



Motion to file a Community Impact Statement regarding The City of Los Angeles' inability to file for timely reimbursement from FEMA for Project Roomkey

Agenda Item: -

Date: March 18, 2021

Proposed By: Homelessness Committee

Include motion in Consent Agenda?

Background

On March 5, 2021, the Los Angeles Times had a news article stating that the City of Los Angeles had not, as yet, sought reimbursement for an estimated \$59,000,000 in funds that should be reimbursed to the City of Los Angeles. This article lists several reasons that these funds have not had a reimbursement requested:

- (a) A lack of proper staffing. Initially one clerk was assigned the task. This has now been expanded to three clerks. The CAO told the City Council Budget & Finance Committee last week that more help was needed to prepare these bills.
- (b) The CAO also indicated that FEMA doesn't accept estimates so that the City of Los Angeles is required to document the number of hours of overtime billed by the Los Angeles Fire Department.
- (c) That no requests for reimbursements had as of March 5, 2021 been submitted to FEMA for Project Roomkey
- (d) The City Council and the Mayor have indicated a desire to expand Project Roomkey in the very near future.

There is a fundamental need for humanitarian actions to be undertaken as quickly as possible. That need is not being challenged by this motion. What is being questioned is whether we jump into action assuring our stakeholders that all will come out well in the end and create future failures due to our unwillingness to look at foreseeable consequences to our current actions. Using the existing Project Roomkey as the example we see that:

- This project was the subject of at least 11 separate council files prior to adoption.
- There were 3 separate Chief Administrative Office opinions prior to adoption.
- There was 1 Chief Legislative Office opinion prior to adoption.
- There was 1 opinion from the Office of the City Attorney prior to adoption.

In spite of the wealth of work done before the program was adopted, we still are in the position where we cannot be reimbursed the amount we expect to receive because we are not able to prepare and submit a request to FEMA for reimbursement. If the proposed facts, as laid out in the L.A. Times article, are correct; there is no reason that the City should be in this position.

1. By the time that the program was initially approved, it was clear that the City was going to face a fiscal crisis that would mandate some reductions in staffing. If we chose to do this as a percentage of each department without regard as to which functions actually produce revenue that is our mistake. I

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believe that the CAO should have been able to balance the value of a prompt repayment of over \$50,000,000 to the city as against the cost of one, three or potentially 9 accounting clerks to prepare a bill for FEMA. This was not a place to economize.

2. If there is one function that City Hall should be equipped to handle it is payment of salary and handling of overtime calculations. To blame the lack of a request for reimbursement on our City being unable to calculate LAFD overtime goes beyond reason. If it is an accurate statement, there needs to be a CAO explanation as to why we cannot calculate the amount of overtime and what is being done to remedy this problem.
3. The number of Council Files may be indicative of a hidden problem. I wonder whether the multiplicity of files created a program so diffuse to have been incapable of management as there was never a clear definition as to what the program was and who would be responsible for the oversight of the program.
4. If we acknowledge the problems inherent in the current program, then it should not be expanded until we are comfortable that the problems in the original program have been resolved.

[This motion is not our typical motion. Since the main issue is that of process and not of whether we should encourage the goals and aspirations of Project Roomkey, there is an additional enclosure totaling over 130 pages where the L.A. Times article, the 11 council files and the 5 opinions are included.]

Proposed Motion

The South Robertson Neighborhoods Council moves to file a Community Impact Statement with the City Clerk requesting that within 30 days of filing the C.I.S, the Chief Administrative Officer report back:

1. Whether the appropriate resources have been allocated to resolve our preparing a bill for reimbursement from FEMA.
2. Why the City had difficulties in determining LAFD overtime expenses.
3. Why these problems were not addressed by the 11 council files that preceded Project Roomkey
4. Advise as to what recommendations the CAO is making to be certain that any expansion of Project Roomkey will provide for the City being able to bill for a timely reimbursement of funds from FEMA.

Considerations

Committee review:
(highly recommended)

Votes For:

Against:

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: -0-
(applies to funding motions only)

Arguments for:

Arguments against:

1. The City should not enter in agreements which they are not prepared to administer. 1 None.