

**VANDERBURGH COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
April 7, 2021**

The Vanderburgh County Board of Commissioners met in special session this 7<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021 at 11:34 a.m. in the Aiken Theater of the Old National Events Plaza. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Vanderburgh County's Road to Recovery Committee and Vanderburgh County's \$35 million allocation from the American Rescue Plan Act.

**Call to Order**

Commissioner Shoulders: We're going to go ahead and start. We are meeting here today due to a community commitment in another room. That's why the change here. I wanted to welcome you to our second of four Vanderburgh County Road to Recovery Committee meetings. Today is April 7, 2021, approximately 11:30 a.m.

**Attendance Roll Call**

Commissioner Shoulders: On that note, Madelyn, could you please take the roll?

Madelyn Grayson: Commissioner Shoulders?

Commissioner Shoulders: Here.

Madelyn Grayson: Commissioner Musgrave?

Commissioner Musgrave: Here.

Madelyn Grayson: Commissioner Hatfield?

Commissioner Hatfield: Here.

Madelyn Grayson: Councilmember Montrastelle?

Councilmember Montrastelle: Here.

Madelyn Grayson: Councilmember Terry?

Councilmember Terry: Here.

Madelyn Grayson: Councilmember Goebel?

Councilmember Goebel: (No response) <sup>1</sup>

Madelyn Grayson: Councilmember Raben? Councilmember Hahn?

Councilmember Hahn: Here.

Madelyn Grayson: Councilmember Shetler?

Councilmember Shetler: Here.

Madelyn Grayson: Councilmember Kiefer? Auditor, Brian Gerth?

Brian Gerth: (No response)<sup>2</sup>

Madelyn Grayson: Eric Williams?

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<sup>1</sup> Joined the meeting by WebEx shortly after roll call.

<sup>2</sup> Microphone was muted. Auditor, Brian Gerth was present by phone.

Eric Williams: Present.

Madelyn Grayson: Greg Wathen?

Greg Wathen: Present.

Madelyn Grayson: County Attorney, David Jones?

David Jones: Present.

Commissioner Musgrave: And, Tara Barney.

Madelyn Grayson: Oh, Tara Barney?

Tara Barney: (No response).<sup>3</sup>

Madelyn Grayson: Tara, are you on?

Commissioner Shoulders: Okay, and if anyone else joins us late, please let us know that you are present or in attendance.

### Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Shoulders: On that note, if you could join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(The Pledge of Allegiance was given.)

Commissioner Shoulders: Thank you, and thank you all again for being here. It looks like a decent size crowd.

### American Rescue Plan Act Update

Commissioner Shoulders: We're going to jump right in here, and we had a meeting about ten days ago, but since then we've added, probably doubled our committee in size; all three County Commissioners; all seven County Councilmembers; former Sheriff, Eric Williams; County Auditor, Brian Gerth; Greg Wathen with the Economic Development Coalition; and Tara Barney, the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce. So, on that note, I ask our County Attorney, David Jones, to provide not only a new business update, but kind of reiterate a little bit about our update from the first time, probably not quite as in length as last time, but if you could give us kind of the bullet points of what we discussed last time and any new updates from the ARPA plan, please.

David Jones: The, of the \$1.9 trillion package that came in the form of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, \$65.1 billion was allocated directly to counties in the United States. The allocation of the county share is based upon pro-rata population. Vanderburgh County's share of \$35 million—

Councilmember Shetler: I'm not getting any sound, Ben. I don't know if anybody else online is or not, but I'm not getting sound this time.

Councilmember Montrastelle: I'm not either.

Commissioner Shoulders: Okay, could you hear me initially?

Councilmember Shetler: I can hear you.

Commissioner Shoulders: Okay, you couldn't hear David?

Councilmember Shetler: I can hear you fine.

Commissioner Shoulders: Here, why don't we just, here, Dave, why don't we switch mics.

David Jones: Is that good?

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<sup>3</sup> Joined the meeting by WebEx at 11:54 a.m.

Councilmember Shetler: Yes, I can hear you.

