

HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
September 21, 2021
5:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Andrew Zuerner, Susan Andrews, Rob Grant, Bobby Irions (late), Becky Langston.
Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Russell Britt, County Attorney; Nancy McMichael, County Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Zuerner called the meeting to order.

ARP Funding & Projects. Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the county has received its Phase I of ARP funding in the amount of \$3.4 million, and that there are six eligible categories for which the funding can be used and include (1) support public health responses, (2) address negative economic impacts, (3) premium pay for essential workers, (4) payroll expenses for public health & public safety employees, (5) replace public sector revenue loss, and (6) water & sewer infrastructure and broadband.

Phase I ARP allocation. Discussion regarding the list of proposed projects included:

- (1) Installation of glass partitions in courtrooms as a COVID prevention & mitigation tactic in the amount of \$4,500. This project and cost were included and approved by the Board as part of the budget on June 15, 2021.
- (2) Increase the number of holding cells at the jail as a COVID prevention & mitigation tactic in the amount of \$38,600. This project and cost were included and approved by consensus during the budget 21/22 discussion on May 25, 2021. So far, \$7,500 has been expended on this project.
- (3) Renovations/capital investments (HVAC) to the old library as a community public health clinic for Mercer Med to add health care capacity in the amount of \$37,9616. The project and cost were approved by the Board during its August 17, 2021, meeting. So far, \$28,268 has been expended on this project.
- (4) Payment for a small part of the new Water Works Administration Building (i.e. larger lobby, conference room, drive-thru access, and new ventilation system) as COVID prevention and mitigation tactics in the amount of \$100,000. This project and cost have not yet been approved. Following discussion, consensus was to remove as an ARP project and to move the \$100,000 to the 7th proposed project on the list.
- (5) Replacement HVAC system in the courthouse as a ventilation improvement in a key location as an infection prevention measure (includes design, bidding, and construction administration) in the amount of \$2,174,900. This project and cost have not yet been approved, but following discussion, consensus was to leave in as an ARP project.
- (6) Matching grant funds for the construction of a new elevated water tank on SR 315 near I-185 as a water infrastructure improvement (includes design, bidding & construction administration), in the amount of \$250,000, and contingent upon the state grant being received of \$2,250,000. This project and cost were approved by the Board during its August 17, 2021, meeting. So far, no funds have been expended on this project.
- (7) Extension/replacement of water lines on Sky Meadow Drive, Hadley Road, Green Drive, Carlisle Drive, and other areas as water infrastructure improvements in accordance with the 2015 (water) list (includes design, bidding, permitting & construction administration) in the amount of \$294,084. These projects and cost have not yet been approved, but funds in the amount of \$125,000 have been expended on the Sky Meadow Drive project. Following discussion, consensus was to move \$100,000 from item #4 to this section and to narrow down the infrastructure improvements before the Board approves same.
- (8) Matching grant funds for Diverse Power EMS (\$250,000) and Charter Spectrum (\$250,000) to provide broadband; contingent upon the state grants being received, in the amount of \$500,000. Funding for Diverse Power was approved by the Board during its August 17, 2021, meeting, and a letter of support, to include the commitment of a \$250,000 match by the County, has been issued. Following discussion, consensus was to not commit any further funding to any other entity/company, but that letters of support, without any monetary commitment, can be issued to other entities/companies making such a request. Mr. Dowling said that Callaway Gardens is applying for a letter of support, which will be issued per the Board's consensus.

Phase II ARP allocation. If this comes in it should be around May 2022. Discussion included:

- (1) General broadband infrastructure improvements in accordance with federal requirements in the amount of \$3,400,000. This project and funding has not yet been approved, however, consensus is that such project is important to the County. Discussion includes that it should be determined if conduit from the 911 call phones that were located on I-185 several years ago still remains, and if so, to whom it belongs, and could it be used as conduit for broadband.

ADJOURNMENT.