

## 06-02-2021 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions

### **ITEM #3: Update: American Rescue Plan Financial Support of the ReVive Recovery Plan**

**Council Question:**

Are there particular projects contemplated by the Downtown Together Initiative? If so, what are they?

**Staff Response:**

*Downtown Together has two primary initiatives:*

- 1) A downtown planning/strategic plan*
- 2) A downtown beautification of East Franklin and Columbia Streets.*

**Council Question:**

What criteria would be considered by the Chamber's Minority Committee regarding the micro grants?

**Staff Response:**

*The criteria has not defined for any of the grant programs, but a general philosophy has evolved for the grants and that is they are generally easy to access and the documentation requirements simple.*

**Council Question:**

The business grants, for the most part, seem quite small. What is the maximum that a business can receive?

**Staff Response:**

*The grants are planned to range from \$500 (micro) to \$1500 (entrepreneur) and \$2500 and up (small business) depending on the need. We had thought the small business grant could go to \$5000 if there was a need shown to go to the highest level.*

**Council Question:**

Will non-profits be eligible for the business grants?

**Staff Response:**

*Our previous PPE grants made non-profits eligible for funding and we expect that to continue. If they can show impact from the pandemic, they would be eligible.*

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**Council Question:**

\$100,000 per year for two years is requested to promote parking Downtown. While it is clear we need to generate more parking revenues, shouldn't we also be promoting transit?

**Staff Response:**

*The Town does allocate money for marketing transit annually and continues spending funds on enhancing multi-modal transportation throughout the Town. Parking downtown is an important element of the local economy for our business community and the health and sustainability of the parking fund is crucial. Making it easy for staff, visitors, and downtown workers to park is crucial in supporting our businesses during this recovery period and amplifying the message that Chapel Hill is a business-friendly community where it is easy to park, shop, and dine.*

**Council Question:**

Is \$50,000 adequate for a robust workforce development program? What unmet needs/skills will be targeted?

**Staff Response:**

*With a 3% unemployment rate, we do not see the need for an overly aggressive campaign and educational programs. We see this as targeted training and developed for job openings that we see going unfilled in our community. We have sponsored an on-air job fair on WCHL and are sponsoring a job fair/recruitment event targeting downtown businesses and hospitality workers as a part of this programming out of our current-year budget.*

*Additional research to better understand the needs would result in that targeted response. There is some recent research that the Chamber has completed, which we will build off to refine our targets.*

**Council Question:**

What opportunities are being pursued to carry out some of these programs jointly with the County and secure County funds in addition to the funds provided by the Town?

**Staff Response:**

*The County has requested funding through the American Rescue Plan and will begin to implement their recovery plan in late summer and we will partner on as many opportunities as possible to grow and expand any money Council puts into these initiatives.*