David Jones: Okay, I'll just briefly recap. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 allocated \$65.1 billion in recovery aid directly to counties in the United States. The allocation is based upon the pro-rata share of population the county has to the entire, the country's population. Vanderburgh County's share is \$35,191,304, which will be payable in two equal installments, the first by May 10<sup>th</sup> of this year, and the second by 2022, March 11<sup>th</sup>. The funds are distributed by the U.S. Treasury, directly to the county. All funds must be spent by December 31, 2024. And, what we basically know is, that Section 603 of the Act, which is referred to as the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund, provides four broad guidelines; counties shall only use the funds provided under a payment made under this section to cover costs incurred by the county by December 31, 2024; (a) to respond to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus disease, COVID-19, or its negative impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses and non-profits or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel and hospitality; the second category, (b) to respond to workers performing essential work during COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers of the county that are performing such essential work or providing grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who perform essential work; (c) for the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction of revenue due to COVID-19 public health emergency relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year of the county, prior to the emergency; or, (d) to make necessary investments in water, sewer or broadband infrastructure. That's taken directly out of Section 603 of the Act, and that's basically all the information that we have at this time. There's no further detail, there's no further explanation. It's our understanding that the White House has charged the Treasury Department with providing guidance, which in effect should flush out more meaning, more definition to this Act. Checking, as we do daily, this morning there was still no further update or guidance that had been issued by the Treasury Department. I can also advise those that are here that in the Act itself, as indicated the total package was \$1.9 trillion. So, that there is money beyond the \$65.1 billion that's allocated to the counties for those four categories. One of the things to remember specifically is that any monies that aren't spent in accordance with the Act, or spent for something not qualified, will require it to be repaid by the county to the Federal government, which is another reason why caution and care must be exercised in determining the expenditure of these funds. The Bill itself has some very broad areas that allocate these additional monies besides the money that's coming to the county. I think it's helpful for all of the individuals, organization and entities that are interested in this to be aware that there are other sources of monies that may fit their particular needs or particular programs. I would urge folks that are interested in this to look at the detail of the Bill itself. For instance, I will just give the same highlights that I gave previously. In Subtitle B, which is labeled Nutrition, Section 1101 is Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; 1102 Additional Assistance for the SNAP Online Purchasing and Technology Improvements; 1103 Additional Funding for Nutrition Assistance Programs; Section 1104, Commodities Supplemental Food Program; Section 1105, Improvements to the WIC Benefits; 1106, WIC Program Modernization; 1107, Meals and Supplement Reimbursements for Individuals who Have Not Obtained the Age of 25; 1108 the Pandemic EBT Program. Under Title II, which is Committee on Health Education and Labor and Pensions, Subtitle A has Education matters and then various allocations that range from specific universities to the National Endowment for the Arts and so forth. Subtitle D covers Public Health and basically funding related to vaccines, testing, contact tracing and so forth. Subtitle G, Public Health Investments; Section 2601, Funding for Community Health Center and Community Care. Subtitle H, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder; Section 2701, Funding for Block Grants for Community Health Services; Section 2702, Funding for Block Grants for Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse; 2703, Funding for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Training for Health Care Professionals and Public Safety Officers; 2704, Funding for Education and Awareness Campaigning Encouraging Health Work Conditions and Use of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services; 2705, Funding for Grants for Health Care Providers to Promote Mental Health Among the Health Professional Workforce; 2706, Funding for Community-based Funding for Local Substance Use Disorder Services; 2707, Funding for Community-based Funding for Local Behavioral Needs, Health Needs; 2708, Funding for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network; 2709, Funding for Project

AWARE; 2710, Funding for Youth Suicide Prevention; 2711, Funding for Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training; 2712, Funding for Pediatric Mental Health Care Access; 2713, Funding for Expansion Grants for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics. I'm skipping through Exchange Grant Programs, Assistance to Rail Workers, Rate Payer Protections. Title III, Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs. Subtitle B are the housing provisions. Section 3201, Emergency Rental Assistance; 3202, Emergency Housing Vouchers; 3203, Emergency Assistance for Rural Housing; 3204, Housing Counseling; 3205, Homelessness Assistance and Supportive Services Programs; 3206, Homeowner Assistance Fund; 3207, Relief Measures for Section 502 and 504 Direct Loan Borrowers, and 3208 Fair Housing Activities. Subtitle C relates to Small Businesses.

Commissioner Musgrave: Mr. Jones? I know that you probably have a couple more to read off, but I want to make sure that I understand that all that long list of various abilities to fund, that none of that is fundable through the grant that we have to disperse. In other words, those are separate funds? Is that correct?

David Jones: Those are all separate allocations.

Commissioner Musgrave: Okay, and we are not the "go to" in order to apply for that?

David Jones: I'm sorry, we are not to—

Commissioner Musgrave: The "go to", to apply for that money?

David Jones: No, no.

Commissioner Musgrave: Right.

David Jones: That's why anybody interested in any of those categories needs to actually go to that Act. It's my belief that what will happen is, that the way the Bill was structured that it will go from various federal departments, down through State agencies that are applicable. Because these things are categorized by Department of Agriculture, Forestry, Department of Education, Department of Labor, Public Health and so forth. And, so, I think it will flow much as the Payroll Protection Program Funds did, and, you know, various others. Oh, and I would just basically say, there is no update. We checked this morning and we have no further indication of anything from the Treasury Department.

Commissioner Shoulders: So, David, thank you. I was hoping we would have a new update, in addition to the update from our initial meeting from last time. What we didn't do last time, and we will do today, after committee comments and committee, you know, provided statements or what have you, is open up for public comment. We have quite a few who have signed up to speak, and that's wonderful and we appreciate you taking time. We tried to vary these committee meetings up, the first two being in the morning, the second two being in the afternoon for schedule and so forth. Because we've doubled this in size, from seven to 14, I want to now open it up for some comments, and in interest of time, you know, we want to keep them, you know, as short as possible, but also as important as possible. So, the floor is the committee's right now, before we go to public comment.

<b>Committee Member Comments</b>
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Commissioner Shoulders: Any committee members have anything? Again, wanted to circle back with the update, from last time, and do not have any new information right now. Hopefully, our next meeting we will.

Councilmember Montrastelle: Yeah, Ben, this is John.

Commissioner Shoulders: Yes.

Councilmember Montrastelle: John Montrastelle. So, I know that our next meeting is scheduled for April the 21<sup>st</sup>, but maybe we should be a little more flexible in that since we don't have the guardrails on the specifics of what we can spend the money on. It would be real beneficial if we (Inaudible), because that is when the rubber would meet the road and we can talk specifics on what we can and can't do. Maybe that next, our next meeting

can kind of coincide with when we have the prose. This is just a thought, you know, to throw that out for discussion. Thank you.

Commissioner Shoulders: I think the point is valid, John.

