

City Council – Action Request Form

Date: April 6, 2020

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Lee D. Garrity, City Manager

Council Action Requested:

Resolution Authorizing a Contribution of \$1.0 Million to the COVID-19 Response Fund for Forsyth County and an Agreement with United Way of Forsyth County and The Winston-Salem Foundation to Administer the Funds

Strategic Focus Area: Economic Vitality and Diversity

Strategic Objective: No

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



Summary of Information:

Over the last two weeks, President Trump, Governor Cooper, and Mayor Joines have declared national, state and local emergencies in response to COVID-19, the novel coronavirus. Across North Carolina, Governor Cooper has issued a stay-at-home order, closed K-12 schools, and limited mass gatherings to no more than 10 people. In an effort to mitigate partially the economic shock of the pandemic in the state, Governor Cooper has relaxed certain processes for people who have become unemployed or underemployed to apply for unemployment benefits. On March 25, Mayor Joines issued a stay-at-home order to slow the spread of the virus locally.

The city already is experiencing the impact of these preemptive, yet necessary, measures. On March 18, 2020, Mayor Joines and officials with United Way of Forsyth County, The Winston-Salem Foundation, and Forsyth County announced the creation of the COVID-19 Response Fund for Forsyth County. The fund was established by a partnership between United Way of Forsyth County, The Winston-Salem Foundation, Forsyth County, and Community Organizations Active in Disaster to support local community members impacted by the novel coronavirus. The City will contribute up to \$1 million to match contributions to the new fund dollar for dollar. The initial goal of this partnership was to raise at least \$2 million for this effort. Already, pledges totaling over \$3.1 million have been committed toward the fund, including

Committee Action:

Committee

Action

For

Against

Remarks:

\$100,000 from both the United Way and the Winston-Salem Foundation; \$1.0 million from Truist Bank; pledges from HanesBrands, Wells Fargo, Wake Forest Baptist Health, Reynolds American; and some large commitments from anonymous donors. United Way of Forsyth County and The Winston-Salem Foundation will administer the fund, providing one-time operating support to existing agencies that work with the communities that are impacted disproportionately by the coronavirus and the economic consequences of the pandemic. Officials at the announcement noted that the community's established relief agencies have policies and procedures in place for vetting requests for assistance. Officials stated that expanding what these agencies already are doing seemed to be the most efficient way to distribute assistance. The fund will not distribute assistance directly to individuals.

The City's contribution will provide one-time operating support to the local non-profit organizations selected to receive funding through the COVID-19 Response Fund for Forsyth County to assist low and moderate-income residents economically impacted by the COVID-19 virus consistent with G.S. 160A-456. This one-time operating support shall be used to increase the capacity of the selected local non-profit organizations to serve the growing population of residents impacted by COVID-19.

Agencies will be able to apply for money from the fund on March 27. Individuals who want to apply for assistance should call 211 or go to NC211.org. An advisory committee of local funders and community institutions working directly with impacted populations will oversee the application process. More specifically, initial funding will benefit disproportionately impacted individuals and families including:

- Residents without health insurance and/or access to paid sick leave
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Healthcare workers
- Hospitality and service industry workers
- Unauthorized immigrant populations
- Communities of color, and in particular, residents with limited English language proficiency

Additional phases of future funding will be developed by evaluating the funds available, community needs, and government response.

The City's matching funds will be provided from unallocated bond money for economic development that voters approved in 2014 and 2018. The bond orders for these bonds allow for economic development grants and other uses to support the local economy. The \$1 million pledged by the City will not be allocated from any existing authorized economic development project.

The City's agreement with United Way of Forsyth County and The Winston-Salem Foundation will require monthly reports on the disbursement of the funds, including information about the agencies receiving the funds, the specific programs employed to provide assistance, and demographic data (i.e., race, gender, age, and residency) of the individuals receiving support through these agencies and their programs. The reporting requirements also will include monthly financial reports, detailing the revenues and expenditures of the COVID-19 Response Fund for Forsyth County.

The attached resolution authorizes a contribution of \$1 million to the COVID-19 Response Fund for Forsyth County as a matching grant and authorizes the City to enter into an agreement with United Way of Forsyth County and The Winston-Salem Foundation to administer the City's funds. This Council Action also includes an amendment to the FY 2019-2020 project budget ordinance to appropriate uncommitted economic development bond funds for the City's contribution.

More information about the COVID-19 Response Fund for Forsyth County is available on The Winston-Salem Foundation's website, WSFoundation.org, and at COVID19Forsyth.org.