

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2021
10:00 AM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	Councilmember Manny Pelaez, <i>Co-Chair, District 8</i> Commissioner Justin Rodriguez, <i>Co-Chair, Bexar County Commissioner's Court, Precinct 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia, <i>District 4</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i> Commissioner Trish DeBerry, <i>Bexar County Commissioner's Court, Precinct 3</i>
Staff Present:	Carlos Contreras, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Camila Kunau, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Jeff Coyle, <i>Director, Government & Public Affairs</i> ; Gen. Juan Ayala, <i>Director, Military & Veteran Affairs</i> ; Sally Basurto, <i>Assistant Director, Government & Public Affairs</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	Melissa Shannon, <i>Director, Governmental Affairs, Bexar County</i> ; Kevin Kelly, <i>Lead Attorney, Government & Regulatory Affairs Group, Clark Hill, PC</i> ; Lauren Lipin, <i>Attorney, Government & Regulatory Affairs Group, Clark Hill, PC</i> ; Baltazar R. ("Walter") Serna, Jr. <i>Attorney, Serna & Serna, San Antonio</i> ; Henry Bonilla, <i>The Normandy Group</i> ; Ron Eritano, <i>The Normandy Group</i> ; Letty Mederos, <i>Senior Managing Director, Clark Hill, PC</i>

Call to Order

Co-Chairman Pelaez called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of the minutes from the January 13 and February 10, 2021 meetings of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to approve the minutes from the January 13 and February 10, 2021 meetings of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion with changes noted. The motion carried unanimously by those present.

2. Federal Update on:

- **American Rescue Plan Legislation Status**
- **Community Project Funding**

Sally Basurto reported on the status of the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan ("Plan") which was the fifth package in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. She stated the House passed the American Rescue Plan on February 27 and sent the relief package to the Senate for further consideration. She added that the House bill included \$350 billion for state and local governments, with \$130 billion evenly split between municipalities and counties, and noted that the House version of the bill would allow for these funds to be used for lost revenue replacement with no deadline to expend the funds. She stated that House bill included a provision to raise the Federal

minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2025, which was not expected to be in the Senate’s final version of the bill, as the Senate Parliamentarian ruled that a bill using the budget reconciliation process could not include an increase to the Federal minimum wage. She reported that the Senate initiated negotiations on the bill this week, some changes were expected, and that it was the House Leadership’s goal to have the bill signed by President Biden by March 14, 2021, when the enhanced unemployment benefits were set to expire.

Ms. Basurto provided an itemized breakdown of the Plan, as follows:

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING - \$1.9 trillion	
State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds	\$130 billion
Cities (by CDBG grants) & Counties (by population)	\$65 billion
Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund	\$10 billion
Direct Payments to Individuals	\$1,400
Enhanced Unemployment Benefits	\$300 weekly
Utilities Assistance	\$5 billion
COVID-19 Testing & Contact Tracing	\$49 billion
COVID-19 Vaccines	\$14 billion
Domestic Violence Services	\$450 million
Rental Assistance	\$27 billion
Homelessness	\$5 billion
Restaurant Revitalization Fund	\$26 billion
Shuttered Venues	\$1.2 billion
Airports & Concessionaires	\$8 billion
Public Transit Grants	\$30 billion

Ms. Basurto noted that the inclusion of State and Local recovery funds was a win-win scenario and noted that staff worked closely with other top cities in a united front to push for funding. She added that city allocations would be determined by a modified Community Block Development Grant (CDBG) formula, the first round of distribution would occur within 60 days of enactment, and the second round would occur exactly one year later.

Ms. Basurto highlighted the \$26 billion in Restaurant Revitalization funding and noted that those grants would cover a wide array of items that included payroll benefits, mortgage, rent, and utility assistance, outdoor seating, construction, and personal protection equipment (PPE). She added that the application process would prioritize restaurants owned by women, veterans, and socially and economically disadvantaged individuals.

Ms. Basurto reported that last week the House Appropriations Committee launched its FY 2022 Community Project Funding (CPF), previously known as earmarks, wherein members could request funding for State or local governments and for certain nonprofits. She stated that the Administration and Federal Agencies had wide discretion over program spending not used for earmarks and that earmarks accounted for less than one percent of federal funding. She noted that the CPF had a rigorous vetting and transparent process and she outlined its specific guidelines.

Commissioner DeBerry noted the opportunity for the City and the County to collaborate and submit a project request for CPF and asked of the deadline. Kevin Kelly stated that the most subcommittees had their deadlines for mid-April and it was most likely that Representative Cuellar would have to push his deadline back to the end of March 2021. He recommended that social service programs over \$3-4 million be avoided and stated that it was critical for the agencies and City departments to collaborate in a very organized approach to meet the tight deadline. Letty Mederos reported that she worked on earmarks for 10 years and that letter of support demonstrating a consensus of strong community support for a project among different sectors was key.