Greg Wathen: Mr. Chairman? Commissioner? Greg Wathen with the new Evansville Regional Economic Partnership, and Tara Barney is on as my Co-CEO for that as well. If we can just share with you briefly, as you're looking at this, some of the experiences that we had, personally, with the Regional Cities Initiative. In particular is that we had very specific criteria which we hoped that the State, or I should say the Federal government will give to us, but the greatest challenge we had was managing expectations. We had, in that process, more than a hundred ideas that people came to us that wanted to receive funding. And, based upon the criteria, some of those were going to shake out. Not that they weren't laudable ideas, but they didn't fit the programs, as much what David Jones was saying, there is a lot of Federal funding coming down the pike, and does it fit with this particular category? And in particular, having some very, I might suggest, some very specific goals and objectives and what you want to achieve and how impactful you want these dollars to be, will help guide as to what you may consider for funding in the near future.

Commissioner Shoulders: Really good points, Greg. Thank you. I believe, I wanted to interject here, this is Ben again, that Brian Gerth has now joined us on the phone, and I believe I see Tara Barney on here as well. So, thank you, Tara, for joining, I know you had a meeting in conjunction with this one. Thanks for making time, and, Brian, thanks for joining us. So, I did want to add those into the minutes here, that those two committee members are now with us today. Any other committee member comments right now?

Councilmember Terry: Commissioner Shoulders, just a question. Since we do need to review community input, is there a formalized way that we can do that? Whether it's creating, you know, a one-page, this is what information we hope to see and need to see from them, so that we can fully vet kind of some of the ideas that will be shared with us?

Commissioner Shoulders: Yeah, that's a brilliant idea, and, so, I want to get with David here after today, after we open it up for public comment with some folks that are here. And, between now and April 21<sup>st</sup>, well before April 21<sup>st</sup>, I would like to see us put together kind of a one-page, two tops, of not only the four criteria or guidelines, if you will, but, more specifically, how this fits into the allocation to the county, in a much more streamlined fashion, not a 691-page fashion. So, David, you and I will get together here ASAP and try to work on that, and send it out to the committee to review, to peruse, to go over and so forth. I think that's a really good idea, Stephanie, because, I don't know about you, but I haven't read the 691-page Bill, but I'm just saying that we would much rather put that together.

Commissioner Musgrave: Can I make a comment?

Commissioner Shoulders: Yeah, go ahead, sure.

Commissioner Musgrave: Councilor Terry, I'm not certain that this allocation to the county allows community groups to even receive funding beyond the four bullet points, but I do see, as our attorney has outlined, that many other parts of the Bill does have funding for some of the things that have been suggested to us. What I think we need to have is an ombudsman or someone that can help these groups and these needs reach the part of the Bill that does provide funding. I think it's a very confusing Federal world out there, and if in some Subsection D of somewhere there's actually funding made available for a purpose that's been brought to our attention, I think we should try very hard to connect folks with that funding. I think we're going to need more administrative help, as we move forward. So, one of the things I'm going to ask for, as time goes on, if the Treasury will let us, this is one of the exact questions that's pending before them, I'm going to ask if we can hire someone to help us be that ombudsman. I just wanted to add that.

Commissioner Shoulders: Commissioner Musgrave, do you mean like a consultant or—

Commissioner Musgrave: An ombudsman or a staff person.

Commissioner Shoulders: A staff person, internal.

Commissioner Musgrave: I don't want it to be a new county employee.

Commissioner Shoulders: Right.

Commissioner Musgrave: I just want to make that clear.

Commissioner Shoulders: You mean a current, internal staff or employee?

Commissioner Musgrave: To help administer these funds exactly, and to help community groups reach the funding that's in the rest of the Bill that doesn't, that didn't come to our line item.

Commissioner Shoulders: Okay. We will put that in the—

Councilmember Terry: And, I want to specifically talk about those groups that will, that do qualify under this, because it does clearly say non-profits or (Inaudible) impacted industries such as tourism, travel and hospitality. So, there are some that would have some proposal, I think, definitely from that area. But, I do agree, there should be somebody, as an advisory committee, we should be assisting organizations to make sure that they get plugged into those Federal dollars, because, you know, ultimately what we desire is for the entire community to benefit from these resources. So, I agree.

Commissioner Shoulders: And, President Montrastelle, you're on here still, right? I know that you, Council meets this afternoon, and I know that a few weeks back, I think it was our most recent meeting, but maybe not, a few weeks back when this was first launched and we were so fortunate to receive, potentially receive this money, that the Commissioners made suggestions before we had created the committee. So, you know, didn't know if you guys were going through that today. You don't need to answer that, but we're all ears and that's why we're having public comment, that's why we're working with Council on this, that's why we're working with so many folks that are taking time to be on this committee. So, you know, if that's in a discussion today, I look forward to—

Councilmember Montrastelle: Yeah, we're just going to briefly discuss it today. But, your, you started off with a list, you and your fellow Commissioners, and it's a good list. It's a starting point. That's what we need to see, first identify our needs as a county, what we think this money can be spent on, and, yeah, so we have to start somewhere and you provided a nice starting point. Back to the requirements, somebody brought up, you know, I've got this, our Auditor, Brian, I think is on the phone with us now, Brian Gerth, he's provided me just these, it's a one-pager on, you know, because it is a very deep Bill on what the requirements are, as far as the funds. It's generalities, but maybe if everybody could get copies of that, it may be helpful.

