

CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON

ORDINANCE NO. 6592

AN ORDINANCE to facilitate the disbursement of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding by (1) amending Ordinance 6557, adopted December 14, 2020, as previously amended, to increase the appropriation to the 2021-2022 Operating Grants, Donations, and Special Reserves Fund in an amount of \$8,000,000; and (2) authorizing the City Manager or his designee to execute and implement all agreements necessary to disburse said funds for residential eviction prevention and rent/mortgage relief, workforce programing and resource navigation, and rent assistance for small businesses and nonprofits, including execution of agreements with nonprofits and community organizations to provide the services, in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the direction of the City Council.

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has had severe and adverse economic impacts on the federal, state, and local economies, including the Bellevue economy; and

WHEREAS, within the City of Bellevue, as a consequence of the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, households are experiencing increased housing insecurity; approximately 2,000 households are considered “very likely” to be evicted within the next two months; approximately 5,600 households are considered “somewhat likely” to be evicted within the next two months; the average rental arrearage is estimated to be between \$4,000 and \$11,000; and the current eviction moratorium (Emergency Proclamation 21-09) is set to expire on September 30, 2021, and upon its expiration the number of households experiencing housing insecurity is expected to increase significantly; and

WHEREAS, those residents who will be evicted upon expiration of the eviction moratorium, or who have self-evicted due to overwhelming debt, will face obstacles in securing new housing and other human services without financial assistance; and

WHEREAS, to help address this need, the City plans to contract with nonprofits and community organization partners to provide past due and current rent, mortgage assistance, and move-in cost relief to low- and moderate-income households whose housing stability has been impacted by the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, within the City of Bellevue, as a consequence of the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are approximately 3,300 unemployed, job-seeking residents; and

WHEREAS, to help address this need, the City plans to contract with external partners in connection with a three-year pilot program focused on providing workforce programming and resource navigation services; and

WHEREAS, within the City of Bellevue, as a consequence of the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, twenty-five percent of commercial tenants experiencing financial insecurity or other economic harm due to the pandemic are seeking rental assistance; as noted by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, small businesses can face greater hurdles in accessing credit and many small business were already financially fragile at the outset of the pandemic; non-profits, which provide vital services to the Bellevue community, have similarly faced economic and financial challenges due to the pandemic; and certain sectors have been particularly hard hit including the personal services, health/wellness, and creative economy sectors that depend on the volume of office workers and visitors to Bellevue; and

WHEREAS, unemployment in Bellevue continues to be approximately twice as high as unemployment before the pandemic, and the numbers of office workers and visitors to Bellevue are significantly lower than before the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, to help address this need, the City plans to contract with nonprofit and community organization partners to provide small business rent relief to help stabilize small businesses and nonprofits, particularly within the personal services, health/wellness, and creative economy sectors, to help prevent closures and job loss; and

WHEREAS, the City previously completed extensive outreach to, and has completed four (4), separate Requests for Proposals for, nonprofit and other community partners to identify nonprofits and community organizations with demonstrated capacity to provide eviction prevention / rent and mortgage assistance services to households and businesses, with capacity to comply with federal and other grant funding requirements, with demonstrated ability to reach communities who have been most impacted by the pandemic including residents of color, immigrants and older adults, and with demonstrated capacity to move immediately and quickly to provide services to residents and businesses that have suffered and continue to suffer economic harm as a result of the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2021, President Joseph Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA); and

WHEREAS, ARPA allocated \$350 billion to state and local governments to respond to the public health emergency caused by COVID-19 and its negative economic impact; and

WHEREAS, on June 14, 2021, the City of Bellevue was awarded \$20.1 million in ARPA funds, and it has already received a first tranche of \$10 million; and

WHEREAS, an immediate disbursement of ARPA funds is necessary and appropriate to help individuals remain secure in their housing, to help commercial tenants keep their small businesses open and their current staff employed, and to help unemployed or underemployed individuals find jobs; and

WHEREAS, disbursing ARPA funds for the purposes of residential eviction prevention and rent/mortgage relief, small business rent relief, and workforce assistance is deemed to be an appropriate use of said funds under the Act and a necessary step to help individuals and the community recover from the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; now, therefore

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON, DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City's 2021-2022 Operating Grants, Donations, and Special Reserve Fund appropriation adopted by Ordinance No. 6557 on December 14, 2020, as previously amended, is hereby further amended to increase the appropriation to said Fund in the amount of \$8,000,000.

Section 2. The City Manager or his designee is hereby authorized to execute and implement all agreements necessary to disburse the \$8,000,000 in ARPA funding as follows: \$7,000,000 for the provision of residential eviction prevention and rent/mortgage relief; \$500,000 for the provision of workforce program and resource navigation; and \$500,000 for the provision of rent relief for small businesses and nonprofits (focusing on personal services, health/wellness, and creative economy sectors). The City Manager or his designee is further authorized and directed to establish criteria to target assistance to households and businesses that have experienced economic harm as a result of the pandemic, including increased housing and financial insecurity, taking into account economic conditions in Bellevue and business data when establishing such criteria. The City Manager or his designee is further authorized to enter into agreements with nonprofit and other community organizations to provide the residential eviction prevention and rent/mortgage relief, workforce program and resource navigation, and rent assistance for small businesses and nonprofits authorized here, consistent with this criteria.

Section 3. The terms and conditions of any agreement shall ensure the City's funds are used for their intended purpose, consistent with the requirements of the American Rescue Plan Act and direction previously provided by the City Council on July 26, 2021.

Section 4. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force five (5) days after its passage and legal publication.

Passed by the City Council this _____ day of _____, 2021,
and signed in authentication of its passage this _____ day of _____,
2021.

(SEAL)

Lynne Robinson, Mayor

Approved as to form:
Kathryn L. Gerla, City Attorney

Brian Wendt, Assistant City Attorney

Attest:

Charmaine Arredondo, City Clerk

Published _____