

Mayor Biss introduced himself, some notables present (State Sen. Laura Fine and Rep. Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz, Council Members Nieuwsma and Kelly), and city staff. He then gave an overview of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). City of Evanston already has received half of the \$43 million ARPA money; we will receive the remainder in 2022. Mayor Biss is committed to an inclusive and equitable public process. He explained the guidelines for permitted spending. The overall goal is to invest in self-sustaining, long-term projects that may not otherwise get funded.

- Support public health expenditures
- Address negative economic impact of COVID
- Make up for lost city revenue due to pandemic
- Premium pay for essential workers
- Infrastructure, namely water, sewer, broadband (increase climate change resilience)

Mayor Biss said that the money may NOT be used to cut taxes, make pension fund contributions, pay down debt, or build a rainy-day fund.

Kate Lewis Lakin, Evanston's budget manager, went through the structure of the city's budget (presentation available on city website) and the city's current budget situation.

- The general fund lost \$10 million due to COVID.
- Staff implemented \$6.8 million in cost savings.
- Revenue was better than expected due to state income tax, state use tax, building permits and COVID grants.

The floor was then open for residents' suggestions, questions, and comments.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Paid internships for people with disabilities.
2. Programs for the elderly; set aside for small minority landlords who have not received rent payments.
3. Support the arts. Arts-friendly community has had positive economic impact. (2 residents spoke in favor).
4. Build affordable units and help small landlords. Do not spend on another Robert Crown.
5. Affordable housing, health care and childcare. Police should not be involved. Most needed programs are not self-sustaining.
6. Support youth programs. A water sprinkler park. Social workers should work with EPD to stop problems before they start.
7. Social services for families. Universal broadband access.
8. Family Focus.
9. 24/7 shelter and public restrooms downtown.
10. Eliminate city budget deficit.
11. Repair sidewalks – more walkable neighborhoods.
12. Water/sewer systems and universal broadband.

13. Help those who were most economically impacted by COVID.
14. Projects to build intergenerational wealth.
15. Address lead in water pipes.

QUESTIONS

1. Is the money available for the school system? Biss: a qualified no, it's for city government.
2. How much has legal cannabis brought in? Biss: working with state for more licenses.
3. What are the needs? Main ideas on the table? Does the money need to be spent this year? Can we invest it? Biss: it's a multi-step process, needs to be spent in a 4 year time frame. Money must be invested in the safest possible way.
4. Will the money help only businesses or will it be used for basic needs of people who have been struggling for a long time?
5. What are the needs and the costs associated with those needs? What are other cities doing?

COMMENTS

1. According to National League of Cities the funds may be used to reduce property taxes. Biss: will follow up.
2. Problems won't go away until NU commits more funds.
3. There should be an interactive page on city's website where residents can make suggestions. Biss: Great idea.
4. Process should be transparent.
5. Investments should generate growth i.e. ADUs.