Councilmember Viagran requested further information on priority applicants for the Restaurant Revitalization funding. She called for the Federal Consultant Team and staff to inform, influence, and provide guidance for State Legislators to secure local, equitable funding from the \$100 million recovery funds appropriated to the State. She requested that the Federal Consultant Team and staff provide the State and Federal government with local demographics and analyses that reflected the need for equity in distribution in local areas most impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Ms. Basurto reported that the Small Business Administration (SBA) would give prioritization to restaurants owned by women, veterans, and socially and economically disadvantaged individuals that would be granted a 21-day headstart to submit their applications. She added that the SBA would issue more specific guidance on its application portal website and noted that the Economic Development Department would collaborate with the local SBA office.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia highlighted that Council District 4 had the highest number of reported COVID-19 cases of students, and noted that teachers were now added to the vaccine eligibility list. She stated that logistically speaking, the one-dose Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine would be strategically beneficial to administer to teachers and homebound individuals and asked if partnerships could be formed accordingly with providers that received J&J doses.

Mr. Coyle reported that Mayor Nirenberg and County Judge Nelson Wolff sent letters to the FEMA delegation requesting that San Antonio be appointed as a vaccine supersite. Mr. Kelly reported that he was in contact with Jeff Zients, Counselor to President Biden, on the overall logistical COVID-19 response. He stated that Mr. Zietz indicated a willingness to work with FEMA and CDC on their joint decisions for vaccine supersite designations. He noted that San Antonio had the highest social vulnerability index based on the Latino/Hispanic population, density of living, and high COVID-19 risks, and such factors were expected to move the City into the selection suite for Texas.

Chairman Pelaez noted that the objective of this Committee was to collaborate on a consensus project(s) to submit for CPF funding. Jeff Coyle stated that local agencies met regularly in an Intergovernmental Relations roundtable and he would call for a special meeting to take place quickly. He indicated that he would include the staff of Congressman Gonzales and Congressman Cuellar for their input and discussion of priority CPF submissions.

Commissioner Rodriguez recommended that the City and County collaborate on a request for additional COVID-19 vaccination resources. Commissioner DeBerry concurred that public health

was the priority and the City and County could collaborate on a request for a mass vaccination site designation as the local need was great.

3. State Update on:

- **Legislative Priority Updates**
- **Committee Meetings**
- **Bills of Interest**

Christine Wright reported that the Senate and the House had filed nearly 4,000 bills to date, March 12, 2021 was the House bill filing deadline, and both House and Senate Committees were currently meeting to consider legislation. She stated that Assistant City Manager Dr. Colleen Bridger would provide invited testimony regarding the COVID-19 impact on cities to the House Committee on Urban Affairs, and Assistant City Manager Carlos Contreras would provide invited testimony regarding the COVID-19 impact on tourism to the House Committee on Culture, Recreation, & Tourism.

Ms. Wright provided an update on the City's prioritized Legislative Agenda Items and reported that the following bills were referred to the House Urban Affairs Committee:

- HB 1087 (Gervin-Hawkins): Authorize the Police Chief to discipline officers within 180 days of discovering misconduct
- HB 1561 (Gervin-Hawkins): Create opportunities to encourage new officers to live in the City in which they serve
- HB 1563 (Gervin-Hawkins): Allow the release of conduct violations held by a law enforcement agency

Ms. Wright reported that HB 1940 (Gervin-Hawkins): Limiting an arbitrator to reduce discipline, as determined by the Police Chief, had just been filed and had yet to be referred to a Committee. She noted that the House Urban Affairs Committee was chaired by Representative Phillip Cortez and members included Rep. Diego Bernal, Rep. Ina Minjarez, and Rep. Elizabeth Campos, all of whom were San Antonians which was a positive sign.

Ms. Wright provided an update on public health. She reported that due to its role in the COVID-19 response, the Department of State Health Services (DHS) requested an exemption to the State's directive for agencies to reduce their budgets by 5% for the next biennium. She added that the City was in support of a DHS exemption and Dr. Bridger mentioned support of the requested exemption in her testimony. Ms. Wright reported that numerous bills regarding Medicaid expansion were filed by the House and the Senate, to include:

- HB 1730 (Larson): Directs HHSC to provide for –and adopt rules implementing – Medicaid eligibility to all persons who apply for assistance and for whom federal matching money is available.
- HJR 86 (Larson) Constitutional amendment that puts the question to the voters at an election to be held in November 2021

Ms. Wright reported that HB5 and SB5 would create a State Broadband Development Office that would develop the State Broadband Plan to form long-term strategies to promote internet access across the State. She noted that some Emergency Management bills would consolidate the authority of the Governor to take action during a pandemic and would uphold State disaster orders to prevail over local disaster orders. She added that HB 749 would prohibit political subdivisions from hiring lobbyists. She stated that House Speaker Rep. Dade Phelan announced the first phase of reforms to address the ERCOT Winterstorm issue with the filing of priority bills that would weatherize the State's energy infrastructure, create a statewide alert system, improve communication between State agencies, and define authority during extreme weather events.

Commissioner DeBerry requested that bills pertaining to appraisal reform be tracked for any insight and opportunities to provide relief for Bexar County taxpayers. She requested updates for redistricting, census data, and special sessions.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia concurred that appraisal reform should be focused on and requested that the Committee be provided with updates on the State and local response to the ERCOT Winterstorm issue. Mr. Coyle stated that he would provide updates.

Chairman Pelaez stated that he would follow up with Commissioner Rodriguez and each Committee member individually to discuss any proposed updates to the City's Federal and State Legislative Agendas.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 am.

***Councilmember Manny Pelaez,
Co-Chairman***

***County Commissioner Justin Rodriguez,
Co-Chairman***

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Cano, Office of the City Clerk