



Legislation Text

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CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Adopt the resolution approving the establishment of a disaster relief program in partnership with Loaves and Fishes Community Services

DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office

SUBMITTED BY: Marcie Schatz, Assistant to the City Manager

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

NA

BACKGROUND:

On June 20, 2021, an EF-3 tornado touched down in Naperville and Woodridge. The city completed an after-action report identifying opportunities for improvement within the organization. In addition, staff identified gaps and opportunities for improved collaboration with residents, community organizations, and non-profits to assist in the response to future local disasters. While the city focuses efforts on public safety, damage assessments, utility and infrastructure response, we can better leverage community partners to assist in disaster recovery.

In the days and weeks following the June 2021 tornado, community members sought opportunities to financially contribute to the homeowners directly affected by the tornado. While neighbors and the school community collected gift cards and distributed them to affected families, there was no organized fund that would guarantee that funds would stay local and provide support to affected residents. Many residents and some community groups contributed to the Red Cross, later understanding that these funds do not come directly back to Naperville residents.

Area residents, volunteers and city staff held an open house in December 2021 to better understand the outstanding needs in the community. With the information from the needs assessment, a resident group was formed that sought to partner with a 501(c)(3) to fundraise and secure grants to complete yard and landscape replacement for affected homeowners. After significant effort to find a 501(c)(3) partner, Naperville Tornado Relief Fund (NTRF) was created when the resident group partnered with MP Foundation. NTRF secured state and city funding to complete yard replacement and landscape repair for affected residents.

DISCUSSION:

As part of after-action efforts, the city identified two goals related to disaster recovery funding, identify an entity to manage a donation program that could be quickly activated and ensure the funds stay local. The city evaluated three potential options:

1. *Create a city-managed disaster recovery 501(c)(3)* - Staff does not recommend this option

due to the lack of expertise and resources required in establishing, managing and maintaining a 501(c)(3).

2. *Take no action now and seek partners depending on the type of disaster-* There are multiple types of disasters, natural and manmade, that could affect the community. Depending on the type of disaster, some organizations may be better aligned with the work of disaster recovery. While this response addresses keeping the funds local, it would not address the goal of providing a location for people to donate in the days and weeks after the disaster
3. *Partner with a local non-profit-* Staff recommends partnering with a local non-profit who has the expertise and resources in managing a 501(c)(3). This would accomplish both goals of identifying an entity to manage a donation program that could be quickly activated and ensure the funds stay local.

Recommendation:

The City approached Loaves and Fishes as a potential non-profit partner in this effort due to the scope of services provided by Loaves and Fishes. Loaves and Fishes has successfully administered the city's utility assistance program since 2021. The attached agreement reflects the needs of both the City and Loaves and Fishes, as an established non-profit, to create and manage a local disaster relief program, if needed.

The attached agreement allows the City and Loaves and Fishes to collaborate in the creation of a disaster relief program limited to funding basic needs including food, housing and counseling.

- The City and Loaves and Fishes would jointly determine whether a disaster activates the program and the period of time that the fund will exist.
- The City and Loaves and Fishes would jointly determine income guidelines, amounts of assistance, duration of assistance and other program parameters as needed.
- Loaves and Fishes will manage and administer the disaster relief program and its funding including receiving, depositing, managing and providing acknowledgment of all donations.
- Loaves and Fishes will review applications for eligibility for assistance. Loaves and Fishes will receive 10% of disbursed funds to cover administration costs of the program.
- The City and Loaves and Fishes will make efforts to not over collect funds. If funds remain after all disbursements are completed, the funds will be used by Loaves and Fishes in accordance with their mission. This will be clearly communicated in any fundraising.
- The City and Loaves and Fishes will practice these responsibilities as part of emergency tabletop exercises.

It is important to reiterate that the proposed disaster relief program covers support for basic needs only (food, shelter, counseling, etc.). It would not have covered the landscaping replacement completed through NTRF in 2023. NTRF representatives recommend that the City continues to work with the Naperville non-profit community to inform and educate organizations on how they are uniquely positioned to assist in supporting future disaster recovery and long-term recovery needs.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.