



Alton Committee Allocating ARPA Funds To Address Homelessness

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
April 11 2023 2:45 PM

ALTON - Following community feedback, the Alton Committee of the Whole voted to include addressing homelessness and other issues as new priority spending projects for the city's ARPA funds. The committee also approved several other items at the April 10 meeting, and the Alton City Council will take final action on those items at their meeting on Wednesday, April 12.

[Last December](#), a volunteer at the Overnight Warming Centers in Alton asked City Council members to consider allocating some of the city's ARPA funds to address homelessness. Until last night, the city had not planned to allocate any ARPA funding toward addressing homelessness, but Alderman Nate Keener introduced a new resolution and said the city would begin meeting with community groups to determine ways ARPA funding can address this and other issues.

"We got some feedback from groups in the public that they wanted to see a little bit more from our recommendations for ARPA spending around the areas of affordable housing and homelessness, youth skills and development, as well as economic development," Keener said. "What this is asking is for the administration to meet with some of those community groups and bring us some recommendations in those categories."

Keener said his resolution would allocate up to \$1 million of ARPA funding to each category, which the committee/council members could then vote to approve as much or little of as they see fit. Police Chief Jarrett Ford said it would be better to get an idea of what each category's projects would cost, then allocate the amounts accordingly.

"Let's say that you took some of that \$1 million and one of the ideas was to open a shelter in the city. It may not be enough to get that project going - it certainly would not be enough to sustain it, and I would hate for the city to, in essence, spend \$1 million on

a project that's not sustainable," Ford said. "I just think if you're going to allocate a certain number, maybe you should have a plan in place and see what that plan costs you before you actually put a dollar amount on these three pretty important topics."

Keener and other council members responded that part of the community group meeting process would be determining what those amounts and projects would be, and that the \$1 million placeholder amounts were based on the amount of ARPA funds remaining. Ultimately, committee members voted to approve the resolution as written with amounts subject to change dependent on whether the projects proposed by community groups are approved or disapproved.

The committee approved several other items at their April 10 meeting, including an Operation Management Agreement with Seahorse Ranch Marine to operate the Alton Marina. They also approved a resolution temporarily closing Belle Street for the annual Kentucky Derby Weekend. Chief Ford said it's "a very limited scope of closing it down" in order to "affect the businesses and such as little as possible."

Several property demolitions were also approved by the committee, including one at 2410 E. Broadway and one at 1311 E. Fifth Street. The committee awarded a bid for the latter demolition to S. Shafer Excavating, Inc. in the amount of \$15,400.00.

The committee awarded a bid for asbestos abatement at 245 West 19th Street to Environmental Operations, Inc. in the amount of \$1,350.00. They also approved the designation of an honorary street sign honoring the Love Family to be placed on Rockwell Street.

A full recording of the April 10 meeting is available at the top of this story or on [Riverbender.com/video](https://riverbender.com/video).