



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202 • www.city.milwaukee.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2021

Collaborative, community focused approach needed for stimulus fund allocation

Joint statement from members of the Milwaukee Common Council: Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Alderman Ashanti Hamilton, Alderman Cavalier Johnson, Alderman Nik Kovac, Alderman Robert J. Bauman, Alderwoman Nikiya Dodd, Alderman Khalif J. Rainey, Alderwoman JoCasta Zamarripa, Alderwoman Chantia Lewis, Alderman Michael J. Murphy, Alderman Mark Borkowski, Alderman José G. Pérez, Alderman Scott Spiker, Alderwoman Marina Dimitrijevic and Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II

The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) will be bringing long-awaited emergency funding to every state, every city and every community across our nation. We applaud President Biden and Congress for ‘going big’ and bringing forth a package that helps small businesses, that assists non-profits and hard-hit local entertainment venues, and that includes the Community Navigator pilot program to improve access to COVID-19 relief, primarily for underserved communities.

We are most focused on the emergency federal funding in the ARPA that will go to cities and states, and to local governments to help us continue providing essential services to the people. The City of Milwaukee, along with other Wisconsin towns, cities and counties, has been on the frontlines in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and the health and economic disaster has taken its toll. Expected revenues disappeared and our budget has been decimated as we try our best to provide services to the community.

We believe the stakes have been raised much higher in Milwaukee with the new emergency funding that will arrive, and that is why we are calling for an elevated level of collaboration and involvement in determining how that money should be spent for city purposes. The distribution of the CARES Act federal funding received in 2020 was almost wholly decided by Mayor Barrett and the city Budget Office, which he is in control of.

That funding allocation approach must not be repeated.

-More-

Instead, we believe the community and the Common Council must play a central role in deciding how to spend the American Rescue Plan funding. The ARPA allows many categories of approved funding, and each aldermanic district has its own needs and its own stakeholders who have the best perspective on how to effectively use the emergency funding. We must listen to those ideas and move forward responsibly with due diligence and care to make sure the money is spent wisely, has the greatest impact possible and is a benefit to Milwaukee's citizens, neighborhoods and business districts.

We stand ready and are looking forward to pursuing a more active and central role in helping govern the critical decisions on how this new emergency funding will be spent in the City of Milwaukee.