



Richland County
 Coronavirus Ad Hoc Committee
 July 12, 2021 – 3:00 PM
 Zoom Meeting
 2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

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| Yvonne McBride District 3 | Paul Livingston District 4 | Gretchen Barron, Chair District 7 | Joe Walker District 6 | Chakisse Newton District 10 |
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Committee Members Present: Gretchen Barron, Chair; Paul Livingston, and Chakisse Newton

Others Present: Allison Terracio, Jesica Mackey, Overture Walker, Michelle Onley, Angela Weathersby, Kyle Holsclaw, Tamar Black, Ashiya Myers, Lori Thomas, Leonardo Brown, Randy Pruitt, Steven Gaither, Stacey Hamm, John Thompson, Jennifer Wladischkin, Denise Teasdell, Tyler Kirk, Bill Davis, Zachary Cavanaugh, Michael Byrd, Allison Steel and Elizabeth McLean.

1. **Call to Order** – Ms. Barron called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 PM.
2. **Approval of Minutes: June 9, 2021** – Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the minutes as distributed.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, and Newton

Not Present: McBride and J. Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **Adoption of Agenda** – Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the agenda as published.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, and Newton

Not Present: McBride and J. Walker

The motion in favor was unanimous.

4. **Emergency Rental Assistance Program (1) Update** – Mr. Brown stated, as of July 7th, the amount approved was a little over \$7,142,000 million dollars for both rental and utility arrears and future rent for 1,232 citizens in Richland County.

Mr. Livingston inquired about the timeframe for people to receive their payments.

Mr. Brown responded many have already received their checks. He stated, after an application is approved, it would take approximately three to five days to process the checks and mail them out.

Ms. Newton inquired if Phase I has concluded and Phase II has begun.

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Mr. Brown responded, once the funds for Phase I have been depleted, Phase II will begin, since the programs have different protocol they could not be mixed.

Ms. Newton inquired if other expenses were covered and promoted in Phase I (i.e. moving expenses or deposits.)

Mr. Brown responded they are focusing on rent and utilities.

Ms. Newton inquired about the call volumes and the workflow of those calls.

Mr. Brown responded Government and Community Services were a part of the program. In addition, Tetra Tech, who was in charge of the call center, provided their services.

Ms. Newton inquired if the call volume was still high, or if it had decreased.

Mr. Brown responded he believes applicants tracking their payments accounted for the additional call volume, and not new applicants.

Mr. Newton inquired who citizens spoke with when they called the call center.

Mr. Brown responded they spoke with persons specifically trained in the program.

Ms. Newton inquired who was on the oversight committee.

Mr. Brown responded he could not recall who was on the oversight committee, but would provide that information to Ms. Newton.

Mr. Livingston noted he received calls from citizens stating they had not received a response. He inquired how long it would take to receive a response.

Mr. Brown responded the system tracks contacts, so if provided the names he would have staff to follow-up with them. He noted there may have been citizens who had unexpected delays, and they are trying to address those issues and improve the process.

Ms. Mackey inquired if the end of the eviction moratorium would change their current process.

Mr. Brown responded they have spoken with the magistrate's office about training, and reviewing their dockets to see if any of the eviction cases are applicants in the system. The County can provide general information, but they are not permitted to provide personal identifiable information. In ERAP Phase II, the Treasury requested that organizations giving out funds require a stay on evictions from recipients of the funding.

Ms. Newton noted they are prioritizing recipients with an average median of 50% or below. She inquired if the program would expand to individuals with a higher income.

Mr. Brown responded he would have to get back with Ms. Newton with that information.

5. **Emergency Rental Assistance Program (2)** – Mr. Brown stated ERAP Phase II has a provision that landlords receiving funds from this program are prohibited from evicting a tenant. He questioned whether Richland County had the authority to request landlords to not evict tenants. He reviewed the requirements of the U.S. Treasury for landlords receiving funds. He noted this program was separate from ERAP Phase I and had different guidelines. The committee was requested to approve the policy

and procedures of ERAP Phase II and to allow it to be run like ERAP Phase I, with the additions of the new Treasury guidance.

