

May 16, 2023

City Council

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Proceedings by Authority

State of New York

City of Jamestown

Mayor's Conference Room

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A Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Jamestown, New York was held on Tuesday May 16, 2023 at 4:00 P.M.

Members Present: Council President Anthony Dolce, Councilmembers Brent Sheldon, Regina Brackman, Marie Carrubba, William Reynolds, Kimberly Ecklund, Randall Daversa and Jeffery Russell (via teleconference).

Others Present: Mayor Edward A. Sundquist, City Clerk/Treasurer Jennifer R. Williams, Deputy Fire Chief Matt Coon, Grant Coordinator Paula Pichon, Secretary to the Mayor Micaela Cleveland and Julia Barron FEMA Project Manager for the city.

The councilmembers introduced themselves to Ms. Barron and Mayor Sundquist thanked her for appearing and asked her to go over the initial questions that had been sent to her.

Ms. Barron read the first question as it pertained to whether or not the city was required to hire eight firefighters. The answer was yes as the grant was accepted for eight full time positions and grant agreements state that you are required to accept all the terms of the grant upon acceptance. Mayor Sundquist asked what the minimum number rostered was and Ms. Barron answered that it was 62 with 54 actives rostered plus the eight with the SAFER grant. The city is required to maintain that number for the period of the grant. She stated that many municipalities struggle to hit and maintain the number due to natural attrition and academy schedules. She also stated that you have to take steps to fill/maintain the positions. She added that the point of the grant is to assist in NFPA 1710-1720 compliance. Council President Dolce asked if the 54 actives rostered included the 4 ARPA funded positions. Ms. Barron reiterated that the list as provided showed 54 actives rostered. Councilwoman Ecklund asked DFC Coon to provide the roster to councilmembers.

Mayor Sundquist addressed the second question of whether or not the city can reapply for the grant and the answer was yes; each grant is separate and a separate staffing level is attached to each grant, so it was advised that the city know where it stands with staffing prior to reapplying as the number will have to increase (in this case to 70 if all 8 SAFER hires remain rostered). She added that if the grant rules allowed, an application for retention could be submitted, however, it was noted that it was a very difficult process due to grant requirements. She also stated that the rules of the grant have changed a lot over the years, so there could be new rules in place in three years. Councilwoman Ecklund asked if it was safe to assume that the city could not possibly do it easily. Councilwoman Brackman asked what determines JFD staffing levels and DFC Coon responded that the department has four stations with 12 on a shift and a requirement of three firefighters per apparatus. The number of people required to run the apparatus is really what drives the total number.

May 2, 2023

Mayor Sundquist read the third question as it pertains to the timeframe to reapply and Ms. Barron answered that as soon as a grant opens, we could reapply.

The fourth question was whether or not other grantees have ever been approved for a second round of funding and how soon after and Ms. Barron answered that there was a city in New Jersey that was funded year after year due to their local circumstances. She noted that if you are successful once, it means that you have a competitive grant application. Others apply every year and are not approved. She stressed how competitive the grant program is and that hundreds of applications are turned down. She congratulated the city on their award and asked for other questions.

Council President Dolce asked how other agencies requested their firefighters and she answered that the agency sets the number based on the numbers needed for NFPA compliance. The city chose the number to get to 100% compliance with those standards. Getting to 100% compliance is a good score and she reiterated that only adding two firefighters would not raise the score high enough to be in the tier of award. Councilwoman Carrubba asked if there was a range of positions awarded and Ms. Barron answered that they have funded anywhere from one to hundreds per agency/municipality. She added that there are so many factors that go into deciding on how applicants reach their number; vacations, retirements, etc. Councilwoman Brackman asked how applicants go about reaching the dollar amount and Ms. Barron answered that it comes down to what a first, second third-year firefighter would be paid, fringe benefits, etc. Mayor Sundquist added that former comptroller, Ryan Thompson worked with the group to establish those costs.

Councilman Sheldon asked if it was correct to say that when the city applied for the grant that congress had not approved funding to that point. Ms. Barron agreed stating that there was additional funding from ARPA that were used for the grant awards. She added that without the ARPA funding, the city would not have received the grant. She stated that fewer people would be awarded next year as the ARPA funds will have been expended.

Councilman Reynolds asked if a grantee has ever rejected the award and Ms. Barron responded that yes, it has happened. She added that the city needs to be committed to moving forward before hiring. The city can begin to bill the grant on August 8, 2023.

The Mayor and Council thanked Ms. Barron for her time.

A member of the public, Darlene May O'Connor of 135 Camp Street encouraged council to move forward with the grant.

The councilmembers asked for the spreadsheet to be sent around as well as the roster. Paula Pichon said she would send it around.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jennifer R. Williams

May 2, 2023

City Clerk/ Treasurer