zeder highlighted the 2020 Mesa Moves Bond program and provided the breakdown of the funding allocations, adding that the \$93 million for regional roadway improvements qualifies the City for \$62 million in reimbursement from the Maricopa Association of Government (MAG) Prop 400 Program. (See Page 3 of Attachment 2)

Mr. Zeder described the goal of active transportation is to enhance the bicycle and pedestrian network to promote connectivity and health within the community. (See Page 4 of Attachment 2)

Mr. Guderian presented the existing active transportation network, which has been built over the last 10 years, that focuses on the consolidated canal corridor connecting Mesa to Tempe and Gilbert, then expanded on other pathway projects. He explained the dashed lines on the map are projects that are either under design, funded or have federal grant funding, and discussed each project. (See Pages 5 and 6 of Attachment 2)

Mr. Zeder stated, in addition to these projects, five traffic signals will be added along the eastern canal to make the crossings safer.

Mr. Guderian continued the presentation by showing the final build-out for the active transportation network. He added the goal is to encircle the city using the freeway right-of-way, the 202 as a loop around the city, and the US-60 right-of-way to connect trails, as well as using the canals for connection. He stressed the final vision is a long-term goal and will take some time. (See Page 7 of Attachment 2)

Mr. Zeder reviewed the timeline and stated the intention is to release a survey to the public that asks a series of questions regarding what is important to the community, then receive feedback from the Transportation Advisory Board before presenting to Council. He advised to do a fully improved path with lighting and amenities would cost approximately \$2 million per mile. (See Page 8 of Attachment 2)

Vice Mayor Duff indicated that active transportation should not be viewed as a point of recreation, but a point of equity and access. She remarked many residents' only form of transportation is a bicycle and the need for connectivity is critical to those residents. She pointed out there is no network that connects to downtown or Mesa Community College. She said it is important to begin shifting the priorities to equity, access, and serving the residents who need it most.

In response to a series of questions from Councilmember Spilsbury, Mr. Zeder explained staff utilize resources such as Nextdoor, homeowners' associations, and other community organizations to promote the surveys and receive feedback from the community. He indicated the build-out will take many years to achieve, but the goal is to provide connectivity across the City. He emphasized in addition to the \$20 million for active transportation, when there is a capital improvement project, bike lanes are included as part of the project. He outlined that staff continue to look for opportunities to add separated bike lanes.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Freeman regarding the \$7 million for arterial road reconstruction and whether that is enough, Mr. Zeder pointed out the \$7 million is the portion coming from the General Obligation Street Bond and an additional \$38 million comes from the regional reimbursement. He added the total for arterial road reconstruction is \$45 million.

Councilmember Freeman pointed out the City has an under-utilized asset in the light rail, and he anticipates when the new ASU building opens that students will bring their bikes on the light rail into Mesa. He mentioned enhancing the canal system and working with SRP to connect downtown. He suggested doing a survey for the City of Mesa biking community to receive feedback and ideas.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Zeder reported the red lines on the map represent the streets that have bike lanes. He advised as part of the design process staff look at the existing right-of-way to see if there is space to add a bike lane.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Heredia regarding complaints that some bike lanes on arterials are unusable based on the lip, Mr. Zeder indicated four feet of continuous surface is required as part of the bike lane. He gave the example of the Mesa Drive project extending the gutter width to become the bike lane.

Vice Mayor Duff expressed appreciation for the installation of bike lanes as arterial reconstruction occurs; however, she recommended looking for bike path opportunities that are not on the main thoroughfares to avoid accidents. She also stated her concern for outreach to individuals who use bikes as transportation and not just recreation, especially those in low-income areas.

Mayor Giles commented that the canal paths are one of the things that makes Mesa special. He said the needs assessment is the next step in the promise made to the voters regarding active transportation. He reiterated the canal paths are not just used for recreation but are an important part of the transportation system in Mesa and a win-win situation will accommodate both users. He described the map as clumps of puzzle pieces that need to be connected and looks forward to hearing the input from community members.

Mayor Giles stated the consensus of Council is to proceed with public outreach and the proposed timeline as presented.

Mayor Giles thanked staff for the presentation.

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

- 2-a. Economic Development Committee meeting held on February 22, 2021.
- 2-b. Audit, Finance and Enterprise Committee meeting held on December 14, 2020.
- 2-c. Library Advisory Board meeting held on January 19, 2021.

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

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Giles-Duff-Freeman-Heredia-Luna-Spilsbury-Thompson
NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

3. Current events summary including meetings and conferences attended.

Councilmember Luna –	NALEO leadership committee meeting NLC municipal recruitment meeting NLC charter committee meeting
Vice Mayor Duff –	Collective Leadership Program panelist LDS Newsroom Interview at The Groves
Councilmember Spilsbury –	Mesa Family Advocacy Center Tour – Sgt. Nick Lien
Councilmember Freeman –	Tour of excavated tunnel underneath Val Vista Road
Councilmember Heredia –	Toured Valley Metro Maintenance Yard and Tempe Streetcar Program

Councilmember Luna stated he will be attending the Falcon Field Lunch 'n Learn today and encouraged residents to attend. He noted he will be chairing the Ari-Son Megaregion Council webinar tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. He acknowledged the thousands of volunteers helping with the vaccines at the Convention Center and thanked Public Safety for their hard work.

Vice Mayor Duff announced she will be attending a Team Up to Clean Up event today with the City of Mesa Code Compliance Department from Seventh Drive to Broadway near Mesa Drive.

Mayor Giles, Vice Mayor Duff, and Councilmember Spilsbury participated as judges in the Mayor's Youth Committee.

Councilmember Spilsbury reported the COM has partnered with Mesa Public Schools (MPS) and Chris Powell to launch Move One Million. She added kindness day is Thursday, April 1, and a kindness card will be passed out to every elementary student in Mesa with the intent of writing a note of thanks or encouragement to someone. She invited anyone who would like some kindness cards to email District2@MesaAZ.gov.

Mayor Giles acknowledged Fire Chief Mary Cameli, who earned the Metropolitan Fire Chief of the Year award. He also spoke about the Mayor's Youth Committee and encouraged juniors and seniors to apply to participate in the committee.

4. Scheduling of meetings.

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

Thursday, April 1, 2021, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Monday April 5, 2021, 4:45 p.m. – Study Session

Monday April 5, 2021, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Meeting

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

JOHN GILES, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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 25th day of March 2021. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

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(Attachments – 2)