

Mayor Biss introduced himself and city staff to the approximately 50 people at the meeting. 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. The City has 4 years to spend the funds.

- 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, build a rainy-day fund or for schools - there may be another fund for that.

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.

We were then placed into 10 "chat rooms" with a moderator and probably at least one city staff for 30 minutes to discuss how the money should be spent. After that each of the groups reported to the entire group and suggestions will be combined/filtered with the in-person (see June 12 report) and Spanish-language group and reported back to the public.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Hire more individuals to respond to 911 calls that do not require a well trained and highly equipped police or fire fighter (i.e., a stolen bike). These people would be similar to those who check parking meters.
2. Increase housing affordability/sustainability for low- and moderate-income people, seniors. Consider making housing affordable in perpetuity, i.e. a land trust.
3. Provide shelter for women and children.
4. Job training, training for entrepreneurship. Have Oakton Community College active in Evanston and use schools or other buildings that are closed in the evening. Have a West Side training program
5. Higher minimum wage.
6. Expand the role of "public health" to make life more liveable, including mental health, food security.

7. Expand the support of childcare and pre-school programs, provide health and mental health for 0 - 5 year-olds..
8. Ensure the entire City has access to broadband, particularly seniors and youth.
9. Engage with members of boards and commissions and citizens in general.
10. Reinvigorate downtown, provide encouragement for those who went out of business to come back.
11. Infrastructure: lead pipes, roads, trains, parks and fields.
12. Support non-profit agencies as they know what they are doing and also use volunteers.
13. Ensure all wards have regular meetings and more town hall meetings.
14. Evaluate the impact of Covid-19 and address the negative impacts.
15. Upgrade the Family Focus building as it needs repairs and serves as a community hub.
16. Outreach to youth.
17. Evaluate all city-owned buildings and develop a plan to use more efficiently or sell.