

Federal, State and Intergovernmental Relations (FSIR) Meeting

May 1, 2020

Video Conference Meeting

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

Others Present: Roberto Venegas, Luke Palmisano, Nancy Rodgers, Natasha Campbell, Kathy Kitzmann, Council Member Gardner, Barbara Dahl, Totsy Rees, Council Member Coombs, Laurie Hettinger, Peggy O'Keefe, Michael Bryant, Shelley McKittrick

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 17, 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: Lauri Hettinger, federal lobbyist, gave an update on current federal legislation. A fourth stimulus bill related to combatting the coronavirus has passed giving additional money to the Paycheck Protection Program as well as money for hospitals, testing, and research. Congress is now working on CARES Act part 2. Speaker of the House, Pelosi is taking the lead in crafting it. They are looking to put more money into HUD, community development, FEMA, hospitals, testing, SBA, as well as more money for municipalities, counties and states. On the Coronavirus Relief Fund, Holland and Knight have been lobbying Aurora's Congressional delegation to make sure money is available for additional municipalities. Speaker Pelosi is starting to draft a bill that will provide money to municipalities with a population of 50,000 and above and also to populations below 50,000. To determine the amount of money that populations will receive, the formula used to distribute CBDG funding will be used. This money is not from the CBDG program but would be new money from the Coronavirus Relief Fund. It may take a little

longer to get this CARES Act part 2 passed because of partisanship and other logistical reasons. The hope is that Congress can get the bill done before the Memorial Day recess.

After that, Congress is going to take up an Infrastructure Stimulus bill which will give more money towards infrastructure, including water, transportation and broadband. The Aurora Water department is already putting together their priorities and projects. Luke Palmisano and Public Works have also been working on priorities for the city. This bill will probably not be proposed until June or July.

CM Lawson asked if in the CARES Act part 2 bill is the going to have more money for the people? Some people have received their \$1200 stimulus checks, but since the economic impact will continue for some time is Congress thinking about getting more money in the hands of the people? L. Hettinger said there will be more money coming for individuals in Pelosi's package for CARES Act part 2.

CM Murillo asked for an update on paid sick leave. L. Hettinger said that was part of the Families First Act. Municipalities are required to provide sick leave but they were not allowed to get the payroll tax credit. That is the issue that was taken up with our Congressional delegation. L. Hettinger said many cities are asking if the Coronavirus Relief Fund money can be used for lost city revenue and Pelosi is putting that in CARES Act part 2.

CM Lawson asked if there something in the proposed bills that could help landlords so that tenants do not have to be evicted from their homes. L. Hettinger said she has not seen anything like that so far. CM Lawson asked if this is something that we can look into and see what other cities are doing and possibly add to the city priorities? L. Hettinger said the National League of Cities (NLC) has put together a spreadsheet of what other cities are doing and is something she can look into and see if it is something that we want to add to the city's priorities.

CM Gardner asked if it is true that Speaker Pelosi is floating \$1 trillion for the CARES Act part 2. L. Hettinger said yes.

Outcome: Information only.

Follow-up Action: None.

5.

Federal Priorities Related to Immigrant and Refugee Community and COVID-19:

Summary of Issue and Discussion: CM Lawson said a draft letter was reviewed by council regarding the growing number of critical needs that are impacting our immigrant and refugee populations during COVID-19. Lawson requested L. Hettinger to provide an overview of what other cities are doing legislatively to provide services to these individuals during COVID-19.

State of California

In early March, Governor Newsom issued an [executive order](#) that California is working to ensure care in treatment for COVID-19 for its residents regardless of immigration status.

On March 18, the state released [guidance](#) for immigrant communities. This guidance assured individuals concerned about the "public charge" rule, confirming that testing, treatment, nor preventative care related to COVID-19 will be considered as a part of public charge.

On April 15, Governor Newsom [announced](#) that California's \$75 million Disaster Relief Fund will support undocumented Californians impacted by COVID-19. This funding will assist those who

are ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits and disaster relief due to their immigration status. Approximately, 150,000 undocumented adults will receive a one-time cash benefit of \$500 per adult with a cap of \$1,000 per household to deal hardships regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. The state's Disaster Relief Fund will be dispersed through a community-based model composed of regional nonprofits with a focus on serving undocumented communities.

