



# Allentown

435 Hamilton Street  
Allentown, Pa. 18101

## Minutes - Final

### City Council

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Wednesday, May 25, 2022

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

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#### Special Meeting: ARPA Discussion

#### Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Joshua Siegel, and Natalie Santos

The purpose of the meeting is to take testimony on the priorities listed below. This is for public testimony on the categories of spending, not a question-and-answer session, this is not to be argumentative. The plan is to refine these categories and goals with potential monetary allocation to be discussed at a meeting tentatively scheduled for June 9 based on your testimony. At that meeting, we will set up testimony from representatives that have expertise and experience in the respective area.

Council is looking at putting their recommendations into a written budget document. We understand people can't make the meetings. If anyone has any comments and could not make the meeting, we ask that they be forwarded to the City Clerk, Michael Hanlon at [Michael.Hanlon@allentownpa.gov](mailto:Michael.Hanlon@allentownpa.gov) or register on the city website and make an ecomment on the agenda. If you have any supporting documents, you would like shared, please forward that as well. We are also exploring the possibility of having a public survey conducted as we develop a plan. Municipalities have until 2024 to fully plan for and commit their funds, and until 2026 to spend them.

While Councilpersons each have a constituency and their own set of priorities that they identify as important, there was agreement that instead of piece-mealing the ARPA funds, we take a step back and present to the administration some type of holistic vision independent of the administration procedure. The categories below represent that.

Prior to taking testimony, City Councilpersons have raised a few concerns that they would like to express to the administration:

1. That the funds, overall allocation, and procedures are determined by the mayor's office – that is the point on intake – we are not sure that is the cleanest most transparent process.
2. Is the ethics ordinance being followed that relates to disclosure of interests?
3. While we think there are some issues with the application that can be addressed later, our position is applications are public documents and that all applications should be public.

4. A public survey has been suggested, contact was made in this regard.
5. List of names and scorers on scoring public application need to be made public.

**Categories/Buckets suggested to be discussed – aim to examine broad categories based on goals put together by the body.**

**Community Reinvestment Priorities:**

**Infrastructure – pools, park maintenance building, streets, garage maintenance building, streetscape beautification, projects, public murals, and art in distressed areas, police academy upgrades – in so far as the city invest in infrastructure projects that will free up future funds and alleviate needs for future tax increases for projects that are needed. Council would also like to see the capital projects plan get an uplift so we can better make decisions on the city's needs.**

**Economic Opportunities: Employment/Educational/Vocational/Entrepreneurial Development/Re-entry Services/Services for newly arrived residents**

**Community Center(s) – in center city that is multi-faceted – creating recreation, educational opportunities, theater, dance, music, yoga, and other community related services – this could be subsumed under the infrastructure bucket and look at moving city recreational/community engagement offices into such facility.**

**Homelessness – investment in permanent structure for wrap around services – multi-funding sources should be considered.**

**Public Safety – hiring 10 police officers, look at community policing, it has been noted that compared to other municipalities we simply do not stack up in terms of number of officers.**

**Housing – look at programs that deal with grants/loans for home improvements; legal services or mediation services to deal evictions; home ownership programs; investment in inspection process.**

**Non- emergency police issues and response – establish personal to respond to mental health issues and items that require less a police person -barking dogs, noise - allocation funds for to set up program to respond to calls where police are not needed. Public Testimony – 3 minutes for testimony – noting this is not a question-and-answer or session that will contain arguments – all testimony will be taken under advisement.**

Ms. Kathy Craving (sp), 550 Skyline Drive, representing Valley Youth House. She stated that they represent their full support on affordable housing. Housing is the bottom-line for the constituents that they serve.

Ms. Kathryn Hoffman, 1649 W. Linden Street, stated that she lived in the city and owned a home for over 30 years. She stated that in the last 12 years she applied for food stamps for people including in Lehigh County and Northampton County. She spoke a few months ago about the need for affordable housing.

