

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
THURSDAY- -MAY 20, 2021- -6:00 P.M.

Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft convened the meeting at 6:03 p.m. Councilmember Daysog led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL - Present: Councilmembers Daysog, Herrera Spencer, Knox White, Vella, and Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft – 4. [Note: The meeting was conducted via Zoom. Councilmember Herrera Spencer arrived at 6:11 p.m.]

Absent: None.

AGENDA ITEMS

(21-358) Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft suggested the budget and CIP workshops be heard together.

Councilmember Daysog moved approval of combining the items.

Councilmember Knox White seconded the motion, which carried by the following roll call vote: Councilmembers Daysog: Aye; Knox White: Aye; Vella: Aye; and Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft: Aye. Ayes: 4. [Absent: Councilmember Herrera Spencer – 1.]

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(21-359) Budget Workshop for Fiscal Years 2021-22 and 2022-23 to Provide Direction that will be Incorporated into Budget Adoption Hearing Materials for City Council Consideration in June 2021; and

(21-359 A) Budget Workshop for Fiscal Years 2021-22 and 2022-23 to Provide Direction on Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget.

The Senior Management Analyst, City Manager and Finance Director gave a brief presentation and answered questions from Council.

Read a letter on behalf of Transform Alameda regarding budget priorities, including commitments to racial, economic, environmental justice, housing security and community health and well being: Savanna Cheer, Alameda.

Urged Council to commit to changes discussed at previous meetings and budgetary shifts: Eve Gordon, Alameda.

Concurred with speaker Gordon; expressed concern regarding funding for Alameda Family Services and traffic and parking; stated more money needs to go towards traffic enforcement by non-sworn officers: Erin Fraser, Alameda.

Expressed support for the proposed Recreation and Parks budget; stated the

Commission supports incorporating Recreation into the General Fund: Tara Navarro, Recreation and Park Commission.

Stated that she is strongly in favor of unbundling parking and traffic enforcement from the Police Department; she supports the creation of a Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO) response team for mental health support: Lorin Salem, Alameda.

Stated Bike Walk Alameda fully supports staffing recommendations that will help grow the Public Works and Planning and Building Departments: Cyndy Johnson, Bike Walk Alameda.

Stated the School District is anticipating approximately \$1 million for mental health services over three years; the amount will barely cover the needs when the youth come back after 18 months of social isolation; the responsibility should not be solely on the School District; it is a community effort; implored the City to help: Jodi McCarthy, Alameda Unified School District.

Stated Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda (CASA) members are here tonight to support the prioritization of sustainability and resilience measures and the City's budgets: Ruth Abbe, CASA.

Urged Alameda to divest from policing, fund community care and meet the survival needs and wants of the City [dropped and continued after Mary Holt]: Is Sullivan, Alameda.

Advocated for ongoing mental health support in schools; respectfully requested that the funding continue; stated the Board hopes to allocated \$800,000 to \$1 million over the next two to three years, but the funding may be significantly less: Jennifer Williams, Board of Education

Expressed support for funding mental health services in the community for students and families; stated it is important for the City Council to think about the well-being of all residents and consider mental health services with regard to police unbundling: Katherine Schwartz, Alameda Family Services.

Shared a budget survey; stated the survey reflects the City's values; encouraged everyone to fill out the survey to make their voice heard on where funds should go: Laura Cutrona, Alameda.

Stated that she concurs with other speakers about reallocating police funds for other forms of help for the people of Alameda; expressed support for having one line for mental health calls: Mary Holt, Alameda.

Urged Council to prioritize housing security and fund community based mental health programs, a guaranteed income program for low income residents, and programs and

opportunities for youth and more: Is Sullivan, Alameda.

Stated that she does not think the budget reflects the desires of the community or the Subcommittee recommendations; urged Council to put money towards services and a system that does not continue to support and lift Police voices: Melodye Montgomery, Alameda.

Discussed wish-list items important to the community, including the purchase of the remaining park land at Jean Sweeney Park and the renovation of the Carnegie Library; suggested Golf Course land be used for pickle ball: Carmen Reid, Alameda.

Expressed support for the General Funds helping the Recreation and Park Department; stated the tennis courts are in desperate need of resurfacing; expressed support for the Jean Sweeney Park land purchase: Kristin Fairfield, Alameda Tennis Coalition.

