City Manager's Report

December 13, 2022

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE



Asheville Fire Department Updates

Safety and Training Officer

Jeff Lyons

- Funeral Services held November 21 with military and fire honors
- Served 26 years with the AFD
- US Army and Air Force Veteran



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Asheville Fire Department Fire

Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating

- AFD was awarded highest fire suppression rating of a Class 1 by the NC Insurance Commission and State Fire Marshal
- Once every five years, every aspect of AFD is inspected
- This rating included components of key partners
    - Buncombe County Emergency Management, Public Safety Communications, and Water Resources Department
- Less than 1% of all fire departments nationwide have achieved this rating
- This means AFD has proven top performance in: proper staffing levels, sufficient equipment, proper maintenance of equipment, communications capabilities and availability of water source.
- This improved rating could mean insurance cost savings for our community

Fiscal Year 2021-22 Annual Report

December 13, 2022

Rachel Wood, Assistant City Manager



Key Takeaways

- The City of Asheville's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30 each year.
- The organization has not prepared comprehensive annual reports in approximately 10 years.
- With a renewed commitment to annual reports and through investments in data and performance, staff will be able to effectively identify and respond to trends as we operationalize the City Council's vision and priorities.
- In Fiscal Year 2021-22, operations began to "normalize" as we became more equipped to respond to the ongoing challenges associated with the COVID-19 epidemic, staffing shortages, and increasing demands for City services.
- The Fiscal Year 2021-22 Annual Report highlights many of the achievements and successes from throughout the year, and the work that was done to fulfill the City Council's vision and priorities.
- Staff is refining the process from the prior fiscal year to further align projects, programs and initiatives underway across the organization with City Council priorities.

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City Council Vision and FY 2021-2022 Priorities

City Council Vision

Asheville is a great place to live because **we care about people**, we **invest in our city**, and we celebrate our natural and cultural heritage. Our city is for everyone. Our urban environment and **locally-based economy support workers, entrepreneurs and business owners, families and tourists**, and people of all ages. Cultural diversity and social and economic **equity** are evident in all that we do. Our neighborhoods are strong, **participation** in civic life is widespread, and collaborative **partnerships** are the foundation of our success.

Vision Focus Areas

Equitable & Diverse Community	Well Planned & Livable Community
Clean & Healthy Environment	Financially Resilient City
Transportation & Accessibility	Connected & Engaged Community
Quality, Affordable Housing	Thriving Local Economy

FY 2021-2022 Priorities

- Reparations
- Reimaging Public Safety
- Utilization of ARPA Funding
- Employee Compensation

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Reparations

- In July 2020, the City of Asheville became one of the first local governments in N. C. to approve a resolution supporting community reparations for Black residents.
- The resolution called for the City Manager to establish a process to develop recommendations addressing the creation of generational wealth and enhance economic opportunity in the Black community.
- Following that direction, the City Manager recommended a three-phased approach including:

1. **Information Sharing and Truth Telling**
    a. Speaker series occurred June 2021, feedback received was used to inform next steps in the Reparations Process

2. **Formation of a Reparations Commission**

    a. In September 2021, a third-party Project Manager was hired to facilitate the Reparations Commission through the development of their recommendations.
    b. In March 2022, the City Council and County Commission approved a 25 member commission.

3. **Finalize and Present a Report**

    a. The Reparations Commission held their first meeting on April 30, 2022 and continues to make progress in the development of their recommendations.

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What's Next - Reparations:
Finalize and Present the Report

- Because of the ongoing work of the Reparations Commission and its importance in the community, the City Council included Reparations as a continued priority for the current fiscal year.

- The Reparations Commission is working to develop a report, slated for completion in spring or summer of 2024, for consideration by the City and other participating community groups for incorporation into their respective short-term and long-term priorities and plans.
    - Retreat occurred on September 23
    - Next regularly scheduled meeting will be on January 9

- Future City of Asheville and Buncombe County budgets will each include at least $500,000 annually to fund reparations.

Reimagining Public Safety

- Reimagining Public Safety examines how the City of Asheville structures departmental responsibilities and community partnerships in a way that promotes racial equity and economic inclusion.