Commissioner Shoulders: I would love to see that, you know, outside of this meeting that would be great. If we don't have, and I don't want to rush our time by any means, but if we don't have anymore comments by the committee members, I would love to open it up to our public comment, because I think we have, at least I show six speakers here to speak. But, one more time, any other committee member comments?

Greg Wathen: Just, Commissioner Shoulders, we've had some experience, especially with our organization in particular with E-REP, we'd be more than happy to help serve that role of the ombudsman side of it, just primarily because of managing expectations, managing all the potential projects, it can be quite daunting. We would be more than happy to assist.

Commissioner Musgrave: Thank you.

Commissioner Shoulders: That's really nice of you to offer up, Greg, thank you. And, you know, fingers crossed, folks that we have at least one, if not many updates from, you know, whether it's the Treasury, whether it's the State Board of Accounts, whether it's the IFA, you know, whatever it is between now and the 21<sup>st</sup>, and, like John said, we'll be nimble on this. We'll want to, we don't want to waste everybody's time, but we're confident we'll get some sort of update in the next two weeks. I would think that we will. So, you know, again, if any, unless a committee member has another comment, I would like to

start the public comment here. I'm going to go in the order that they signed up here. Apologies if I mispronounce....pardon me?

Jill Hahn: May I say a few words?

Commissioner Shoulders: Sure, please.

Jill Hahn: This is Jill Hahn for others that aren't viewing. It seems like the COVID crisis obviously put our city in a disadvantage with impact. Do we know where, whether it's tourism dollars, behavioral health, do we know where we did not generate revenue? You know, where we lost money that we could put this money towards helping these various facilities and these various organizations?

Commissioner Shoulders: I mean, Brian, feel free to jump in, but, to me that's, and that's a great question, Jill, but I would think that's kind of a broad question, because there's a lot of county offices, there's a lot of, you know, tourism offices, there's a lot of folks who, do we know where? I guess I could say we could look at how any office, or most offices and show the lost revenue, year over year, or especially quarter over quarter. So, we can provide you that list, but as we went through our suggestions, as John alluded to, as the Commissioners, some of our suggestions were some of the offices that really lost revenue, such as the County Coroner's Office.

Commissioner Musgrave: Not the Coroner.

Commissioner Shoulders: Or, not the Coroner, which, I don't remember which one was—

Commissioner Musgrave: Road and Streets Funds, we listed—

Commissioner Shoulders: Well, sure, but I was.....yeah, Road and Street Funds, I mean, there were a lot of, as a percentage of their revenue that were lost, but we can definitely provide that to you, Jill, because—

Commissioner Musgrave: And, I would also like to ask Brian Gerth to examine all the funds and report to the committee at our next meeting, whenever that is, with a full list of those shortfalls.

Commissioner Shoulders: That's a good idea. Yeah, Brian, that would be great if you could do that.

Councilmember Shetler: You know when you start looking at those numbers, it makes a difference if you're looking at top line revenue, or if you're looking at the bottom line.

Commissioner Shoulders: Yeah.

Councilmember Shetler: A good example of that is Burdette Park. You know, obviously, we didn't have any activity, but we also didn't have any expenses. So, we didn't incur the expenses that we typically do and we didn't lose the three or \$400,000 we might, we lost \$100,000 or so. So, you know, you have to look at the whole picture (Inaudible. Audio feedback.)

Commissioner Shoulders: That's a really good point.

Commissioner Musgrave: Councilor Shetler, I would like to point out that the Bill does not ask you to deduct the expenses that you might have had. It just asks you for lost revenue.

Councilmember Shetler: Yeah, I'm not debating the point, I'm just saying it's important to look at the whole picture (Inaudible), bringing that point out.

Commissioner Shoulders: You just mean, because, yeah, because the park, you know, wasn't open, so thus, and some of the county offices were open, and, yeah, no, I see both sides, I see that point for sure. It's a valid point. Okay, any other comments from the committee members.

Councilmember Shetler: I guess I do have a question—

Commissioner Shoulders: Sure.

Councilmember Shetler: -- of David for just a second. I know this is really a shot in the dark, but we experienced somewhat on the PPP Program, I don't know, I have no idea to keep track of, and couldn't have kept track of, but there were probably 20-30-40 updates that came out during the course of the year, once it was (Inaudible) the first stimulus package. And, even today there are still changes that are happening. Do we, you know, anticipate that there's going to end up being that same scenario here? Because I really would hate to get the county into a situation where we follow the current guidelines, we end up in a situation where the guidelines change and end up with a project that isn't really qualified underneath the present guidelines at the time, and we have a problem. (Inaudible. Audio feedback.) money for it, which is what some businesses are having to do today. So, (Inaudible. Audio feedback.) I don't know if there's things that have been put in here to keep that from happening that weren't put into the first one or not.

David Jones: I wish I could answer. I wish I could answer that, Tom.

Councilmember Shetler: Boy, I do too.

David Jones: You know, all I know is what I read or when I turn on the news what's coming out of Washington. Who, you know, who knows? I would think, however, that to the extent that this affects units of government, in that this is going to be like pouring money, or pouring water on a desert sand. It's going to go quick. I don't see that you're going to be able to take this off into the future over a period of months and start changing requirements and eligibility. I think there's, you know, State and local government organizations, you know, the Association of, the National Association of Counties, for instance, pushed a very thorough letter on Treasury, pointing out the flaws and shortcomings of this Act, and asking for clarification and guidance. So, there's a lot of built-in, ready to go push back if that sort of thing were to happen. So, I really think that, in all likelihood, that that's not going to be the case.