The Senior Management Analyst showed the Short and Long Bases slides side-by-side.

Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and Councilmember Knox White made comments.

The City Clerk responded to a question about record request software.

Councilmember Daysog, Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and Vice Mayor Vella made comments.

The Recreation and Parks Director responded to Councilmember Herrera Spencer's questions regarding a BMX park, tennis courts and DePave Park.

The City Manager responded to Councilmember Herrera Spencer's questions a Police Auditor position and mental health.

Councilmember Herrera Spencer made brief comments.

In response to Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft's inquiry, the City Clerk outlined which items had support.

The Senior Management Analyst responded to Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft's question regarding façade grant funds, which only received support from two Councilmembers.

The Shuumi land tax was discussed, which had majority support for next fiscal year.

Sports courts were discussed, which had support for the next two fiscal years.

Funding for Alameda Family Services and mental health services was discussed and supported.

Pension funding was discussed and a majority expressed support for the \$10 million proposed.

The Public Works Director gave a brief summary of the proposed appropriations.

Funding for DePave Park and Jean Sweeney Park were discussed, but did not have majority support.

The City Manager stated the Council has given staff sufficient direction to bring a budget back on June 15<sup>th</sup>.

In response to Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft's inquiry, the City Clerk stated no motion is needed and the Council direction is sufficient.

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Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft called a recess at 8:00 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

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(21-360) Recommendation to Provide Direction to Staff Regarding the Allocation of an Anticipated \$28.95 Million of Funding from the Federal Government through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 to Assist with Recovery from the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The City Manager noted there is time; final decisions do not need to be made tonight.

The Assistant City Manager gave a Power Point presentation.

Stated the ARPA money is a great opportunity to invest in housing in the community; suggested the City look into working with experienced community based organizations: Lorin Salem, Alameda.

Stated the funds could help provide the community with services that have been long needed and will be required for a strong, equitable recovery; provided examples of how funds could be spent, including mental health and substance abuse treatments: Beth Kenny, Alameda.

Stated that she has noticed how many children have been affected by the pandemic and agrees there are a lot of mental health issues; expressed support for the parks and summer programs for children: Carmen Reid, Alameda.

Councilmember Herrera Spencer stated that she agrees with the speaker comments; she reached out the Housing Authority for a list of ideas on how to use the funding; it is critical to support transitional and affordable housing, along with offering support; she sees the money as an investment in people, which also includes mental health and education; it is important to reach out to non-profits to see what they could do with some additional funds; expressed support for the idea of supporting Recreation and Park Department programs and offering scholarships to all ages; stated the mental health

component is real; education support is critical; broadband is a long term issue; she looks forward to hearing from the other Councilmembers.

Councilmember Knox White stated that he appreciates many of the recommendations Councilmember Herrera Spencer put forth; tonight is not about what projects should move forward; he appreciates that both the federal government and City staff have identified replacing revenue reductions is a way to receive funds and go back out in a very flexible way for projects that may not meet the criteria, which he would like Council to make a priority; the focus should be on one-time costs; if Council plans on entertaining any ongoing costs, he would like a the funding plan for once the ARPA fund is done; he does not want the Council in a position of funding or expanding service operations that are then going to come back with the expectation of continued funding from the General Fund; he would like to look at rent support and address some of the related lost economic costs for both residential and commercial; ways in which funds could be used to address economic recovery of Webster and Park Streets should be explored; lease recovery options would be a good use for the funds as well; it is important to take the burden off of businesses trying to figure out how to pay back 12 months' worth of rent.

Councilmember Daysog stated it is important to look at the near term and long term infrastructure needs within the budget and figure out where redundancies might occur; savings generated by the redundancies could be put into creative ways of funding projects that meet ARPA criteria and benefit the community as a whole; projects that satisfy the goals and objectives of the ARPA include economic development, social equity and expanding Jean Sweeney Park; overall, the funding should be generated towards infrastructure or assets so the item exists for many years beyond the current situation.

Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft stated one topic Councilmember Daysog mentioned has been the subject of Closed Session, which should not be discussed.