- Examples of Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Reimagining Public Safety initiatives include:
  - **Animal Control and Noise Ordinance Enforcement was transferred from Asheville Police Department (APD) to Development Services**
    - DSD closed 71% of the total noise complaints, while APD closed 29% of the total noise complaints.
    - There was a 24% decrease in non-emergency line noise complaints between FY2020-21 and FY2021-22
  - **City/County 911 Consolidation**
    - Elimination of call transferring
    - Eliminated call transferring and provided more consistent service delivery
    - Greater opportunities for interagency response and backup and data sharing
    - Greater opportunities for alternate response methods through consolidated training and procedures
  - **Increased Training Opportunities for APD**
    - Additional training opportunities funded using salary savings from vacancies
    - Examples of trainings taken by APD Officers include civility training, crisis intervention training, and advancing racial equity
  - **Creation of the Office of Data & Performance**
    - Established to enhance the use of data for equitable outcomes, accountability, and communication
    - Over the past year, ODAP has been involved in external and internal activities to advance its mission, Council priorities and goals of reimagining public safety

What's Next - Reimagining Public Safety

- Reimagining Public Safety is a long-term commitment to redefine how and who responds to public safety issues while also identifying root causes behind concerns.
- Because of the importance of the work associated with Reimagining Public Safety, the City Council included it as a continued priority for the current fiscal year.
- Examples of Reimagining Public Safety efforts in Fiscal Year 2022-23 include:
    - APD support for intervention and community outreach. This will be accomplished by working with Buncombe County's Community Safety Initiative and other nonprofit groups in Asheville.
    - Implementation of retention and recruitment strategies to make APD more competitive for maintaining existing staff and recruiting new officers.
    - The Asheville Fire Department is collaborating with Buncombe County on a Community Response Team that will address overlapping community needs related to the unsheltered, behavioral health and substance abuse.

Utilizing ARPA Funds

- The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is a Federal funding program that allocated $65.1 billion to help communities recover from COVID-19.
- The City of Asheville received $26 million in ARPA funding.
- During Fiscal Year 2021-22, the City Council made important decisions on how best to invest ARPA funding back into the community.
    - Projects were selected for funding based on the following criteria and categories:

Criteria



Categories

- Affordable housing
- Homelessness services
- Small business recovery
- Workforce development
- Food systems
- City infrastructure
- Domestic violence prevention and assistance
- Community communication

- 18 projects have been funded to-date, for a total of $24.9 Million

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What's Next - Utilizing ARPA Funds

- As the majority of the City's $26 million in ARPA funding has been allocated, City staff has begun the implementation phase.
    - This includes working in collaboration with funding recipients to finalize contracts and reporting structures with a continued focus on successful outcomes.
    - City staff will partner with funding recipients to assist in navigating the federal rules, regulations and obligations that come along with ARPA funding.
- Information about ARPA funding will be shared with the community during the implementation phase through an online dashboard, presentations to City Council, and posts on the City Source Blog.

Employee Compensation

- The Fiscal Year 2021-22 annual operating budget fully funded the implementation of the Archer Compensation Study recommendations for employees on the public safety pay plans and increased compensation for all other employees.
- The cost of implementing these recommendations was approximately $7.9 million Citywide, with around 87% or $6.9 million of this increase going to employees earning less than $60,000 annually.
- The increased compensation resulted in the following impacts to key classifications of employees:

Department	Adjustment
Fire	Average of 16% increase
	Starting pay increase of 30%
Police	Average of 13% increase
	Starting pay increase of 19%
All Other Departments and/or civilians	Minimum of 2.5% increase

- The Fiscal Year 2021-22 operating budget also included eight weeks of paid parental leave and six weeks to care for a qualified family member with a serious health condition.
- The City also added two additional paid holidays in Fiscal Year 2021-22, Juneteenth and Veteran's Day.

