



Richland County  
Coronavirus Ad Hoc Committee  
October 20, 2021 – 3:00 PM  
Council Chambers  
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

Yvonne McBride	Paul Livingston	Gretchen Barron, Chair	Joe Walker	Chakisse Newton
District 3	District 4	District 7	District 6	District 10

Committee Members Present: Gretchen Barron, Chair; Yvonne McBride, Paul Livingston and Chakisse Newton

Others Present: Michelle Onley, Tamar Black, Leonardo Brown, Angela Weathersby, Justin Landy, Kyle Holsclaw, Jennifer Wladischkin, Lori Thomas, Randy Pruitt, Shane Kitchen, Stacey Hamm, Bill Davis, Michael Byrd, David Bertolini, Ashiya Myers, Dante Roberts, John Thompson, Brittney Hoyle-Terry, Jennifer Catoe, Aric Jensen, Beverly Harris, Jani Hussain, Jessica Mancine, Michael Maloney and Steven Gaither

1. **Call to Order** – Ms. Barron called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 PM.
2. **Approval of Minutes: September 29, 2021** – Ms. Ms. McBride moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to approve the minutes as distributed.

Ms. Newton requested the Clerk’s Office to review the recording regarding “incentivizing” individuals geographically.

In Favor: McBride, Livingston, Barron, and Newton

Not Present: J. Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **Adoption of Agenda** – Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. McBride, to adopt the agenda and published.

In Favor: McBride, Livingston, Barron, and Newton

Not Present: J. Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **Community Outreach and Awareness Efforts**
  - a. **Incentive Program** – Mr. Brown stated Council approved the vaccination incentive program, and the County is partnering with the Meeting Place. The first 250 Richland County residents receiving their 1<sup>st</sup> vaccine shot will be provided a \$100 gift card. The County has a provider who will be activating and passing out the cards to citizens who qualify. The PIO Office has prepared visual, radio and paper advertisements. Ric advertisements that was prepared. He noted Richland County staff will be present at the event on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Livingston inquired about the time of the event.

Mr. Brown responded the event is scheduled from 1:00 – 5:00 PM, but the incentives are on a first come-first served basis.

Ms. McBride noted MUSC will be providing the vaccinations and there will also be health informational sessions regarding COVID-19.

Ms. Barron inquired about who will be responsible for giving out the cards.

Mr. Brown responded Richland County staff will be responsible for making sure the cards are distributed properly.

Ms. Barron inquired what will happen to cards not distributed.

Mr. Brown responded the cards will only be loaded as necessary. The funding not spend will be reported back to the committee.

- b. **Infomercial** – Mr. Brown noted they were trying to get Richland County faces out before the community about getting vaccinated. He noted the County’s videographer is currently out.

Ms. Barron inquired if the project could be out sourced.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative.

Ms. McBride suggested interviewing local citizens at the vaccination drive.

Ms. Barron stated it would be a great idea to capture live footage on that day.

5. **American Rescue Plan Funding** - Mr. Brown stated Richland County was to be awarded approximately \$80M in two different tranches. He stated the County has been utilizing the first \$40M, and we can expect to receive the second \$40M by mid-2022.

The breakdown of the funds that have been allocated:

- Lump sum distribution grants award - \$1,706,439
- Employee stipends – July Approval - \$7,140,900
- Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center Safety and Security Projects \$3,338,300
- Employee Stipends (Modified Schedule) - \$660,00
- Total Allocated \$12,845,339
- Remaining funds \$67,910,973

- a. **Grant Management System** – Mr. Brown stated they are not requesting any funding today. He believes grant management software will be critical for staff to continue to manage both ARP and other grant funding.

- b. **HVAC and Ventilation System** – Mr. Brown stated staff wants to upgrade the ventilation systems at 2000 and 2020 Hampton Street. He noted the systems are older and a new system would allow for circulation of air, which will improve the air quality. He noted water inclusion could create problems; therefore, replacing the HVAC and not addressing water intrusion would not benefit the new ventilation system. Staff recommends approval of \$5,205,000 in ARP funding

to replace the HVAC and Ventilation system, as well as roofing. He noted this would allow the County to use CIP funds from this project somewhere else.

Mr. Livingston noted there was a recommendation to tear down this building, so he wants us to make sure the building is worth putting the new system into.

Mr. Brown responded there were other plans, and the building is not considered uninhabitable.

Ms. McBride stated, in the future, we need to use citizens input to determine how the funds will be spent.

Ms. McBride moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to approve staff's recommendation to approve \$5,205,000 in ARP funding to replace the HVAC and Ventilation System, as well as, the roofing.

Ms. Newton stated, if we looked at all our needs across the County, they would exceed the amount of ARP funds we have. Therefore, she wants to ensure we are looking at the needs of the community, and do not end up in a situation where we have expended the funds and neglected other priorities we may have wanted to consider.

Ms. Barron noted the County is in a holding pattern, as the US Treasury has not given final guidance on how to spend the funds.