City of San Francisco

On April 22, San Francisco Mayor London Breed released [Give2SF funding](#) for undocumented San Franciscans. The first round of funding from the Give2SF COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund was allocated to support vulnerable San Franciscans. The funding included \$5.35 million to focus on assisting undocumented immigrants with food security and access to housing. The Fund has been allocated to the relevant city agencies to support these priority areas:

- **Food Security:** An initial \$500,000 is dedicated to providing grocery gift cards for undocumented individuals and families. The program will distribute \$200 Safeway gift cards to roughly 2,500 low-income, undocumented San Franciscans for online or in-person purchase of food items.
- **Support for Small Businesses and Workers:** A total of \$2.1 million has been allocated to provide financial assistance to small businesses and workers, including undocumented and mixed-status households.
- **Housing Stabilization:** \$750,000 has been allocated to provide flexible short-term financial relief to individuals and families who are experiencing a housing crisis or are at imminent risk of a housing crisis related to COVID-19.

City of Chicago

On April 7, Mayor Lori Lightfoot of Chicago signed an [executive order](#) to protect immigrant and refugee communities during COVID-19. This executive order explicitly ensures that all benefits, opportunities, and services administered by the City of Chicago are accessible to all residents, regardless of current citizenship status. Immigrant communities will have access to the numerous programs the City of Chicago has implemented during this pandemic, including:

- Establishing the COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grant program, which provides disaster relief aid for the housing costs faced by individuals and families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Offering online Enrichment Learning Resources through Chicago Public Schools for all students at all levels, so that each student, regardless of immigration status, can continue to pursue a top-notch education.
- Starting a \$100 million Chicago Small Business Resiliency Fund to provide small businesses with disaster relief cash flow during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is available to any entrepreneur, including immigrant business owners.

New York City

On April 22, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio [announced](#) the COVID-19 immigrant emergency relief program with Open Society Foundations. The \$20 million fund will reach 20,000 immigrant workers and their families with direct, one-time emergency relief. This program is an essential piece of the city's commitment to providing emergency monetary relief to immigrant

workers and their families, who have largely been excluded from federal COVID-19 relief programs. The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City will create a citywide network of community-based organizations that will provide direct, one-time emergency relief payments to immigrant families, including undocumented workers. The citywide network of community-based organizations and worker centers will disseminate one-time emergency relief payments to eligible New Yorkers in the following amounts:

- \$400/individual
- \$800 for couple or single parent with children
- \$1,000 for family with multiple adults and children
- And/or where identified increased additional supports

Additionally, the Open Society Foundations will provide a \$15 million donation to the Fund for Public Schools' to support New York City Department of Education's school communities during this challenging time.

City of Minneapolis

Established a \$5 million emergency response fund to provide multiple types of relief for city residents, regardless of immigration status. The Emergency Housing Assistance Program provides up to \$1,500 (with a possible extension to \$2,000) for rental assistance and utility payments, and forgivable loans for small businesses, including self-employed people, to cover payroll and other expenses.

City of Boston

Established a \$3 million fund was established to assist city residents, regardless of their immigration status, who are at risk of losing rental housing due to COVID-19.

City of Austin

Passed a resolution that allocates \$15 million dollars to the city's Relief in a State Emergency (RISE) Fund. Half the funds will go to social service providers to ensure food access, rental assistance, and other direct relief services. The other half will be distributed by organizations to Austin residents who have financial need and are ineligible for federal relief.

City of Los Angeles

Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti established the "Angeleno Card", a privately funded program that provides \$700-1,500 to low-income city residents regardless of immigration status who have suffered a job loss or severe loss of income due to COVID-19.

L. Hettinger said the information provided regarding what other cities are doing was put together prior to the CARES Act being passed.

CM Alison Coombs, said although her resolution has already passed through this committee, she wants to look at the possibility of explicitly stating that folks who have an ITIN will be included in receiving funds from the CARES Act Part 2 bill. The other concern that has come up is that the Supreme Court denied the ability to block using public charge criteria related to receiving COVID relief. Is there anything that we can or should be doing with respect to that? L. Hettinger said she has heard that municipalities are giving out cash, but they are doing it from their own municipal funds not funds received from the CARES Act. She will do more research on this. CM Coombs

asked if people receiving cash from municipal funds can be penalized the same way as if they were receiving federal aid? L. Hettinger said she would have to look into that.

