

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday May 24, 2022 @ 5:30 pm., Council Chambers

Members Present: Michael Martens (VC), Carol Lukens, Sarah Watson

Members Excused: Lisa Rasmussen, Doug Diny

Others Present: Maryanne Groat, Jeremy Kopp, Matt Barnes, Liz Brodek, Anne Jacobson, Eric Lindman, Katie Rosenberg, Tammy Stratz, Bob Barteck (via WebEx), and Mary Goede

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. The Finance Committee was called to order by Vice Chairperson Michael Martens.

Minutes of the previous meeting: (5/10/22)

Motion by Watson, second by Lukens to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion and possible action regarding ARPA funding request - Community Outreach Specialist Position - Wausau Police Department

Michael Martens explained the committee discussed funding this position at its previous meeting and sent it forth to be ranked. Maryanne Groat indicated it ranked very strong with a composite score of 74, which is very high.

Benjamin Ericksen, 2702 Merrill Ave, addressed the committee stating at previous Police Task Force and Council meetings he has expressed his strong support for the Community Outreach Specialist Position, however, he asked them to vote no to the ARPA funding through the Police Department. He referenced a video shown by Chief Bliven at the Public Health & Safety Committee meeting on the homeless showing their faces and stating some names. He did not want this position to be under the Police Department and asked them to consider tabling or sending it back to HR Committee to have the position placed under a different department that understands mental illness and trauma.

Sarah Watson stated she liked this for the ARPA funding because it would only fund it for the remainder of the year and then we will find a place for it in the budget. Carol Lukens added this is an unsworn position and is meant to help to offer services.

Motion by Watson, second by Lukens to approve the ARPA funding request. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion and possible action regarding ARPA funding request - 3 Firefighter Positions - Wausau Fire Department

Michael Martens stated this was also discussed at the last meeting and were planning to hold off on the funding but now the Chief has requested it be considered now.

Fire Chief Bob Barteck stated this will be the first hiring increase of operational level firefighters since 1970 and tonight's request is for the first three of the additional 12 firefighters that were approved at HR December 2021. He indicated he submitted a SAFER Grant for 9 of the firefighters. He stated at some point in its history they removed three firefighters from the operational side and moved them into administrative positions. The department is completely different from 1970 when we had EMT basics, but now are leading the nation at paramedic level, as well as being a state HAZMAT asset. He pointed out we do not meet the national standards for benchmark staffing. He explained what he was trying to do by hiring 12 firefighters was to put one in each of the three engine companies throughout the city. He felt it was essential to move this request forward and begin funding these positions. He asked to use ARPA funds to smooth it over the next few years until some of the TID's close. He reminded them these are COVID relief funds and the city's firefighter/paramedics were taking care of this community at a point of contact at great risks to themselves all throughout COVID.

Sarah Watson questioned if there were three candidates ready to go. Chief Barteck stated they had two open positions and have offered one position to a candidate. He pointed out we are going into the summer recruitment with all the Technical Colleges releasing their Paramedic and Associate Degree students in May and June. This puts us in a strong position to recruit. He indicated they would advertise and do interviewing in June and want to be able to extend offers but must have the funding available to do that. He commented his people were overworked and are mandated overtime daily; there is a desperate need for staffing that is long overdue. He believed these positions were essential for survival of the department and the community we serve. Watson indicated she could support the request as long as they can find a way to smooth out the funding to the general budget over the next three years.

Motion by Lukens, second by Watson to approve the ARPA funding request 3 Firefighter positions. Motion carried 3-0.

Presentation and related discussions regarding ARPA funding requests - to be ranked and evaluated at the next meeting

Michael Martens indicated there were several requests from Public Works and a couple from Community Development and opened the floor for discussion.

Eric Lindman, DPW, stated he had three projects for consideration. The first one is at the Wastewater Treatment Facility for a **Screening System Improvement Project**. He explained this is where all the wastewater comes into the facility and screens out large debris to prevent damage to the piping. He indicated they continually have problems with gear boxes maintenance. He noted this was in the initial project for the upgrade but due to budget constraints it is one of the projects that was pulled out. It is estimated to be an \$800,000 project and could be a CIP project for half of it and half ARPA.

Lindman stated the second project if for the **Abel Lift Station – Stormwater**. It was built in 1971 and is the only stormwater lift station within the city and there have not been any major upgrades to it. Project cost is \$800,000 including design. He noted a large part of the cost is the pumps that need replacing and cost approximately \$140,000 each. There are also mechanical and electrical issues that need to be brought up to code for safety. He stated there is no other source of funding for this project other than CIP out of the levy. If any other funding became available, he would let them know and they'd reduce the amount of ARPA obligated to this project.