Mr. Brown noted they are tackling certain issues because the long-term sustainability of what we are trying to accomplish could best be utilized by addressing those particular needs that have gone unaddressed.

In Favor: McBride, Livingston, Barron

Not Present: J. Walker

Abstained: Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

- c. **Utilities Delinquent Receivable** –Mr. Brown stated individuals impacted by COVID-19 who are unable to pay their utilities. He noted ARP funds could be used to pay that bad debt that are greater than 90-days. Staff recommends approving up to \$1M in ARP lost revenue funds to recover utility bad debt brought on by the pandemic. He noted Richland County's utility system is a rate payer system, and we have an interest revenue bond that backs the system up. This means we have associated rates that we charge in order to make sure we meet the debt. Without the funding, we will be in the hole with the system. This allows them to recover, so we can keep the rates at a sustainable level.

Ms. McBride stated, for clarification, this funding was not a part of the Rental Assistance Program.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative.

Ms. McBride inquired if the Rental Assistance funding could be used for this.

Mr. Brown responded it could not.

Ms. McBride inquired if the request is to assist citizens.

Mr. Brown responded the funds are to recover the County's loss of revenue, as a result of individuals not being able to pay their bills.

Ms. McBride noted the Emergency Rental Assistance Program and this request are similar. The citizens could have applied for ERAP funding to pay the County.

Mr. Livingston stated he was under the assumption that a lot of citizens could have used the rental assistance program and paid their utilities.

Mr. Brown noted the assumption would be that all of the people that applied have Richland County utilities. He stated the eligibility could be there, but we could not tie the two together. This request is not exclusive to renters. Homeowners would also have been eligible to have their utilities paid.

Audio problems

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. McBride to approve staff's recommendation.

In Favor: McBride, Livingston, Barron

Not Present: J. Walker

Technical difficulties: Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous

**d. Funding opportunities for non-profits and businesses** – Mr. Brown noted there was an Executive Summary of the ARP survey results. He noted the top ten responses were:

1. Services for abused and Neglected Children (66%)
2. Street improvement (65%)
3. Mental Health (64.39%)
4. Support Service (63.93%)
5. Transitional Housing (63.15%)
6. Emergency Shelters (61.85%)
7. Permanent Housing (60.99%)
8. Broadband Infrastructure (60.78%)
9. Services for Victims of Domestic Violence (60.52%)
10. Veterans (57.44%)

Mr. Brown noted other items that were noteworthy included:

- Special Housing for Elderly
- Safety for your neighborhood during the day
- Youth Services
- Day Car Services
- Special Needs Services
- Rental Assistance
- Substance Abuse Services

- Food/Drainage Improvements

Mr. Brown noted a lot of these areas were previously discussed by the Committee and Council. Citizens have reaffirmed those concerns through the survey. He stated this is a platform to be used as the County considers how to use ARP funds.

Ms. McBride inquired how many people responded to the survey.

Mr. Brown responded the survey has not closed. At the time of this report, 700 people had responded. He noted the following agencies have submitted requests for funding:

- Midland Fatherhood Coalition/ARC - \$1750,000
- Eau Claire Cooperative Health Center, Inc. (d/b/a Cooperative Health) - \$2M
- Foodshare South Carolina - \$495,720
- Affordable Housing Trust Funds – More Justice - \$10M
- Midlands Technical College Richland County ARPA Proposal – Free College for Richland County High School Graduates - \$12.4M
- Homeless No More – Affordable Housing for Families At-Risk of Homelessness - \$4.5M
- Homeless No More – Affordable Housing for Families At-Risk of Homelessness with Children - \$6M
- Columbia Food Policy Committee - \$150,000

Ms. McBride inquired if there was an RFP or if these are agencies that were knowledgeable of the funding and made requests.

Mr. Brown responded an RFP was not used. The agencies were aware of the ARP funding and made a request.

Ms. McBride noted she would be concerned if we only used this list, and not issue an RFP for others to apply.

Mr. Brown noted, from previous conversations and concerns, the public may not know about the available funding and how to communicate this to the public. In addition, a filter to determine what qualifies for funding.

Ms. Barron stated we cannot forget about the mom and pops that have small businesses or newer non-profits. We have to be able to ensure there is an equitable process so the information is disseminated out and they know what the expectation is. She noted the OSBO staff has started to engage the community with their grant funds. The committee can further extend what the OSBO staff is doing. She would rather give 10 people \$1M versus one organization \$10M. We can spread the wealth by connecting what the citizens have said and marrying it to what the County is going to say with the strategic plan to push forward the County's priorities, as a whole.

Mr. Livingston stated if the request were categorized it would help him compartmentalize the requests.

Mr. Brown noted the US Treasury is expected to have final guidance out by December 2021. Waiting on the final guidance will affect the timelines for future projects.

Ms. McBride inquired about the timeline for the funds.

Mr. Brown responded the funds have to be obligated by 2024 and spent by 2026.

6. **Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:57PM.