



CITY OF PITTSBURGH
OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER
Controller Michael E. Lamb

Friday, September 10, 2021

Members of Pittsburgh City Council
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Members of Council,

Next week, the final vote is scheduled for the American Rescue Plan Act (APRA) allocations (2021-1803, 2021-1804, 2021-1805, and 2021-1806). As my office understands it, this would authorize a direct transfer of funds from the ARPA Trust Fund to the following entities: OnePGH for \$2,500,000; the Pittsburgh Parking Authority for \$80,000; the Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority for \$17,500,000; and the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh for \$74,878,811.

As currently written, the legislation provides guidance and funding amounts, but no further tracking mechanism exists. This lack of control is concerning, and I believe it could lead to accountability issues down the road.

Accordingly, I would encourage the legislation to be amended to keep the money in the ARPA Trust Fund until it is ready to be spent by one of the agencies listed above. The funds, once encumbered, should be drawn down as needed rather than a one-time direct transfer of funds. This would allow my office to appropriately monitor the expenditures over the life of the ARPA Trust Fund and provide the public greater transparency and opportunity for comment.

Other modifications to the legislation could include:

1. Incorporate language to mandate that agencies receiving large ARPA Trust Fund transfers of \$1,000,000 or more must submit the following as requested by the Pittsburgh City Controller:
 - a. Quarterly Progress Reports on activities
 - b. Quarterly Financial Reports on activities
 - c. Other information, as required.
2. Authorize and direct the Pittsburgh City Controller to have auditing authority over all agencies receiving ARPA funds, pursuant to the powers outlined in the Home Rule Charter. For example, Council could draft legislation similar to [2019-2320 Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy](#).

3. Write separate contracts for each project funded with ARPA funds. This would require each ARPA project go through the rigorous process of legal review from the Department of Law and the Controller's office.
4. Mandate each ARPA project to have separate tracking in city budgeting processes. This increases transparency and would allow the public to better understand how each dollar was allocated and subsequently spent.

I am grateful for the work that has gone into our City's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic to date. While we are on the right track, it is my hope that proper controls are added to these ARPA projects to maintain trust with Pittsburgh residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Lamb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael E. Lamb

CC: Mayor Bill Peduto