Lindman stated the third project is **17th Avenue – Stewart Avenue to Elm Street Reconstruction**. He noted this section is heavily traveled with about 10,000 vehicles per day. It is concrete overlayed with blacktop and there is reflective cracking and needs to be reconstructed. He noted they did receive a \$400,000 grant from the state, but the total project is quite a bit more. The ARPA request for the street and storm only is approximately \$1.2 million. Water and sewer need to be replaced as well and could be included in the ARPA or put on CIP.

Tammy Stratz, Community Development, the first is **Homebuyer Education and Counseling/Closing Cost Assistance**. She stated the housing market is difficult currently with overpriced homes and high closing costs. They want to help first time homebuyers through education and counseling to make them successful. She explained they would be offered a \$500 grant towards closing costs on a home within the City of Wausau. She indicated they would promote the program with local lenders and realtors and hope to get 50 homeowners.

Stratz stated the next project is **Improvements and Expansion of Affordable Housing Units** and is directed more at the rental side. She commented rents in Wausau are high at \$1,000 to \$1,200 a month and we know there are units out there in older buildings not charging that high but are not as desirable as the new ones. This would be a benefit of assistance to upgrade these units so they can compete with the higher paying rents. The caveat is the landlords would have to continue to rent at a lower percentage than market rate. She indicated they would work with these landlords to ensure they are keeping their rents low and renting to income qualifying tenants. Every year that they do that, 10% of the amount lent to them would be forgiven, with a maximum of \$75,000.

Liz Brodek, Community Development Director, stated the project is **Community Partners Campus Facility Development** which brings together several nonprofits under one roof in a very accessible area to make access to basic human services easier. She noted Community Partners Campus has done significant private fundraising throughout the community, just over \$7 million. They are also dealing with the high construction, materials and labor costs, so despite the fundraising and a \$1.5 million Neighborhood Investment Fund Grant, as well as a \$1.5 million line of credit through the CDA they ended up with a gap of \$162,000. This ARPA fund request is to help close that gap. Nonprofits were significantly affected by Covid and a lot of fundraising opportunities went to the wayside during the pandemic.

Martens stated these projects will be ranked for the June 14th meeting.

Discussion and possible action regarding budget modification - shortfall Torney Avenue Street Project

Maryanne Groat Explained the Citizens Advisory Committee -CDBG goes through and establishes a budget for the entitlement funds and every year they try to provide a project that is in a low to moderate income neighborhood for public services, such as streets or street lighting. They had targeted Torney Avenue and budgeted \$200,000 for it.

She indicated they have not put it out for bid yet but based on the bids we've received for other street projects they are expecting it will be between \$150,000 - \$175,000 over budget. This is due to the rising construction costs as well as fuel and oil costs. She stated the options are to reprogram \$100,000 of Homeowner Rehab funds to help fund this project or include this in the 2022 debt issuance with a \$26,000 impact through interest over 10 years. She noted the city generated a profit in 2021 and another option would be to use some of those proceeds. She noted they were hoping to bid this out in June.

Motion by Watson, second by Lukens to use \$175,000 from the 2021 surplus to fund the budget shortfall for the Torney Avenue Street Project. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion and possible action regarding State of Wisconsin Weights and Measures Inspections Services

Maryanne Groat explained our Procurement Policy states if we have contracts with other government units they need to be approved. This is an ongoing contract we've had with the State of Wisconsin, so that anything that is measured or weighed that people purchase, whether it be gas or avocados, the scales are monitored by the state to ensure they are honest and working as required. She recommended they continue with this contract.

Motion by Lukens, second by Watson to continue the contract. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Hearing regarding 2021 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program Award and related contract with Marathon County

Martens opened the public hearing for public comment, there being no testimony the hearing was closed.

Discussion and possible action on Interlocal Agreement between the City of Wausau and Marathon County for the 2021 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program Award

Deputy Chief Matt Barnes explained this is an annual thing that comes before the Finance Committee and Council. The city has a partnership with the Sheriff's Department where they facilitate a grant for a different amount each year that is given to us to use with liberal stipulations. He indicated there is very expensive software in dealing with cell phones and locked cell phones to which we will allocate these funds.

Motion by Watson, second by Lukens to approve the Interlocal Agreement. Motion carried 3-0.

Presentation 2021 Financial Results

Deferred to future meeting.

Adjourn

Motion by Watson, second by Lukens to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.