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What's Next - Employee Compensation

- The Fiscal Year 2022-23 budget expanded employee compensation with the following increases:
    - Ensured all full-time employees earn at least $35,360 annually, with an additional adjustment in January 2023 to $36,816 annually. Since 2020, the City's minimum starting salary has increased by 18%.
    - Provided staff with a 5% cost of living increase if hired on or before December 31, 2021, or a 2.5% increase if hired after that date.
- Human Resources staff have reviewed classification and compensation to address compression issues and ensure the City maintains a competitive total compensation package. Compression adjustments went into effect on November 26, 2022.
- Ongoing for Fiscal Year 2022-23:
    - $75,000 investment in Asheville Fire Department for new Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) pay supplement for staff who have this certification.
    - Funds new Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) pay supplement for staff who earn this certification.

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Fiscal Year 2021-22 Core Services Statistics

Police	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Calls for service*	77,524	70,511	60,387
FY 22 is down 17% from previous year likely due to changes in reporting standards where citizens are asked to report certain incidents through the P2C platform. *Excludes officer initiated and canceled calls			

Transit	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Total ridership	1,516,580	1,531,665	1,446,637
FY 22 down 6% from previous year due to service cuts in the spring and summer of 2022 because of a labor shortage			

Parks & Recreation	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Unique program participants	2,828	693	1,982
FY 22 up 65% from previous year due to COVID restrictions in FY 2021			

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FY 2021-22 Notable Accomplishments

- Over 1.5 million people participated in programs or attended events at City facilities
- The Mountain Community Capital Fund, a loan guarantee fund for small businesses has provided $1.5 million in loans since the fund originated in 2019.
- 26,384 linear feet of end of life water pipes were replaced.
- Significant progress was made on several bond projects including expansion of the Dr. Wesley Grant, Sr. Southside Community Center, design for New Haw Creek Road sidewalks and other transportation projects, and affordable housing at 319 Biltmore Ave.
- The City of Asheville generated 214.32 Megawatt hours (MWh) of renewable energy, reducing 152 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.
- Neighborhood Matching Grants Program was launched by the Communication and Public Engagement Department.
    - Build neighborhood capacity and increase civic participation, Empower neighborhoods to self-determine improvement projects, Create and strengthen partnerships between the city government and community groups
    - 13 Neighborhoods Awarded Grants, totaling $60,950
    - $32,234 of that total was dispersed through the end of the FY 2021-22 fiscal year
- Using the Affordable Housing Bonds, the Housing Trust Fund, American Rescue Plan funds and the Land Use Incentive Grant program the City funded 257 affordable units in FY 2021-22.

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Where We're Heading

- Council Committee structure revised to better align with current City Council priorities
  - In early calendar year 2023, work plans will be reviewed with each Council Committee to confirm key areas of focus including projects and policy work are aligned with Council's priority direction
- City Council Strategic Priorities to be reviewed during March 2-3 City Council Retreat
- Enhanced alignment between Organizational Work Plan development and budget development process for Fiscal Year 2023-2024
  - Office of Data & Performance is moving to the Budget Division of the Finance & Management Services Department to more closely integrate performance management and Council priority alignment with budget development
  - Organizational Work Plan is informed by Council Committee Work Plans along with specific operational projects and administrative policies identified by City leadership
  - Departmental Work Plans developed to track all major initiatives within departments to ensure alignment with Council priority direction and to serve as a management tool for balancing workload
- Improved performance measures and reporting structure and tools with a goal to have an interactive dashboard with regular performance reports and a data driven annual (year-end) performance report distributed.
  - Project Management Framework implemented across the organization to ensure consistent application of project management best practices and communication standards are applied

OPERATIONALIZING CITY COUNCIL'S VISION



Why?

City Council Strategic Priorities

- Improve & Expand Core Services
- Houselessness Strategies
- Equitable & Affordable Housing & Stability
- Neighborhood Resilience
- Reimagining Public Safety
- Reparations

What?

Organizational Work Plan

How?

Project Management Framework

**Development of employee work plans will be a future enhancement

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Work Plan and Budget Development Cycle



Council sets broad vision for City, where staff should focus efforts to improve or expand services.

Resources allocated to achieve stated goals.

Organizational Work Plan outlines how allocated resources will be used to achieve goals.

Reporting out on progress shows whether goals were achieved and where adjustments should be made.

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