

## **COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

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**CAVALIER JOHNSON**  
COMMON COUNCIL PRESIDENT  
ALDERMAN, 2ND DISTRICT

# **Comprehensive, inclusive process should dictate how federal dollars get allocated**

**Statement of Common Council President Cavalier Johnson  
April 2, 2021**

Yesterday during a special meeting, the Common Council considered a file for immediate adoption that would have eliminated the new street light fee from residents' bills for the first and second quarter of 2021. The file ultimately failed, but had it passed approximately \$5 million in revenue would have been lost with the expectation that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars would be used to make up the difference.

While I agree that residents need relief, I believe we must be thorough and engage the community on the best ways to spend ARPA resources. At this point, it is still too early to know the preferences of the community and be strategic in how funds are allocated. In my opinion, it would also be unwise to spend money before it hits our bank account and before final guidance on allowable uses of ARPA funds is released.

As we approach receiving our first ARPA funding allotment, I want to make a few promises to the community, my colleagues, and other stakeholders interested in how these dollars are spent.

The Common Council will lead the way, and we will engage in a transparent process that will include the community and the administration. The yet to be released federal guidelines for ARPA spending will be thoroughly reviewed and followed. There will be coordination with state and county governments in order to more effectively maximize the use of ARPA funds.

In coordination with broad support from my colleagues on the Common Council, I co-led a series of resolutions to ensure that our process for the allocation of ARPA funds is transparent, inclusive, and strategic. File [201571](#) directs the administration to establish a funding plan utilizing the following steps prior to the allocation of ARPA funds:

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1. Conduct a public survey to identify the community's priorities for ARPA allocations
2. Establish specific and measurable equity and inclusion goals related to the allocation of funds
3. Present a proposed budget for allocating and expending the ARPA award
4. Solicit comments from the public following presentation of the proposed ARPA budget
5. Engage in hearings before the Common Council's Finance and Personnel Committee to finalize the ARPA allocation plan.

File [201615](#) directs the Department of Administration to establish a public dashboard detailing the allocation and expenditure of ARPA funds in conjunction with opportunities for public comment. Both files will be heard Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup> before the Finance and Personnel committee.

These resolutions will ensure that funding allocations are strategic, equitable, coordinated, and most importantly, make the greatest impact possible for the most residents. While we still may ultimately decide to reduce the street light fee, we must first follow a comprehensive process to ensure funds are used responsibly and effectively.

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