




THE CITY OF KEY WEST

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TO: Greg Veliz, City Manager
Patti McLaughlin, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Mark Finigan, Chief Financial Officer 

DATE: February 8, 2021

RE: Ratification of Payments to United Way of Collier and the Keys

ACTION STATEMENT:

Ratification of a Memorandum of Understanding between United Way of Collier and the Keys (UWCK) and the City of Key West for Community Rental Assistance, Food, Medical and Utilities/Essential Needs Support pursuant to the Stop-Gap Measure COVID-19 Support Proposal. Ratifying four (4) payments totaling \$132,186 to UWCK and granting the City Manager the authority to effectuate necessary budget amendment(s) for this purpose.

JUSTIFICATION AND NEED:

The following excerpt is taken from the Stop-Gap Measure COVID-19 Support Proposal:

While there is finally an end in sight to the pandemic, the immediate future remains bleak. As we await the vaccine and the next round of federal aid, our Island's safety nets run thin. The virus still rages, and rapid testing is both limited and expensive. Many frontline employees are forced to pay out of pocket to get quick results. Some avoid getting tested altogether. The CARES Act funds took approximately 10 weeks to reach Monroe County after they were approved, and longer to reach community members. If a similar trend ensues for the most recently approved funds, there is an urgent need to fill the gap between now and that time.

There is little help left in our community to meet our residents' basic needs. Our nonprofit organizations have exhausted most of their funds and cannot provide for much longer at this current rate, without additional support. A recent survey conducted by United Way in December 2020 of 13 nonprofit organizations in Key West, (attached), shows a gap in funds to assist residents with rent, food, utilities, medical and other essential needs.

The lack of basic provisions adds to the spread of the virus. When employees can't pay their rent or put food on the table, they are dissuaded from quarantining. There are not enough support systems in place to help them, and much of the workforce simply can't afford to lose more income.

The spike in COVID cases, combined with the lapse in funding and protective measures like the eviction moratorium could lead Key West into a tailspin in the coming months. If ever there were a moment to step in and fill the gap, that time is now.

MEMORANDUM

BACKGROUND:

The Health and Business Advisory Committee, The Key West Chamber of Commerce and the Nonprofit Community of Key West, and the Inter-Ministerial Alliance joined in December 2020 to identify measures that would assist the community through the first quarter of 2021. The result was a five-part plan presented to the City Commission on January 5, 2021. Two parts of the proposal required a commitment of City of Key West Funding, \$171,250 for a Free Rapid Testing program administered by AHEC and \$262,520 for community emergency assistance for rent, food, utilities and medical and essential needs, to be administered by United Way of Collier and the Keys.

Details of each of these two proposal parts can be found in the Stop-Gap Measure COVID-19 Support Proposal, which is made a part of this Legistar item.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

At the January 5, 2021 City Commission Meeting the Proposal for a Stop-Gap Measure for COVID Support to the City of Key West was presented. The City Commission granted via voice consensus the City Manager authority to expend up to \$500,000 of City of Key West General Fund unrestricted fund balance for those specific community support services outlined in the Proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Commission ratify the four (4) payments totaling \$132,186 to United Way of Collier and the Keys (UWCK) for Community Rental Assistance, Food, Medical and Utilities/Essential Needs Support pursuant to the Stop-Gap Measure COVID-19 Support Proposal as well as granting the City Manager the authority to effectuate necessary budget amendment(s) for this purpose.