Mayor Matt Tuerk gave a point of clarification on the process that the

administration articulated. The process that they will follow with ARPA was detailed in the attachments. Ultimately, City Council would make the decisions of all these appropriations. Everything that the administration brings forward to City Council, they vote yes or no on. It will not be decided by any mayor or any committee.

Ms. Janet Keshl, W. Wabash Street - representing Mountainville 40 Community Center, stated that what her community would like is more police on the streets for safety issues, help with the academy to have more funding, infrastructure for safe and clean parks and an officer in the schools.

Mr. David Keshl, 119 W. Wabash Street - representing Mountainville 30 and he has a business in the Sixth Ward, stated that he would like to see the Police Academy grow and more officers with body cameras and training. With the city that is growing, we need more officers.

Ms. Marilyn Ricardo, Catasauqua, stated that she does everything in Allentown from protest and community service. She is concerned about Allentown. She has been here since 1988. Her concern is the youth. She see the budget and how it has been decreasing and cutting in the Parks and we need extra curriculum activities for the children. The city needs money allocated for arts and sports.

Ms. Jeani Garcia, Mother to Mother, stated that she wants to focus on the public safety and stated that she has an organization and gave the brochures to Mike Hanlon. She stated an organization because she was signed up for a club she did not want to be in. They joined this club because they lost a child to gun violence. She spoke on gun violence prevention programs and re-entry programs.

Ms. Jennifer Miklus, representing Operation Address the Homeless, stated that she is glad Council is doing this. They have been discussing with the Commission on the Homeless getting an actual building. She asked about a survey to go over a Strategic Plan. She stated that they need to increase funding for community outreach. She does not have the opinion to Defund the Police. Rent is out of control and she went to get gas and it is \$4.74 a gallon and the minimum wage is \$7.25. That is half of your money for one hour. She suggested to bring jobs in the city. Police Officers in schools can change the landscape.

Dr. Hasshan Batts, Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley, 1101 Hamilton Street, stated Brian asked if he could come, but he is not going to say anything. He stated that what is important to Brian is his mom and his family. He stated that Promise Neighborhoods is a Black led, Anti-Racist,

Women Center, Liberation Based, grassroots organization that focuses on healing and wellness that is done by leadership development. It is always about succession planning. How can we support in the neighborhood level the next generation of leaders within this community. He started that City Council is very familiar with Promise Neighborhoods Violence Prevention and re-entry work. How do we work with the high risk individual? How do we respond to every act of violence across the city as it occurs? How do we partner with everyone from the large anchor institutions to the grassroots organizations and people at the neighborhood level. Everyone in this community wants to feel safe. Safety comes when people feel a sense of hope, a sense of belonging, and feel a sense of agency.

Mr. NayQ'uan Godfrey - QB (sp), 303 N. Second Street, stated that he wants to speak on the youth about the Recreation Center. He stated that he can guarantee at least about 30 percent out of 100 percent of the crime rate of the community with this Community Center. A lot of the ways are not working so we have to find other alternatives for them. He suggested sports, computers, cosmetologist, radio stations, and boxing rings. A lot of kids want to be rappers nowadays.

Mr. Armando Hernandez (sp), Make the Road Pennsylvania at 347 N. Eighth Street, stated that he has been a resident for over 30 years. They build power for justice for Lantinx immigrant communities and working class communities of color. They believe in a transformational theory of change that seeks power for community members to be the principal agents and leaders and challenging the dismantling systems of oppression through community organizing and policy innovation. he asked Allentown to explain about the gun violence and the solutions offered like Promise Neighborhoods. Listen to the community of what we need. We don't need over militarization. It does not work. Solutions: living wages, workers rights regardless of immigration status, better funds for our schools, repairs to our homes, affordable housing, permanent rent relief fund, and healthcare.

