



City Administration

DATE: July 22, 2021

FROM: Keith Hunke, City Administrator

ITEM: Request from the University of Mary for support of expanding their water and sewer infrastructure utilizing State of North Dakota American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

REQUEST:

Consider request from the University of Mary for support of expanding their water and sewer infrastructure utilizing State of North Dakota American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Please place this item on the July 27, 2021 City Commission meeting agenda.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The University of Mary has water and sewer infrastructure project needs that are eligible to receive American Rescue Plan Act funding. The University has been in contact with the North Dakota Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB has determined that the City of Bismarck should be the recipient of the funds. The City of Bismarck has served as the “pass thru” agency for many funding requests of other non-government entities in the past and can do so for this request. The Finance Director, Public Works Utility Director and City Attorney have been consulted in regards to this request.

RECOMMENDED CITY COMMISSION ACTION:

Approve request from the University of Mary for support of expanding their water and sewer infrastructure utilizing State of North Dakota American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and having the City of Bismarck serve as the “pass thru” agency.

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION:

Keith Hunke, City Administrator, 355-1303, khunke@bismarcknd.gov



OFFICE of the PRESIDENT

22 July 2021

Dear Mayor Bakken,

Thank you for graciously taking my call yesterday. I'm following up with this letter so that you can consult with city staff about the University of Mary's request.

There are provisions in *The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021*, passed into federal law in March, which provide for "necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure." As I mentioned to you, the University employs the use of a wastewater lagoon system for septic water treatment, and our connection to the City of Bismarck's municipal water system lacks redundancy. Our water system has also been deemed insufficient for the needs of our growing campus and for adequate fire suppression support requested by the fire department. This is a concern for us in light of the growing needs of the University community, and more so in light of the designation of our campus as an emergency evacuation and command site to support our community and the surrounding region in occasions of need.

We have consulted with Joe Morrissette in the Office of Management and Budget at the Capitol about the University's eligibility to receive funds for improvement projects related to these needs. He responded that the University could submit a proposal. Because connecting to city sewer and expanding city water would be an expansion of city infrastructure, he is recommending that we inquire if the City of Bismarck is willing to be the recipient of the funding. In such a case, it would be appropriate for us to request the funding but ask that it be distributed to the city on our behalf. (I should mention that these funds are different from those in the Act that flow directly to municipalities through the states, so it is additional funding beyond what the City of Bismarck or Burleigh County should be receiving.)

We need to submit a proposal to the Governor's office by the end of the day on Monday, July 26. If we could have a simple response from the City signaling a willingness to work with us on this vital project, we would include it in our proposal with much gratitude. Thanks so much for your consideration and for all you do for all of us.

Sincerely yours,

Monsignor James P. Shea
President