Ms. McLean responded Richland County can enforce the requirement on the landlords. She noted the Treasury recommended further time periods of another 30 – 90 days after the assistance has ended, but she would not recommend it.

Ms. Newton inquired if they could include the Treasury's language and suggest landlords not evict tenants for a time period.

Ms. McLean responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to approve staff's continuing with ERAP Phase II utilizing the same protocol used for ERAP Phase I, including the guidance received from the Treasury and the additional modifications discussed.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron and Newton

Not Present: McBride and J. Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

6. **American Rescue Plan Initial Proposal of the United States Treasury** – Ms. Barron stated they would need to set forth a couple of motions and devise a plan that broadly labels areas to spend funds. She noted they are still taking input and having a public hearing on Monday, July 19th.

Mr. Brown stated they needed to approve a preliminary plan, which was a condition they had to meet in order to continue using the American Rescue Plan dollars from the Treasury. He requested a separate motion to approve a COVID-19 hazard pay stipend for two different groups. One associated with direct exposure through their routine work, and those who were considered essential workers who did not have direct exposure. He noted the American Rescue Plan does not allow the stipend for those who worked remotely. The recommendation is \$5,000 for those with direct exposure and \$2,500 for those without direct exposure.

Mr. Livingston inquired about the estimated dollar amount.

Mr. Brown responded it is approximately \$6.5M.

Ms. Newton inquired if this is a one-time payment.

Mr. Brown responded he would recommend a one-time payment, but Council has the ability to decide.

Ms. Newton inquired if the two groups had been defined.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative. He noted the County would not exceed \$82,150, which was 150% of the average medium income for a household in Richland County.

Ms. Barron inquired if those people would receive any funding.

Mr. Brown responded they would not qualify for funding from the American Rescue Plan fund, but for those that cannot receive ARP funding Council would have to decide if they should receive a stipend utilizing other funding.

Ms. Barron inquired if there was funding available.

Mr. Brown responded the amount would have to be determined, but he believed they could accommodate them.

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the Administrator's recommendation regarding the COVID-19 hazard pay stipend.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, and Newton

Not Present: McBride and J. Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Brown noted they previously discussed the American Rescue Plan Initial Proposal of the Treasury. He stated they identified those groups from the budget process that were eligible for the ARP funding.

Ms. Thomas stated, of the \$1,796,439 in lump sum distributions approved by Council, \$706,439 was eligible and \$90,000 was not eligible. She noted the groups that were not eligible for ARP funding were called sub-recipients. She stated grantees would have to agree with the terms of the grant, and if they did not comply with the rules there was a claw back ability to recoup the funds. Staff was requested to look at hospitality funding, and only the Recreation Commission was eligible for \$325,000 to pave the Parklane tennis courts.

Ms. Mackey inquired if the timeframe of payments to the organizations would change with a change in the funding source.

Ms. Thomas responded there may be a 3 – 4 week delay, which was discussed with the organizations.

Ms. Newton inquired if all of the funds would be received in advance, or dispersed on a quarterly basis.

Ms. Thomas responded it would be incremental payments, with incremental reporting, like other grants.

Ms. Mackey inquired if there was an opportunity for other non-profits to apply for additional ARP funding next year.

Mr. Brown responded Council would have to make that decision.

Ms. Newton inquired about food insecurity, and if that was included in the plan.

Mr. Brown responded it was included, and could be stated in the motion to ensure inclusion.

Ms. Newton inquired about small businesses, and if they could be included.

Mr. Brown responded small businesses are included. He noted the plan would be revisited and tailored over time to address the County's needs.

Mr. Livingston inquired how organizations could apply for ARP funds.

Mr. Brown responded agencies have to submit their proposals to staff to be vetted. The proposals will then be brought to committee.

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the ARP Initial Proposal and to recommend the Administrator include the lump sum, lump sum sub-recipients, food insecurities and small businesses in the plan.

In Favor: Livingston, Barron, and Newton

Not Present: McBride and J. Walker.

The vote in favor was unanimous.

7. **Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:12PM.