Commissioner Shoulders: Brian, it sounded like you were wanting to say something here. I thought I heard you commenting.

Brian Gerth: I'm trying to. I keep getting muted on the phone. Can you hear me now?

Commissioner Shoulders: Yes.

Brian Gerth: You can?

Commissioner Shoulders: Yes, we can hear you, yes.

Brian Gerth: I was just going to say, I mean, I've started looking at some of the revenue streams. You know, clearly the Highway and Local Roads and Streets are monies that were lost, and we can compare that from '19 to '20 to come up with a number. You know, the Highway's about \$237,000 and the Local Roads and Street Fund is about \$56,000. You know, we lost, we do know we lost about a couple hundred thousand in the Riverboat Fund, and Innkeepers is another one that we're looking at, which that, you know, that helps fund the CVB and it also handles the, I guess, the deficit from the Old National Events Plaza. But, those are the things that I've targeted already. You know, I know there's other tourism types of revenue streams, but if they don't run through the county, I won't have those types of information. You know, like, and I understand where Tom's coming from with Burdette. I would like to see more directive, what is required from us. The State Board is going to require us to have a, you know, basically, we're going to have to have proof of what the loss was. You know, I'm kind of guesstimating at this point, but the big one is going to be Local Income Tax. You know, whether that qualifies or not, and, you know, we're going to see that loss next year for 2022's budget, and we'll know those estimates sometime in August. And, then, I'm not quite sure yet, you know, again, I would like to see what kind of clarification we're going to get from, you know, whether it's the Treasury or the State Board, but those are the ones that I've already identified at this point.

Commissioner Shoulders: Really good points.



Commissioner Musgrave: Can I ask the Auditor to, maybe you shouldn't do this right away, because it's a little bit unclear, but I know that many offices charge fees, fees in terms of copying, Clerk's fees for filings, if they ultimately allow us to recapture the fees that we didn't get, you know, an estimate of those, I would like those to be included as well.

Brian Gerth: Well, I agree with you there, in that, I think that's what's really unknown, as if that is going to qualify. I mean, I looked at a couple, like the Treatment Court and Work Release User Fees, because I now with the courts being shut down last year, they weren't able to do those services. Now, will it be as detailed as going down to copy fees and those types, I mean, we don't know yet, and that would be pretty tedious to come up with a number on those types of things. But, you know, for me, I'm just looking for more clarification on what can be and we'll absolutely identify those avenues.

David Jones: Brian?

Brian Gerth: Yes?

David Jones: As I read both this Act and the memo and directive from the State Board of Accounts, the loss is determined by taking the amount that we would actually have gotten in a revenue fund and comparing it to the baseline of 2019 fiscal year, and if it's less than 2019, then that amount that it's less is our actual loss. Is that how you read that?

Brian Gerth: That's how I read it. So, what I've started to do is, like basically what have we, I just, in my spreadsheet I've got 2019 revenue numbers and I'm showing what 2020's were, and then what the shortfall is. You know, I think the Local Income Tax dollars, and when I say that, I'm talking about COIT and the Public Safety money, you know, that's basically collected on a fiscal cycle. So, what's collected through June 30<sup>th</sup> of this year will be what's distributed for next year. So, I think that's going to look a little bit different compared to say the Fuel Tax money. You know, but, we can get there for sure, it's just, you know, identifying what we're going to need to prove our shortfall, but we can get there.

Councilmember Goebel: Brian, this is Mike Goebel. Concerning the loss of funds and tax dollars from LOIT, COIT and everything else, we won't really know that until the end of the year, is that correct? Or November?

Brian Gerth: We'll have...for COIT and Public Safety we'll have preliminary estimates in August, and I'm guessing about the first week of August. That will be our projections for next year. They don't finalize them until November, but that's usually if we make some kind of change to our rate locally. So, if we went, you know, so hypothetically if we don't change our rate locally, what we receive in August we'll know what it will be next year. But, if we have plans of changing that rate, then, obviously, that's going to change our figures.

Councilmember Goebel: Well, you know, Tom Shetler mentioned earlier the Burdette Park situation, do we know that already, compared to what we're going to find out about local taxes?

Brian Gerth: You know, I've looked at their revenue as far as what they've brought in, you know, for like the pool or the chalets, the cabins and those kinds of things, so I have numbers associated to that. Again, that's just the revenue side. You know, I would probably want to confirm, kind of go through that with Jerry too, just to kind of confirm and make sure that we're on the same page. But, yeah, you know, like the Float Stand is about \$154,000, well, that was pretty easy to figure because the pool didn't open last year, you know, but then you start talking about their rentals, you know, and they had a lot of cancellations last year, you know, due to COVID. So, that's what I would like to nail down with Jerry a little bit.

Councilmember Goebel: Well, my only thought is we don't want to over-commit the spending of the funds until we know how much revenue we're not going to be receiving, and that's going to take a while. I know we need clarification, so that's really all I've got to say. Thank you.

Commissioner Shoulders: Good point, Mike, and thanks for joining us, Councilman Mike Goebel is with us as well today.

**Public Comment**

Commissioner Shoulders: On that note, we probably should shift to public comment. We have six signed up, and I know it's already 12:15, so I'm going to start in the order that was, that folks signed up. And, apologies if I mispronounce your name here. Mr. Jerome, it looks like Ekelly, Ekele? And, again, apologies if I mispronounced. Your name, your address and your subject, sir.

