

Item 24-1063: Request to approve to de-obligate a portion of two existing ARPA fund allocations and re-obligate to Human Resources Strategic Planning Project

Finance Committee

Mon, Aug 12, 2024 5:30PM

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 04:36

Next item is 24-1063, request to approve to de-obligate a portion of two existing ARPA fund allocations, and re-obligate to Human Resources Strategic Planning project.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 04:50

Move to approve.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 04:53

Second for discussion.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 04:54

So, we do have a motion and a second. So, I guess I'll—is there a...? Okay, we'll—you're on director one. All right, so we'll turn it over to you. Go ahead.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 05:06

So, two projects were previously approved by Common Council. This was our Neighborhood Leadership Academy project and the Comprehensive Plan Update project. The Neighborhood Leadership Academy project was approved. Or—originally had allocated to it \$100,000, and the Comprehensive Plan Project had \$400,000. After we entered our request for proposal process and received proposals, did interviews, and then selected consultants. The total amounts for each of those contracts came in lower than that total allocated amount, and then those contracts were approved by Community Development Committee and Common Council. And the Neighborhood Leadership one was approved for \$80,000 total, so 20,000 under what was originally allocated to that project. And then the Comprehensive Plan update was approved for \$375,000 so \$25,000 under what was originally allocated to that project.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 06:09

So, this provided an opportunity to reallocate the remaining \$45,000 from both of those projects. And an additional note is that both of those projects did include some contingency in them. So, we're not concerned about, like the budgets over going kind of what we had already worked out with the consultants for those projects as well.

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 06:31

So, we have this \$45,000 available, and we had previously kind of identified this Human Resources project that would be a strategic planning project for the city to define visions, goals, needs going forward. Someone else might be able to talk a little bit more about that. But we have this \$45,000 available for that project. And so, the action here today would be to de obligate the \$45,000 (\$20,000 from Neighborhood Leadership Academy, \$25,000 from Comp Plan) and then re obligate those funds to the strategic—the HR strategic planning project for use in that. And I'll also note that the Strategic Planning project has been approved by our consultants at Booth Management and Consulting as an eligible ARPA project, so we have no concerns in terms of the eligibility of using those funds.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 07:27

All right, thank you. Anyone else? Oh, I'm sorry, I wasn't sure if you're trying to get my attention. All right, we'll go with Alder Croatt then.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 07:39

Thank you, Chair. Question for me would be, was this was this money in one of the quote, unquote buckets, or is this one of—is this more of, uh, in the fund that could be spent on a numerous—a number of different things? So, is—are there restrictions on what this money can be spent on? I know you said it was approved by the consultant, but if we don't use it for this—I guess, what I'm getting to is if we don't use it for the HR strategic plan, what could it be used for? And were other things considered?

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 08:17

Do want us to take that Jeri, or you? Do you remember which bucket the comprehensive plan came from?

Olivia Galyon (Community Development Specialist) 08:24

Yes, it was in social infrastructure, belonging, and neighborhood resiliency.

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 08:29

Yeah, so the buckets that you're alluding to, those were established, I'd say, by policy of the Common Council. There's no ARPA restrictions that would prevent us from moving it to this strategic planning effort. What I can say is it is best practice to align outwardly looking comprehensive planning efforts with inwardly looking strategic planning. So, there is still a component where it does align with that comprehensive plan. To your question of where other projects identified that we could use the \$45,000 for, no, it was our intention to scope out the HR project.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 09:08

Okay.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 09:12

Anything?

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 09:13

No.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 09:13

Okay. Okay.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 09:14

Not right now.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 09:14

All right. Alder Hartzheim.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 09:17

Thank you, Chair. I've been involved in strategic planning, and I'm no fan. But that should not stop us from allocating funds, I expect. My concern is, what will this \$45,000 get us if we are pushing towards this HR strategic plan? Again, I'm not a fan of strategic planning. That doesn't mean it doesn't have its place. And my

concern is that this is just, I won't say, "wasteful spending," but in my mind, not as great a way to spend these funds. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 09:55
Director Ratchman.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 09:57

Thank you, chair. So, as you know with the comprehensive plan it's important from an organizational standpoint to make sure that what we're doing aligns, that we're not headed in a different direction internally from the bigger plan. The last time that we've updated our strategic plan was 2019. So, the goal here is actually to create efficiency by doing this now, so that we can piggyback off the comprehensive plan, that development process, to use data that's being collected and to use it so to maximize and not have to repeat what's being collected. A lot of key stakeholders are going to already be part of the comprehensive plan. We can use that data and make sure that we're realigning from a strategic standpoint internally.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 10:41

