

Item 23-1013: Resolution #10-R-23 Allocation of State Shared Revenue Aid

Common Council

Wed, Sep 20, 2023, 7:00PM

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:31:45

All right now we'll just move in order. Next is the item from Finance Committee. This is item 23-1013 Resolution 10-R-23 Allocation of state shared revenue aid. Recommendation for denial out of committee, just want to point that out. We have a motion and a second to approve. Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 1:32:16

Call the question.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:32:17

Is there a second? We have motion and a second to call the question. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Those opposed? The motion fails. The item remains before us. And the floor is open. Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:32:41

Thank you, chair. I was remotely participating in the finance committee meeting, so it was a little bit difficult for me to get a little bit of sort of read the room kind of thing going on with this particular resolution. I don't know how I'm going to vote, whether I'm going to vote to allow a denial of my own resolution. And the reason I say that is because I see the arguments and listen to the arguments that came forward from, in particular Aldersperson Fenton, in regards to what we're seeing from state legislation that requires a lot of these things that we are asking for in this particular resolution.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:33:16

But I did have a point that I made at that committee meeting, but would like to reiterate, and that is that I have a concern about expenses that will show up using these funds that will become expenses in the future. And whether we believe or don't believe that these funds are going to be guaranteed into the future—into future budget years, we should be cautious about doing that sort of thing. So that was my primary concern in signing on to this particular resolution. And that is what I wanted to make clear to everyone here.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:33:54

I would encourage everyone here to reconsider a denial of this resolution, not because we're trying to be punitive against the mayor or anything of that sort, but because of that particular item, which is: can we make sure that we don't reuse or create an expense that's going to be something that we'll be seeing in the future that may not be supported by these shared revenue funds? Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:34:24

Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:34:26

Thank you, Chair. I want to commend Alder Croatt for authoring this resolution even though I will vote to deny it. It's—you know, I think that he had the best intentions, and I think that he and the authors did start an appropriate discussion about this item so that we will have materials and things ready when it comes time to do our duty with the budget. I just think this needs to occur with the budget discussion. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:34:58
Alder Alfheim.

Aldersperson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 1:35:00

Thank you, Chair. I signed on to this bill, because I thought and understood that this was something that I really hoped that we do around here—that it started with a good intention, and it went, second, to a communication with the mayor. And that is a good thing. I like when we work in that process.

Aldersperson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 1:35:24

When I signed on, however, I was under the impression that all parties in that discussion, including the mayor, were fully on board with the resolution itself. And I think after listening to the mayor in the finance committee, I think that was stated that perhaps that was an overstatement. What we agree on is that there are rules we have to follow. We understand we are behind in infrastructure; we understand that there are things in our safety and our areas that we need to invest in. And we all know that we must do that. And thankfully, we have a few extra dollars from the state to do it. That's not in question.

Aldersperson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 1:36:04

I have full faith in our budget process. I have full faith in the ability of the staff and the mayor to present us with the tools and that the measurement and accountability to those state laws will be followed. With that in mind. I do not need this resolution to follow through on that. So, I will be voting to deny as well. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:36:32
Alder Croatt.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:36:34

Thank you, Mayor. I'd like to start by thanking those that voted to not call the question on this. I feel that that is very disrespectful to not have—allow any discussion on something like a resolution that was submitted and that was that was discussed at committee. I'll just leave it at that. It's disappointing.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:36:56

I do want to say a few things about the resolution. And I want to thank Alder Van Zeeland for her comments. Did not create—draft this resolution to create any confusion or misunderstanding. That was not the goal. The main goal of the resolution was clear to me, it was to use the new state aid on our greatest needs—infrastructure, public safety, things that the state says we have to use it for, which is great. We're going to do that. We're also going to do something—some other things that I don't necessarily agree with using this money for that—and I don't want that taken the wrong way, because I feel like compensation is an important part of the budget for next year. I just don't—I'm not comfortable using one time money (yes, it'll be reoccurring; it's not guaranteed) for ongoing expenses. That's one of the biggest, I think, things with this resolution that we're not in agreement on. But I think most are in an agreement that we do need to spend the money on infrastructure and public safety. If that results in less borrowing for those projects or more projects, that's great, because we need to do more investment in our infrastructure and public safety.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:38:09

