



Agenda Item Summary

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Agenda Item Title

Discussion Regarding the Survey Results for the Expenditure of American Rescue Act Funds

Overview

At the November 15, 2021 Village Board Meeting, staff provided a report of the initial feedback from the web survey regarding the ARPA funds. The Village Board asked that this discussion continue at the Special Meeting on November 22, 2021 to confirm next steps.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends a special meeting in the 1st Quarter of 2022 to discuss. As a next step staff will explore each comment and try to determine current community need or impact, identify any duplicated existing services, or following up with agencies who needed more time to submit a comment. Staff will only bring forward immediate needs, if any, at the December 6th regular meeting.

Fiscal Impact

N/A.

Background

The Village will receive an allocation of \$38,984,402 under the America Rescue Plan Act which may be used under the following broad categories:

- 1) Replace "lost" revenues
- 2) Support public health expenditures for the ongoing response to COVID-19
- 3) Addressing negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency
- 4) Health Equity

Within these broad categories are one or more subcategories of eligible expenses. For example, providing grants to businesses or non-profit organizations having financial challenges due to the pandemic would be considered an eligible expense under the "negative economic impact" category. Similarly, offering financial assistance with homelessness and mental health recovery would fall under the "support public health" category.

Thus far, the Village received half of its allocation or \$19,492,201 under the ARPA program. Approximately \$8.6 million of this amount was already used to reimburse the Village for lost revenues for fiscal year 2020 as calculated using the Department of Treasury formula. Additional lost revenues are expected for 2021, 2022, and 2023, however, it is still premature to estimate what lost revenues will be for this and the next two years.

It is important to understand that when ARPA funds are deemed “lost revenues”, such classification removes a great deal of the above-referenced spending restrictions surrounding the funds. However, even lost revenue funds may not be spent on paying down debt service, payments towards settlements or lawsuits, or paying down unfunded pension liabilities.

In order to obtain a wide variety of feedback from Oak Park residents, businesses, and any interested third parties, staff allowed external input regarding spending ARPA funds via direct email, remote listening session, and an online survey.

Approximately thirty emails were received with varying degrees of feedback. Some of the top suggestions included using ARPA funds for:

- 1) Water infrastructure improvements
- 2) Flood mitigation in areas of OP where this is an issue
- 3) Reimbursing businesses in-need for marketing and other new costs due to the pandemic
- 4) Providing businesses reimbursements for employee downtown OP parking and other public transportation expenses
- 5) Food assistance
- 6) Tourism recovery initiatives
- 7) Indoor clean-air initiatives
- 8) Reparations
- 9) Lead pipe replacements

In addition, the top-weighted average categories from the survey results indicated a great need for:

- 1) Providing support to vulnerable residents for public health services
- 2) Expansion of mental health services
- 3) Addressing health and safety disparities (i.e. lead hazards, recidivism reductions, etc.)
- 4) Addressing food insecurity
- 5) Expanding crisis intervention services

The full results are attached to provide further information.

Alternatives

This item is for discussion purposes only and to obtain Board feedback.

Previous Board Action

N/A

Citizen Advisory Commission Action

N/A

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

A more detailed agenda item on this subject is expected in Q1, 2022

Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

N/A.

Performance Management (MAP) Alignment

N/A.