So, what would the process consist of if this is approved? It would be creating a vision, or updating our vision, identifying core values and guiding principles, and then setting keys internal strategies to make sure that departments and the organization as a whole are all moving in the same direction. Right now, without this sort of plan, there could be a disconnect. So that that is the purpose of this.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 11:06

Correct me if I'm wrong, we already have a mission, vision, guiding beliefs, core values, etc.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 11:12

That is correct, and this is to, as part of the overall plan, to make sure that we're revisiting that vision, core values. But also, it goes deeper than that. It starts at the top, but then funnels down to what are the strategic key priorities of the organization, and once again, making sure that we're going back to that guiding document, which is the comprehensive plan.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 11:36

Thank you. I'm not sold as yet, and I don't know that \$45,000—I mean, I worked with a very small nonprofit organization, and we were talking about \$70,000 for a strategic plan, but that was sort of starting from scratch. So, I don't know that \$45,000 really will hit the mark in what your aim is here, and that has me concerned—not that I do not trust that staff knows you know what they're looking for as far as dollar figures and what it will take to have a consultant help through this comprehensive plan, but—er this strategic plan. But again, these had—these are concerns that I have. Thanks.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 12:15

All right. Alder Croatt.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 12:16

Thank you again, chair. Thanks for the explanation. That helps, and it sounds important. I'm more supportive of it. But I'm wondering if we didn't have this scenario where we have this money available, what would we be doing? Would we be looking at adding it for the '25 budget?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 12:37

So, if funding is not granted through ARPA, I—yes, we will have to come back through some other source, whether it's through 2025 budget or some sort of special budget request. But this has been identified as part of the leadership team and in planning that we've done that, we need to go back and revisit this. So, the answer is yes.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 12:58

Okay, thank you.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 13:00

Anyone else? I guess, from my standpoint, I'm glad to see this funding be available for this initiative. I mean, just from a nuts and bolts, you know, from our standpoint of looking at these things and our employees, the city's employees is one of the largest expenses in our budget. So, examining kind of the different needs around that area, I think, is very important. And I think is, you know, every service that the city provides is provided by people doing work. So, taking the time and putting resources towards examining this, I think, is very worthwhile. So, I'm glad to see that things have worked out in this manner. So, with that, any last comments, otherwise, we'll go ahead and vote. Oh, sorry. Alder Fenton,

Alderman Denise Fenton (District 6) 13:46

So, and I apologize if I'm asking the question—thank you, chair. I apologize if I'm asking a question that has already been answered, but are—and I'm directing this to Director Rachman, I suppose. But are we confident that this \$45,000 is going to get us what we need?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 14:10

So, until I actually do an RFP process—I didn't want to get too far along without trying to secure funding—it's hard to answer. I'm confident in that from the standpoint of we're not starting from scratch; we are going to be piggybacking off of the Comprehensive Plan, which is going to collect a lot of data. So, I—that should be a large expense that we should be able to avoid, and we just have to drill deeper—other key stakeholders, like employees and bringing our leadership team together. So, if not, we will have to come back and talk about it, but when we talked about it, we believe that that amount should get us where we need to be.

Alderman Denise Fenton (District 6) 14:48

Thank you. Thank you, Chair

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 14:50

Thank you. Alder Croatt.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 14:51

Thanks, Chair. Is that bucket completely allocated? So, if there was a need for \$15-\$20,000 there's no money in that bucket to pull from?

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 15:08

If the bucket you're speaking to is the bucket it's coming from, that's correct.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 15:12

Okay, yep, it was. Thank you.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 15:15

Thank you. One—okay, Alder Hartzheim.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 15:17

Thank you, Chair. Um—this is not meant as a criticism, but I'm a bit disappointed that this was not identified as something that should have been a part of the comprehensive plan budgeting in the first place. So, I feel as though I'm glad that we've, you know, found some funds to be able to do this, but I just feel as though this is sort of a "I don't know; we aren't sure what we're doing, so we gotta kind of move in this direction," and this might help, and this might not help. It just feels unpolished to me, and I'm very unsure about it, and I intend to vote "no" today, but that does not mean that I can't be talked into it prior to full Council. I just am very skeptical about the taxpayer value that comes from this \$45,000 in a strategic plan initiative in this regard. Thank you.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 16:14

Alder Croatt.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 16:15

One last comment, and I agree with Alder Hartzheim, but I'm going to vote for it tonight with some reluctance for those same reasons, but I think it's great that we have this opportunity to have this money, and if there's an identified need, that's the reason why I'm gonna vote for it.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 16:34

All right. Thank you. One last check. Anyone else? All right, seeing none, we'll go ahead and vote all those in favor? Aye. Opposed?

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 16:42

Nay.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 16:42

Abstentions? That passes three to one.