Yes, there was, there were two ways to go about this. There was the resolution route or wait until the budget comes out and then address concerns that way. I wish I could have gotten the resolution out sooner that might have given us more time to discuss this at committee, possibly even refer it back to committee and have more discussion about the wording of the resolution, which we did slightly amend to put some more detail into the amounts, which is not a big deal.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:38:34

But I just want to thank everyone involved in the discussion and those that that signed on to it, the intentions were clear to use the money. And I think at the end of the day, we're going to accomplish that goal. And also, Mayor, thank you for the discussion on this. Yes, I acknowledge that there was some things in there that we didn't directly discuss, like the debt reduction. So I apologize for any confusion with that. But thank you for everyone for listening.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:39:04

Alder Siebers?

Aldersperson William Siebers (District 1) 1:39:06

Thank you, your honor. I know there's been comments in terms of this is something that we should talk about at budget time. I made a comment to one of my colleagues not too long ago. You know, you start, and the department heads start talking about the budget months before we ever get our hands on it. And then we get this big book, and we're given weeks to digest it. And so I made the comment, you know, when we should start thinking about the budget is when we pass the previous budget. And so I appreciate things like this resolution, not—because it gives us an opportunity to talk about things that could go in the budget or may not go in a budget. So, you know, I hope we never stop talking about future budget items—I really do—ahead of the budget. And finally, I concur with my fellow colleague Aldersperson Hartzheim in regards to why I support this resolution. So thank you, Your Honor.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:40:24

Alder Hayden.

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 1:40:26

Thank you, Chair. I'll be voting against this. But there was one thing I wanted to speak to and that is the concept of compensation around this this resolution. I have heard from talking to staff that many of our—many of staff who work here in the city struggle to be able to afford to live in our city. So I saw the compensation part of this resolution as probably the most meaningful piece of the resolution out there, because I think for people to work in the city and for the work that they do, to be unable to afford to live here is almost criminal. So that was one of the things I just wanted to say. Thank you, chair.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:41:12

Alder, Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 1:41:14

Thank you, Chair. So earlier, I did—I called the question because I had something to say, but it wasn't exactly the most necessary thing to say. So I figured I knew how I was going to vote let's just vote. But I will say what I wanted to say earlier. I do think this resolution is pointless. I think that it was made in a sense of political theater, wanting to take credit for something that we all lobbied for, and I just felt as though it was, in a way, disrespectful to the staff who also worked hard to get more shared revenue, the mayor's office, and the rest of Council. I think this resolution is garbage. And I'll be voting against it.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:42:10

Alder Croatt.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:42:13

Wow. Those were some strong words. I just wanted to clarify. Okay, I just wanted to clarify that the word compensation is not listed in the resolution anywhere. The fact that it's excluded is—one of the points of the resolution is that we're focusing—the resolution intent is to focus on infrastructure and public safety. There's nothing in the resolution about not providing compensation in the budget. Just wanted to make that crystal clear. That was no way shape or form. That was one of the goals of that resolution. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:42:53

Any further discussion? We have a motion and a second to approve. And just to remind you, there's a recommendation to deny coming out of committee. So an aye vote upholds the denial and denies the resolution. Everybody clear on that? All right, please cast your votes. Motion passes 11 to four. The item has been denied.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:43:26

Now that that item's resolved, I'd just like to say that I also appreciate the discussion around the budget. And I'm grateful to the colleagues who came and met with me to talk about the shared revenue money and to share their thoughts about how that money should be allocated. I appreciate that conversation, and I appreciate the follow ups that I've had with Alder Croatt since. So I just want to be clear that, you know, we're not always going to align in our views about how to do things, but I do also believe that deep down the intent was good, and I appreciate the opportunity to have the discussion.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:44:07

And that was also the intent of sharing more detail with you all at the last Council meeting about my intended recommendations. To Alder Siebers' point, I wanted to make sure that you had more time than just the initial budget to process that initial proposal that I'll be bringing forward in the executive budget, and we'll have that conversation through the budget process. But again, I just want to take the opportunity to be on the record and make sure we clear the air on this. We're all right, and we're moving on to the budget. So again, thanks to the colleagues who've engaged in good faith in this discussion.