Jerome Echele: Yes, my name is Jerome Echele. My address is 4220 Bromm Road in Evansville, and I also have a second address, property with my son at 600 Oakley Street in Evansville. My topic or my subject for you to consider is in regard to the Evansville Care Center facility. I am a member of All Saints Catholic Parish and a member of Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment, CAJE. I thank you for your attention, and I thank you for listening to what I have to say. I wanted to share some information that I think you will find useful, as you decide how to wisely spend the American Rescue Plan funds our community will receive. About a month ago the Vanderburgh County Coroner reported eight suicides so far in 2021. I believe there have been a few more since then. Six of the eight had prior suicide attempts. The 2020 report shows that 39 people took their lives. Of the 39, 24 had a history of depression; 14 a history of drug and alcohol abuse; and 19 spoke of suicide before their deaths. These reports drive home the urgent need for crisis intervention and jail diversion support, and we need action now on this issue in our community. The Evansville Care Center facility is, right now, today, available to provide professional behavioral healthcare services. We suggest that you allocate one million dollars of the Rescue Plan funds for the Evansville Care Center, to provide for operation and staff funding, so that the doors can finally open and our neighbors can receive the help and care they need. They are our neighbors, they are your constituents, the collective health and quality of life of our community is at stake. That's my prepared remarks. I just want to make a quick comment, and I respect and understand the complexity of managing this opportunity of receiving Federal funds, and we at CAJE are very supportive and understanding of that situation, and we appreciate the comment from the Councilperson that we should, that you should try to connect with us to understand the funding issues. And, I also suggest that it is part of your responsibility to interpret, through your legal support, whether or not this suggestion of spending the funds is within the limits of the Act. I heard you mention (Inaudible) health, and I heard you mention mental healthcare several times in your litany of entitlements. It seems to us that funding the Evansville Care Center facility would fit in that category.

Commissioner Shoulders: Well, Jerome, thank you so much.

Jerome Echele: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Shoulders: Yes, and I failed to mention this to others, and you were right on spot, so, right on target, so thanks, but we're limiting these to, at most, three minutes per speaker, due to our time, because it's already 20 after 12:00. So, Jerome, thank you again. We will certainly make note of this, and really appreciate you taking time and attention to this. Next, we have Kylie Devries. Kylie, is Kylie here? Okay. And, again, folks if you, it looks like at least four of the six are here for the Evansville Care Center. And, I sincerely, sincerely appreciate your passion, but we also want to be cognizant of everyone's time. So, if you could speak to additional bullet points about the Care Center, and not necessarily repetitive ones, that would be really helpful. So, a time limit of three minutes please. The floor is yours.

Kylie Devries: Hi, my name is Kylie and I'm here today to ask about the Road to Recovery meeting, to use some of the Federal COVID relief money to help get the Evansville Care Center up and running. I wanted to share a few words as to why it's important to me. On March 20<sup>th</sup> of last year, I was taking a nap when I heard my mom screaming for me to call 911. I came downstairs to see her struggling to keep my 29-year-old brother from cutting himself with a kitchen knife. My brother has bipolar disorder, and had been doing well for about ten years. But, because of life changes and probably the pandemic, I saw him become depressed, anxious and paranoid. My parents could not take him anywhere for

help because he was not a danger to himself or others. But, that day in March when I called 911, I begged them not to hurt him. I told her that he wouldn't hurt anybody. Three cops marched into our house and told my brother to drop the knife. One of them drew their gun and the other tased my brother twice. After they handcuffed him, they told us they were taking him to the hospital. When I saw my brother laying in the floor I thought he was dead. If the Evansville Care Center had been opened last March, my mom probably would have convinced my brother to go see somebody there. Maybe the Evansville Care Center could have helped adjust his medications. Maybe it would have helped him deal with depression. Now he has medical bills that insurance won't pay for. Maybe if he had gotten the help he needed he would not have flashbacks from what happened last March. Maybe I (Inaudible) heard and saw. You have a chance to help people by putting a portion of the COVID money relief to the Evansville Care Center to help the Evansville Care Center open. Please do it. I'll be 17 in a few months. I and a lot of my friends care about these problems. We can vote in the next election.

Commissioner Shoulders: Kylie, thank you so much.

(Applause)

Commissioner Shoulders: Absolutely. Thank you very much for being here, and your time and attention as well. Next, I have Mike, again, apologies, it looks like Scvuzzo. Mike is heading up to the microphone, for those of you on Zoom. It looks like he is speaking about the jail diversion Care Center.