Ms. Enid Santiago, 1243 S. Jefferson Street - South LV Women's Re-Entry, stated that referring to ARPA the words that stuck out the most were disproportionate impacted communities and equity. When reading the recommendations both of those are missing. She stated that they are asking to make sure the next time you are allocating funding, our nonprofits are prepared for the next pandemic, for the next crisis, for the next catastrophe. She stated that they are quick to be calm when an issue arising. However, are the last one on the list when funding is distributed. She stated that they need a brick and mortar facility to deal with a women's re-entry. She stated that she still doesn't understand that the third largest city in the state of Pennsylvania does not have a community center for our

youth.

Ms. Sherri Brokopp - Binder, 1553 W. Turner - Ripple Community, Inc. - 1335 W. Linden Street, stated that she was glad to see that housing was one of the categories on tonight's agenda. Encouraged Council and echoed what others have said to add the creation of affordable housing as a specific priority within that category. Housing is an absolute critical needs and it is challenging for a lot of the neighbors, but it is completely untenable for our very low income, extremely low income and unsheltered neighbors.

Ms. Kim Schaffer, Executive Director - Community Bike Works, 235 N. Madison Street, thanked Council for the opportunity to continue this discussion on the use of the ARPA funds. This is potentially a game changing investment in our city. She acknowledged and appreciates the procedure that the City Council and the administration have laid out for a very transparent and fair process. She comments on the buckets and urged a specific commitment to broadly at violence prevention and the youth of our community. She sees a narrow focus on community centers.

Dr. Abby Letcher, 28 S. 16th Street, stated that she is a family doctor and here to talk very briefly about the brilliance of the people that are in this room behind her and the strength that they have in Allentown. When she looks at the buckets that Council created, she encourages them to think about how they build an infrastructure to make sure that all the people behind them have an opportunity to work together to solve the problem for each member of our community. As a family doctor she sees and hear the stories for each individual or each family. It is not just housing, public safety, or opportunities. It is all those things all together. How can we reach everybody that needs the assistance. How do we create opportunities so they don't need the assistance in the years to come.

Mr. Pas Simpson - One Big Smile Foundation, stated that poverty is violence. As we start to discuss all the different things we are going to attack, the most important thing that we need to attack is poverty. The homelessness, the rise in the rents and to end gun violence. Gun violence is also a stem of poverty. He told them that when he was broke he would shoot them. When they have other opportunity and other options, they do better. Collaborations is key. He is a nonprofit with no budget. As the city starts to eliminate violence, we start to do that by investing in our youth. He asked the city not to spend a dollar, but to invest. Investments come back.

Mr. Alan Jennings, 2128 Pennsylvania Street, stated that he ran Community Action and brought millions of dollars and resources to the city weatherizing homes, rehabbing houses, starting businesses, supplying the

food pantry with food. He echoed what everyone else has said. Affordable housing is the key. Not just affordable housing, but better housing. We have a housing stock that is not worthy and in cases of third world conditions. We have to make a massive effort to invest in those homes. Home ownership should be the priority. It doesn't work for everybody. We can't keep treating rentals like they are the bad guys, but nobody ever washes a rental car. If you own a home you take better care of it and pay more attention to the neighborhood conditions. You put your trash cans out on the right night and you call the police when there is something going on in your neighborhood. We can't do enough to increase home ownership. The youth center that Enid talked about is something they did not come up with. That was not his proposal. They had a different idea. They went into the neighborhood and got hundreds of people's input and they said they need a youth center.

Ms. Andrene Brown, Executive Director of Fine Feather Foundation - 215 N. Ninth Street, stated that she has a nonprofit organization that focuses on children's mental health. We do it through the arts, media and entrepreneurship and STEM, focusing on bullying, low self-esteem, and all the factors that these children are going through. The youngest winner of the National Entrepreneurship Program in Building Young Moguls was from Allentown, PA and 11 years old from a program that has students from ages 11 to 18. The community wants to do a summer camp.

Mr. Darnell Scott, 518 N. Eighth Street, representing NAMI (board member) and a liaison at Lehigh County for mental health. He wants to discuss mental health and the issues that he has seen since he worked with mental health in Allentown. He has noticed that no matter what state of mind you are in, mental health is important. We all need therapy and someone to vent to and to relay our issues and differences. The city and the county should have more funding directed towards mental health, more facilities and more outreach.

