

Federal, State and Intergovernmental Relations (FSIR) Meeting
April 17, 2020
Video Conference Meeting

Members Present: Council Member Angela Lawson, Chair; Council Member Crystal Murillo, Member

Member Absent: Council Member Allison Hiltz, Vice-Chair

Others Present: Roberto Venegas, Luke Palmisano, Nancy Rodgers, Natasha Campbell, Kathy Kitzmann, Council Member Gardner, Council Member Gruber, Barbara Dahl, Totsy Rees, Council Member Berzins, Lauri Hettinger, Cammie Grant, Peggi O'Keefe.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 3, 2020 MEETING

The minutes were approved as written.

2. CONSENT ITEMS: None

3. Welcome and Introductions:

Summary of Issue and Discussion: Chair CM Angela Lawson welcomed the committee via video conference call.

Outcome: Information only.

Follow-up Action: None.

4. Federal Legislative Update:

Summary of Issue and Discussion: Laurie Hettinger, federal lobbyist, gave an update on what is happening in Washington DC. Congress is still in recess, they were supposed to come back on Monday. The earliest they will reconvene back in session is May 4, but more realistically they will come back around Memorial Day. This is challenging because Congress does not have a way to vote remotely. Any legislation they pass has to be done unanimously. Right now Congress is considering a 4th Emergency Relief Coronavirus bill. The priorities laid out in this bill by Rep. Nancy Pelosi and Sen. Chuck Schumer is \$150 billion for the coronavirus relief fund. This program is dedicated to states and municipalities for funds from HUD and to mitigate any losses from dealing with the pandemic. The challenge with how the bill is currently drafted is that there are few municipalities and counties that are over the 500,000 population. The only city in Colorado that qualifies for the funding is the city of Denver. The mayor sent a letter earlier this week to the

delegation, thanking congress for creating this new program but also said that as additional funds go into the program to make sure cities with population less than 500,000 will be eligible to benefit from the program. Both the House and the Senate have introduced bipartisan bills to address this very issue and there is hope that this issue will get worked out. The Democratic leadership has also drafted legislation asking for \$250 billion in additional funds for small businesses and an additional \$150 billion for hospitals and medical centers for more rapid testing and funding for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The final item they are asking for is an increase in the maximum Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit. Congress is now working on CARES Act part 2 which will provide more money which could potentially cover housing assistance, tax credits and first responder funding. After that they would like to focus on an infrastructure stimulus bill.

The letter that went out to the delegation from the Mayor regarding the city's priorities was very well received. L. Hettinger is working on setting up some phone calls with the Mayor and the delegation as well to discuss the city's priorities.

CM Angela Lawson asked if Congress is not going to reconvene until Memorial Day how is that going to work with all the pending COVID-19 bills? She states that there are a lot of needs that the city has including more small business assistance so how can we as a city continue to convey the importance to Congress that something needs to be done so money can get to the city. L. Hettinger said the next bill will get more money in to the PPP small business program. There is no contention over that bill it will most likely pass. The disagreements of the Coronavirus Relief Fund at that Democrats are asking for more money for healthcare that would go to municipalities and the states. Sen. McConnell is staying in DC and there are some Democratic senators who live close by if there is an objection they can come in. Speaker Pelosi is going back and forth to DC quite often and also has representatives who live near by who can come in to object if necessary. Congress is in recess but they are still technically in session and bills are being passed. L. Hettinger said that another way that council can help with advocacy of bills being considered by Congress is by using their contacts in the different national committees they are members of, such as National League of Cities.

Outcome: Information only.

Follow-up Action: None.

5. State Legislative Update:

Summary of Issue and Discussion: Peggi O'Keefe, state lobbyist, gave an update on the state legislature's recess which has been on adjournment due to the coronavirus. The Supreme Court gave the General Assembly back its lost time from being on recess due to the coronavirus outbreak. The state legislature will be focused on priority issues such as the state budget, school finance, a series of sunset bills and bills dealing with COVID-19 and workforce creation. There is still some discussion if they are going to only focus on priority bills or try to address the 450 bills that are still out there and if they are they going to stay focused on bipartisan legislation. They are scheduled to go back into session on May 18. It is not positive if that date will stick. In the mean time the joint budget committee is working on finalizing the budget as much as they can.

CM Lawson asked for an update of the budget shortfall. P. O’Keefe said they have not come back with another analysis yet. There should be an update before they go back on May 18. At this point the shortfall looks to be between \$2 and \$3 billion.

CM Dave Gruber said that it is his understanding the county commissioners have been informed that of the \$2.23 billion that have been allocated to Colorado, the Polis administration has allocated \$560 million to city and county of Denver, along with Adams, Arapahoe, Jefferson and El Paso counties. The other cities will not receive any money from the federal distribution including Aurora. Has anyone else heard about this yet? Aurora has spent a lot of money on different projects in support of COVID-19 with the expectation of some federal money in that allocation. If we receive nothing from the Governor in way of those federal funds it will leave the city in a bind. P. O’Keefe said that she had not heard anything about those funds yet. And asked that CM Gruber forward any information he might have to Luke Palmisano. CM Gruber said he does not have any official information only that the governor has notified the county commissioners. L. Palmisano said this is new to him as well but he will look into it. He also said this is the reason they have been advocating for additional money.

Outcome: Information only.

Follow-up Action: None.

6. Water Update:

Summary of Issue and Discussion: Kathy Kitzman, said Aurora Water did not have any new items to update. They are working on a legislative letter for the infrastructure stimulus bill. It should go out for approval next week. There will be a short item for the May 1st meeting.

Outcome: Information only.

Follow-up Action: None.

- 7. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION:** L. Palmisano said the state lobbyists would like to set up a video conference call with council members and as many of the state representatives who might be available. Would the committee members be interested in setting up such a call? CM Lawson and CM Murillo said they would be interested in the call. CM Murillo asked if it would make sense to include the county commissioners in the call. It might be helpful to have them in on the conversation. L. Palmisano said he agrees whether there are 2 calls or one larger call it would be helpful to have them included. CM Lawson said with all the information that is out there it would be great to collaborate and all be on the same page. CM Murillo said her personal preference would be to have one call with everyone but will leave it up to staff to decide. CM Lawson agreed with CM Murillo. CM Lawson asked what the time frame would be. L. Palmisano said he before the session starts back up. Maybe as soon as Friday, April 24.