Mike Scvuzzo: Good afternoon. My name is Mike Scvuzzo. My address is 400 Kings Valley Road in Evansville. I'm a member of Holy Redeemer Catholic Church and also a member of Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment, CAJE. I've been a member of CAJE for 12 plus years. Five years ago, I traveled with a couple other CAJE members and some other people from Indiana to San Antonio, Texas to take a look at their novel idea for jail overcrowding, jail diversion. When we got there they were already five years into their program. Not only did they reduce jail overcrowding, but they were able to save their community \$10 million. As of three weeks ago, our jail had 600 under roof. Under a roof that was designed to hold 512 inmates. Another 112 inmates are diverted to jails in surrounding counties at a cost of \$35 per inmate per day, which amounts to \$1.5 million and change a year. The Sheriff's Department, as well as other officials are on record as saying that they believe 30 plus percent of the inmates in our jail suffers some form of mental problems. Now, certainly not all 30 percent would qualify for jail diversion, only those that are non-violent and non-felons. But, if it's only ten percent, you're looking at saving a million dollars a year. Where would you divert them too? Well, the United Caring Services has a plan in place for that, but they're looking for funding. Who benefits from jail diversion? Well, certainly the citizens that are suffering some form of mental illness that are non-violent and non-felons would. Certainly, the county would, and would have the potential of saving millions of dollars. Certainly, the taxpayers would, and certainly the jail would. The United States government said for 2020 the average number of incarcerations for every 100,000 people in the United States is 655 individuals. In Indiana it's 723. Vanderburgh County has the highest rate per capita of incarcerations in the State. Higher than Indianapolis, Ft. Wayne, South Bend, Bloomington. It's been said that Evansville, since (Inaudible), a crime corridor, I believe is the term. Okay, I'm going to finish up. Who benefits from the jail diversion? Certainly, let's have (Inaudible), let's reduce jail overcrowding, let's make these visitors from these out-of-state areas, coming in to our community to create crimes a place to stay. Thank you.

Commissioner Shoulders: Mike, thank you so much. Thank you for your time and attention as well.

(Applause)

Commissioner Shoulders: It looks like next on the list we have Reverend Adrian Brooks with us today. I believe Reverend Adrian Brooks is here with us today. Reverend, your name, address and subject please.

Adrian Brooks: Adrian Brooks, I live at 1401 East Park Drive here in Evansville, Indiana. I just want to simply just have some general comments about how we might distribute, at some point, these funds, and how it is my hope and prayer that, as you consider these distributions that you will make sure that they include all sectors of the community in terms of their impact. I also would like to encourage you to look at those programs that perhaps you have funded, but have not adequately funded within our community, and look at this as an opportunity for you to adequately fund some initiatives that we have previously not funded because of lack of revenues, or declining revenues. And, I would also caution you not to allow organizations to distribute or to screen potential funding opportunities that do not have diversity. And, so, I want to encourage you to make sure that all of our citizenry is represented at the table. It's good to see our County Councilperson, Stephanie Terry, and others who are here, but I think it's important that our total community have an opportunity to benefit from the distribution of these funds. And, then, I also want to, I've seen some feedback from some of the trade associations and organizations that we belong to, as they too are waiting, like counselor Jones, to get further clarity on utilization of these funds, one of the initiatives that's been tossed about is emphasis on perhaps doing direct cash assistance to the local citizenry by providing local level stimulus checks to those who live within the county. So, I toss that one out. That's a nice grenade to toss out, so I thought I would toss that one out, and then I'm going to stop. And, I want to encourage you to certainly look at initiatives that you have not been able to fund because of the decline in revenue in our city. I'm hoping and praying that that will include an enhancement of any of our parks, our housing trust funds, our youth services and in particular mental health services. I don't think that the half has been told, in terms of the impact, that the pandemic has had on the mental health of so many of our citizens, especially our most vulnerable, which are our youth. So, I want to encourage you to use this unique time that we have to really have a major impact on a lot of people in our community who previously have not been able to participate in reaching full potential as a community.

Commissioner Shoulders: Reverend Brooks, thank you so much, and it's interesting that you mention that, because I read an article this morning, I think it was actually in one of our local outlets as well, that said one in three COVID survivors suffered from some sort of brain disease or mental health. So, this past year was very, very hurtful and harmful to many, many people, and continues to be. So, thank you, Reverend Brooks, for being here, for taking the time, for everyone here. Our next two meetings are at 3:00, so not always in the morning, wanted to let you know that, because I know everyone is busy, but couldn't thank you enough for being here.

Adrian Brooks: Let me take my final 15 seconds—

Commissioner Shoulders: Please.

Adrian Brooks: -- to say thank you to the County Commission and to the County Council for allowing us to have this opportunity to speak to you, and thank you for the commitment that you have made to continue to serve in our community, and bless you.

Commissioner Shoulders: And to you, sir. Thank you.

(Applause)

Commissioner Shoulders: Our next speaker signed up here is Linda Henzman. I believe she is speaking about the Care Center.

Linda Henzman: Good afternoon. I'm Linda Henzman. I reside at 310 Hunters Green in Evansville, Indiana. And, like how we like to say at CAJE, I am your neighbor. I have read and heard that an objective of the COVID Relief Fund is to benefit the health and well-being of our country. And since the pandemic has exacerbated mental health issues, and substance abuse issues, the Federal dollars coming to Vanderburgh County would be well spent on the Evansville Care Center. Our Vanderburgh County neighbors will benefit, receiving intervention instead of incarceration. And, the county's budget will benefit through jail diversion cost savings. Don't relegate the Evansville Crisis Center to the leftovers, or to the possibility of other grant funds that are not guaranteed. Put the Evansville Crisis Care Center on the list.

(Applause)

Commissioner Shoulders: Linda, thank you for being here and taking time as well. Next, we have Dr. William Wooten with us today. Dr. Wooten, once you make your way to the stage, your name, your address and your subject please.

Dr. William Wooten: Good morning. I'm Dr. William Wooten. I live at 839 Canterbury Drive in Evansville. And, what was the other question?

Commissioner Shoulders: Your subject.

Dr. William Wooten: My subject?

Commissioner Shoulders: Please.