Ms. Da Lizette (Ello), Do it 4 the Youth, (sp) stated that it is building a No Child Turned Away Fund. That is basically giving children the an opportunity to go into programs that families due to financial hardships cannot afford.

Ms. Jessica Ortiz, 523 Tilghman Street - Executive Director of the Ortiz Ark Foundation, stated that she appreciates everyone that spoke today. She is an Allentonian. Many of them were not. She stated that she was born and raised here and a part of the Prison to School pipeline. A part of juvenile probation. She stated that she has been arrested as a juvenile and molested. The city of Allentown has really done her and many others wrong. She doesn't want to talk about what's needed because each one of

you spends a lot of time in the community. Before she came to Council Chambers, she sat with a young women that is 40 years old and has been three years in her car. She stated that she never got city money as it has been allocated and said. Most of the initial money from the Ortiz Ark Foundation came from her husband's 401K, her savings and he kids work to fund it. The only funding they ever got was for COVID and now for the re-entry and youth program. It sits in their bank accounts because they fund it from their pockets. She stated that there are a lot of organizations and the city needs to fund all of them.

Mr. Dan Bosket, Community Action Development Corporation of Allentown, 523 - 525 N. Seventh Street, stated he is here on behalf of Community Action and Executive Director, Dawn Godshall. They are here to talk about the community center and advocating on behalf of a community center here in Allentown. As we are all aware, 19 children and two adult were just killed yesterday by a troubled young man. In Ms. Godshhall job she had done previously, this is something she had to report. During her tenure she reported about Columbine as well. This opportunity that we have for the ARPA provides the ability to do something unique and something that hasn't been done before. People talk about the need for a state-of-the art youth center where children can learn to be entrepreneurs, learn how to create and record their own music in a music studio, have classrooms homework and tutoring, develop trade workshops to develop career paths for youth. studios space for dance classes and technology space. If large enough, indoor soccer, indoor football, basketball, volleyball and a student lounge. Ideally a safe space.

Mr. Kurt Landes, Lehigh Valley IronPigs - East Allentown at Coca Cola Park, stated that it has been a pleasure to listen tonight from a lot of different organizations to talk about thins in the community, youth, recreation and family. Those things for the IronPigs are who they are under the guise of a minor league baseball team. It has been a pleasure for him to partner with many organizations that presented tonight. The IronPigs support them and the things that they do. We do so much more than baseball. They are a community organization. They applied for ARPA money for a significant project for them. It is very critical for the IronPigs to survive and continue. They applied under the tourism impacted industry. Their entire 2029 season was wiped out. They had no revenue, was severely impacted for 2021 and still trying to get back on their feet for the 2022 season.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked if there were any other comments from the public.

[15-5084](#)

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Stuff

- Attachments:** [Application and Rubric](#)  
[ARPA uses from Admin](#)  
[Memo from Mayor Matt Tuerk regarding Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#)  
[SLFRF Policies and Procedures](#)  
[Ordinance #15764](#)

15-5085 ARPA City Samples

- Attachments:** [Atlanta mayor announces American Rescue Plan recovery funds](#)  
[Buffalo New York - American Rescue Plan](#)  
[Charlotte, North Carolina State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds - 2021 Report](#)  
[City of Houston American Rescue Plan Act](#)  
[Detroit, Michigan - American Rescue Plan Act Funds](#)  
[Kansas City Missouri - American Rescue Plan](#)  
[Mayor Baraka Outlines 5-Year Plan To Stimulate Newark's Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery – CBS New York](#)  
[NEWARK RECEIVES \\$88.3 MILLION IN AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN MONIES](#)  
[Pittsburgh, PA - American Rescue Plan](#)  
[Seattle - American Rescue Plan](#)  
[St. Louis, Missouri - American Resuce Plan](#)  
[Syracuse New York - American Rescue Plan](#)

**ADJOURNED: 6:50 PM**