Vice Mayor Vella stated covering revenue loss is very important to make sure that things are sustaining for all of the partners of the City; priorities include housing and addressing homelessness and equity; her priorities are using funds to prevent further displacement, maximizing needs relative to housing and covering whatever COVID related expenditures incurred; she would like to keep it fairly general and would be supportive of infrastructure if it is relative to providing and meeting housing needs; she wants to be careful since the funds are one-time; grants have been given to tenants and businesses; some small businesses do not have the same access to traditional commercial lines of credit; addressing needs does not necessarily have to be done equally, but things should be done a little more equitably in terms of who has not been eligible to receive certain funds in the past; some tenants are going to be incredibly hard hit and she would like to prevent displacement.

Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft stated that she is excited about the funds coming to the City; she thinks it is time to think big and go big for the things the City has been really wanting to

do; housing is a priority; she would like to create emergency and transitional housing; she would like to see Alameda build the kind of development that San Jose and other cities have built; this is the time to pursue doing so; she would like it to be high on the Council's priority list; the City would very much like to purchase the Marina Village Inn, which was successfully run as a project room key hotel; it would be a wonderful opportunity for transitional housing for women and children from the Midway Shelter; she would like to reimburse some unpaid utility bills if possible; there are other sources of assistance; she would like staff to put together a flow chart compendium; concurred with Vice Mayor Vella that not all businesses suffered equally during the course of the pandemic; stated that she would like to find out what State services are available to commercial and residential renters and fill in where needed; she is intrigued by the concept of universal basic income; she would like the Social Service Human Relations Board (SSHRB) to look into the program, perhaps in the second tranche; it speaks to so much of what the most vulnerable members of the community have experienced over the last year; she is supportive of using a portion of the money to help out with infrastructure at Alameda Point, especially assisting with West Midway and RESHAP (Rebuilding Supportive Housing at Alameda Point) project; it is an exciting opportunity for the City; she looks forward to hearing more from staff.

Councilmember Herrera Spencer stated that she agrees with quite a few of the comments; Vice Mayor Vella's comment regarding the inequitable experiences of some small businesses is important; she would want to consider offering some sort of training for people whose jobs have disappeared and ways to address said need, as well as back rents; many non-profits provide critical services and have not been able to fund raise; Alameda Family Services is key to moving the community forward and should stay a part of the conversation; it is critical to continue partnering with the School District.

Councilmember Daysog stated the Council should consider how it goes about selecting projects; he would encourage requiring any project funded to require at least four votes, which would force compromise.

Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft stated that she would punt that issue to the City Attorney; the Council cannot arbitrarily decide what items require four votes; Council should require criteria; any use needs to be carefully vetted.

Councilmember Herrera Spencer stated many of the non-profits provide the services that are articulated in what the monies can be used for and are equipped to hit the ground running to use the money carefully as they have always done.

In response to Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft's inquiry, the Assistant City Manager stated staff has the start of a list, which is a helpful way to review options; the idea is to take the feedback, direction and input received from Council and triage the list; the City is expecting about \$14.3 million with the first tranche; staff will gear the options and recommendations towards the first tranche, then have some time to think about where to go with the rest of the money; bigger items that might stretch over both tranches will

be identified; the City has until the end of 2024 to fully program the funds, which must be spent by the end of 2026.

The City Manager stated that he concurs with all of the Assistant City Manager's comments; when the rules are close to being finalized, staff will come back with the programs outlined by the Council, along with how the first tranche will be allocated and give options to review and prioritize further.

Councilmember Knox White stated people are interested in a very broad range of things; proposed giving direction for staff to bring back a framework with the criteria for Council to agree on and prioritize before having a long list of things to evaluate.

The City Manager stated doing so would be appropriate; staff could bring the matter back as the next action; then, follow up with the specific projects.

Councilmember Herrera Spencer stated that she concurs with Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft to think big as there are some projects that could very well take a larger percentage of the funds; she would like to keep options open regarding how the money is allocated; she is concerned about creating hard percentages that would eliminate other projects right off the top; she wants staff to recognize the Council priorities were a prior Council's priorities and have not been revisited by the current Council.

Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft stated Council and staff now have an outline of where to go moving forward; as the Treasury comes forward with more rules, the City will learn more; it is a really big project with many disbursements across the country; thanked Council and staff for all of the great input.

#### ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

(21-361) Carmen Reid, Alameda, stated that she opposes Assembly Bill 1322; discussed the regional housing allocation.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft adjourned the meeting at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lara Weisiger  
City Clerk

The agenda for this meeting was posted in accordance with the Sunshine Ordinance.