Dr. William Wooten: I wanted to speak to you to reinforce what some of the others have said here today, but to specifically touch on a couple of subjects that make effective substance abuse prevention and treatment. As some of you know, I've spent a good portion of my life as a volunteer supporting effective prevention in schools through Youth First, an organization that I started in 1998. It's now serving thousands of Vanderburgh County residents, both parents, school staff and students in public, parochial, private schools. Youth First has saved more lives than I ever did as a physician, by reaching kids and families early in the stage of (Inaudible) development and intervening and turning them around to be more productive citizens. The second thing that I wanted to mention is my service on the Mayor's Substance Abuse Task Force since his election, first election, and I've served as Chairman of that Task Force up until January of this year. I still serve as a member. We have a group on the Task Force that has focused on the need for a long-term recovery center in Vanderburgh County, serving Southwestern Indiana, and, hopefully, serving as a pilot for the rest of the State. Some of you may be familiar with the Warm Center in Henderson, a recovery center that is a model program. In Kentucky they have 18 such centers around the State, serving the Department of Corrections and the general public. A very effective program that saves approximately \$2-\$3 for every dollar invested by the State, and it's funded through a blended funding stream. This work group has a business plan, a building need and a need for operational dollars, and as you hear others speak about the significance of substance abuse and mental health issues in this community, those things were increasing before the COVID pandemic hit, and I can promise you they have not lessened at this point in time, and most likely have been aggravated by the pandemic itself. So, if you would consider supporting effective prevention and treatment, and, in particular, from programs like Youth First and the long-term recovery center efforts on the Mayor's Task Force, I would appreciate it.

Commissioner Shoulders: Dr. Wooten, sure will and thank you for taking time and being patient with us here today.

Dr. William Wooten: Thank you.

Commissioner Shoulders: Thank you so much for being here. Last but not least we have—

(Applause)

Commissioner Shoulders: -- last but not least we have Belinda Tinner. Belinda Tinner, it looks like she is speaking about health and wellness. Belinda Tinner is our final speaker here today. You have up to three minutes, Belinda.

Belinda Tinner: Thank you very much. My name is Belinda Tinner, and I live at 866 Sunset Avenue in Evansville, Indiana. I want to speak about, it's more of a recommendation. I enjoy the great outdoors very much. I love recreation, anything outdoors, and I'm thinking the theme I have is quality of life. I know quality of life, we want to focus on safety, but my thought of quality of life is more health and wellness. We have a lot of neighborhood parks, I would like to have money towards the parks and recreation for those neighborhood parks in building sidewalks on those parks with those funds, so our community can walk on sidewalks, get out, enjoy themselves and get good mental

and physical health from that, by walking those parks. It's also a safety issue, we have a lot of toddlers, youth, the elderly who want to get out and enjoy the parks, but because there are no sidewalks, it's hard to do. Given this COVID environment, what better way to get out and enjoy and get, like I said, good physical and mental health from that. I've got a, I'm thinking outside the box here, not sure how Pigeon Creek is part of the Vanderburgh County, but the widening or deepening of the Pigeon Creek so that you can canoe and kayak and paddle board. Not sure how partners in other areas would be able to join forces, but what better way to really enjoy the great outdoors, promote tourism, as well, for this area, and as Stephanie Terry said earlier, we desire for the entire community to benefit from these resources. Thank you.

Commissioner Shoulders: And, thank you, Belinda. And, I think Commissioner Musgrave has a question for you.

Commissioner Musgrave: Thank you very much for your testimony today. You mentioned sidewalks in parks. The County Commissioners have two appointments to the City-County Parks Board, that's not a lot, it is two. Could you tell me which parks specifically need these sidewalks?

Belinda Tinner: Well, because I'm closer to more of the underserved area, I'm thinking Aiken Park, Bellemeade Park, Bayard Park, those areas specifically.

Commissioner Musgrave: So, you were thinking about having sidewalks that go through the park, rather than just around them?

Belinda Tinner: Around the park, as well as through the park, yeah.

Commissioner Musgrave: Okay, alright, thank you.

Commissioner Shoulders: Belinda, thanks so much for being here. And, having three small kids myself, green space is pretty important to me too, sidewalks and everything else. Want to get them out of the house. Well, thank you. I think that's all the speakers we had. I know it's about 12:40, so it's a little past what we had said.

**Reminder of Next Meeting & Adjournment**

Commissioner Shoulders: Our next meeting is April 21<sup>st</sup> at 3:00 here in this building, the Old National Events Plaza. We really hope, and fingers crossed that we'll have some updates with the American Rescue Plan Act. On that note, I ask for an adjournment, or, I guess we're just adjourned. Okay, second. We are adjourned today. We will see you, hopefully, all April 21<sup>st</sup>, a different time, 3:00 and not 11:30. Thank you all for being here. Stay safe.

(The meeting was adjourned at 12:41 p.m.)

**Those in Attendance:**

- |                     |                  |                |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Ben Shoulders       | Cheryl Musgrave  | Jeff Hatfield  |
| John Montrastelle   | Stephanie Terry  | Mike Goebel    |
| Jill Hahn           | Tom Shetler      | Brian Gerth    |
| Eric Williams       | Greg Wathen      | David Jones    |
| Tara Barney         | Madelyn Grayson  | Jerome Echele  |
| Kylie Devries       | Mike Scvuzzo     | Adrian Brooks  |
| Linda Henzman       | William Wooten   | Belinda Tinner |
| Others Unidentified | Members of Media |                |

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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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**Ben Shoulders, President**

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**Jeff Hatfield, Vice President**

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**Cheryl A.W. Musgrave, Member**

(Recorded and transcribed by Madelyn Grayson.)