CM Lawson said she brought the federal priorities related to the immigrant and refugee community and COVID-19 forward to see what other municipalities are doing and for the committee to decide if they wanted to bring forward to the full council for further discussion on adding any of the topics to our federal priorities. CM Murillo was thankful this topic was brought up and it is helpful to see what other cities are doing around the nation. She said she would be ok with forwarding this to full council for further discussion.

CM Lawson asked if it would be possible to bring this forward to council at the next Study Session? L. Palmisano said we could certainly bring something forward but it sounds like this is still in the developmental phase. We could come up with some ideas and bring those forward to council for discussion. CM Murillo agreed that a general update would be beneficial for the public as well as full council. L. Hettinger said she sent over information regarding what immigrants and refugees can and cannot receive from these bills and with the information on what other cities are doing should be enough information to bring forward to full council.

CM Coombs asked how much time to do they have to influence the next CARES Act bill before it goes to the floor. L. Hettinger said she can guess that we have a few weeks.

Outcome: Information regarding what other cities are doing concerning immigrants and refugees and what they can receive under COVID bills is to be brought back to FSIR on May 15 and then to Study Session on May 18, 2020.

Follow-up Action: Bring item forward to FSIR on May 15, and then to Study Session on May 18, 2020.

6. State Legislative Update

Summary of Issue and Discussion:

Peggi O'Keefe, state lobbyist, said the legislature is still slated to return on May 18. As of right now there has not been a decision on what the priorities will be. Will they stick to what needs to be completed constitutionally, i.e. the budget, or do they try to pass other bills as well. There has been discussion of just working on the budget, school finance bill, and a set of sunset bills, and then adjourning the session again in case they need to come back later.

Roberto Venegas, Deputy City Manager, said the Workers Compensation issue may or may not be discussed when the legislature convenes. There has been a lot of concern from the Work Comp insurance companies that they will be severely impacted due to COVID illnesses. We have been invited to participate in a working group to discuss this issue. Staff will report back with any information and what we can expect when the session starts up again.

Outcome: Information only.

Follow-up Action: None.

7. Water Update:

Summary of Issue and Discussion: Kathy Kitzman, gave an update on SB20-201. The bill appropriates \$4 million from the species conservation trust fund for programs submitted by the executive director of the department of natural resources that are designed to conserve native species that state or federal law list as threatened or endangered or that are candidate species or are likely to become candidate species as determined by the United States fish and wildlife service. City staff recommend an active support position.

The bill includes \$1,900,000 in funding to the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program that provides Aurora and other water users with ESA Compliance for South Platte River water supply operations.

CM Lawson and CM Murillo unanimously agreed to actively support the bill.

K. Kitzman said it is Water Week in DC this week and there are a lot of video and conference calls going on and provided an update on two of the hot topics being discussed related to COVID-19 response legislation. One topic is a possible moratorium on utility shut offs with proposals that would have utilities waive fees and bills. Most national water organizations are advocating against these measures as they would have unintended consequences and most municipalities are already working with residents on these funding options. The second topic is the federal government provided funding for programs that assist low income individual with water utility bills. Aurora has the Aurora Water Cares Program which provides bill payment assistance to limited-income customers experiencing challenges. CM Lawson said there have been a lot of people asking about utilities. She asked how much the Aurora Cares program has? K. Kitzmann said initially there was about \$70,000 in the fund. CM Lawson asked what the balance of the fund is? K. Kitzmann said she would check on that. The maximum has been raised to \$250 of assistance per customer per year.

Outcome: CM Lawson and CM Murillo unanimously agreed to actively support the SB20-201 Species Conservation Trust Fund bill.

Follow-up Action: K. Kitzmann to provide Aurora Water Cares fund balance.

8. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

CM Lawson asked L. Palmisano to give an update of the proposed homelessness letter. L. Palmisano said Jessica Prosser, Community Development Manager, gave him a petition with several different points. Staff thought it would be a better idea to address these points in a letter. During the week it became known that a number of service providers had reached out to the Governor regarding very similar topics. The Governor had responded with a letter. We thought that sending out our own letter would be redundant, since it sounds like the Governor is working on the issues addressed in our letter. Shelley McKittrick, Homelessness Coordinator, said she has seen the letter and part of her agrees that they should not send an additional letter. But part of her thinks that they should send something if we have not seen any action in this area in a few weeks.

