

# COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

August 1, 2023 at 5:45 PM

Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Stewart, Trisciani, E. Sapienza, Cavanaugh, Heath

Messrs.: J. Belanger

1. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$200,000 for CIP 212023 Gatehouse TST Initiative.

Alderman Heath asked is this the same money that we approved; the \$200,000.

Chairman Stewart replied yes from the Opioids Settlement.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to approve.*

2. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$50,000 for CIP 410524 ALERRT Integrated Response Training.

*On motion of **Alderman E. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to approve.*

3. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$65,000 for CIP 410624 Full Scale Active Threat Exercise.

*On motion of **Alderman Trisciani**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to approve.*

4. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$23,034.47 for CIP 810922 ARPA - Manchester Economic Development Office.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman E. Sapienza**, it was voted to approve.*

5. Communication from Ryan Cashin, Fire Chief, requesting permission to apply for the Firehouse Subs Foundation Grant in the amount of \$15,200.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to approve.*

6. Communication from Janet Horvath, Recreation & Enterprise Manager, requesting permission to apply for grant funding for various projects through the Land Water Conservation Assistance Fund.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to approve.*

7. Communication from Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, regarding a CEAG request from Chaos and Kindness for \$20,000 to support their annual Sky Show event.

***Alderman Cavanaugh** moved to approve.*

Chairman Stewart stated I have a little bit of concern with this for a number of reasons. One, this is double the usual amount that is the max for these CEAG grants. I would worry this would take away money from others who might be wanting to do projects. I certainly appreciate the show and the event, but I'm inclined to keep the money in case we have another round of CEAG grants for neighborhood residents to do their own events.

Alderman Trisciani stated I share a similar concern. We have capped the grants at \$10,000. Alderman Heath knows as well as I do that we have several small community groups that don't have the money to throw events. We have several community members who have done things like beautify sections of the city, and I think that was the intention of these grants. I realize we awarded them one in 2022, and the process was available to apply again. I have a problem going outside the process and going above and beyond the amount when it is likely to be our last round. I think we need to think of the broader scope it has had across all of the various communities in the city.

Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, stated I don't have a policy preference either way. There is a process. You have every legal right to go around that process. This is totally up to you. It wouldn't be inappropriate or wrong for you to grant this request. However, you could also not and that would be fine as well. You're not limited legally by what you do here. My letter stated there is about \$92,000 left in the pot for these CEAG grants. These are ARPA funds, so they are pretty broadly useable across a wide array of different things. If this is something you wanted to devote the money to you could. You could chop it in half to \$10,000 which is what they got last year. Or you could say they get nothing at all and they should go through the process. It is possible there may not be a fourth round. This is not as big of a pot as would normally be allocated, and we were debating whether or not there may be other uses to put this money to but that is ultimately an Aldermanic decision.

Alderman Heath asked can I move to amend the motion to approve \$10,000.

Chairman Stewart stated that would be up to Alderman Cavanaugh if he would be amenable to an amendment of his motion. I still have an issue with it being outside of the process.

***Alderman Cavanaugh** rescinded his motion to approve.*

**Alderman Heath** moved to approve \$10,000 in CEAG funding for Chaos & Kindness. **Alderman Cavanaugh** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked is there still a procedural question here. Does anyone want to expand on that?

Chairman Stewart stated as Director Belanger stated, we are free to do what we want. We can grant the money if we want to. It would be outside of the previous grant process, but there are no legal encumbrances upon us.

Mr. Belanger stated there are no legal encumbrances. If you look at the budget authorization for this project, which every CIP project has, the authorization has a description at the top that tells what the intent of the Board was when allocating this money. There is a number range in that budget authorization from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per grant. That was the intent when this started, but again you are not bound by that; you could go outside that if you wanted to.

Chairman Stewart stated I do like the process. It has been setup previously in that it had a time-bound period when people could submit applications. There was a group that evaluated these against each other and then made recommendations. I'm not a fan of these one-offs coming in.

Alderman Trisciani stated it leveled the playing field for everybody.

Chairman Stewart stated correct. Any money that we allocate just by our vote I think has the appearance of politics, and also it reduces the amount that other neighborhood groups can go after in the future.

**Chairman Stewart** called for a vote. Aldermen Heath and Cavanaugh voted in favor; Aldermen E. Sapienza, Stewart, and Trisciani voted in opposition. The motion failed.

On motion of **Aldermen Trisciani**, duly seconded by **Alderman E. Sapienza**, it was voted to receive and file, with Aldermen Heath and Cavanaugh being duly recorded in opposition.

There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman E. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.



Clerk of Committee