

Q: What exactly is ARPA and what is its purpose?

The American Rescue Plan. It's an acronym for the relief that the federal government gave to local municipalities and states as a result, obviously, of the coronavirus fiscal impact that devastated a lot of communities. It was a federal funding program that allowed communities to pay first responders, and necessary workers, to invest in infrastructure, streets, roads, and broadband (in some situations as well that didn't apply to the city of Lawrence.) There were a lot of rules by which these funds could be used, and certain dates, times, and restrictions for when those funds had to be encumbered. In other words, dedicated to use. And then other dates where projects actually have to be completed. So, we're right in the middle of our spending of our ARP funds. Those are overseen by the fiscal body of every community. In this case, it's the Common Council, the mayor of the municipality can make recommendations and then it goes to the council for approval. Now the city of Lawrence received roughly \$11.2 million in ARP funding, and you've seen, maybe hopefully if you've driven around Lawrence, you've seen a lot of the improvements that have happened as a result of that. We still have about \$5.6 million left in spending to do. We had hoped this year in 2023 to get about half of that spent on projects and get things going. We had a proposal that was tabled. So, 2024 is going to be a big year for ARP spending in the city of Lawrence. You're going to see major improvements in our city as a result of that spending. We can get really in the weeds with the plan and the exact dollar amounts and where everything is going to be happening.

Q: As a council member, how do your residents in District 3 get in touch with you to share their concerns about streets or other issues?

My constituents usually call me on the phone. They either text me or e-mail me and I get back to them within a matter of 48 to 72 hours. I keep chalk in my car, so when I see a pothole, I get out and circle it. That's how I do things with my community and then I see a couple of my constituents here and they keep me informed because I can't be everywhere. I even help other districts too. They call me and I relay the message and I can tell them what to do and who to contact.

Q: Does LPD have mobile surveillance trailers? If so, how would a neighborhood with a pool or park that has had a sudden surge in teen/kid fights, violence, and mischief officially request one?

Q: Also, are the trailers actively monitored or just something to reference after something happens?

We do not have a mobile surveillance trailer. We do have some neighborhood signs that we have put in neighborhoods before and have had pretty good success with. They measure people's speeds and when it comes to speeding vehicles through neighborhoods, which is historically been one of our biggest complaints that we received from citizens in regard to speeding through neighborhoods. Those signs will flash. We'll put up a person's speed and it also collects data as well that helps our officer's kind of pinpoint when we are seeing peak activity. Somebody will call or e-mail into mayor mail or call the Police Department and complain there are speeders and they're speeding in Winding Ridge or in whatever neighborhood they might be referring to. And we try to get a little bit more data out of the complaining person. We appreciate those complaints, that's how we direct officers where to go when we get those complaints and to address those issues. We certainly do that. The data collection boxes not only show

the speeds of the vehicles going through there at the moment, but they also collect that data so we can kind of pinpoint. It's really helped us in a lot of neighborhoods, giving us an idea on when peak conditions are occurring where people are speeding through that neighborhood. The other thing it does is it gives us some empirical data that a lot of people will think people are speeding. And in some of the smaller neighborhoods it certainly looks like they are. And then we pull the data after a week or seven days or so of that traffic box being in a neighborhood and we see the average speed is 27 miles an hour, for instance, in a 25-mile-an-hour zone. So, it gives us a little bit of data to be able to come back and say, well, it might look like they're speeding because the neighborhood is a smaller one. The data demonstrates that they're really not, and it allows us to very efficiently allocate our limited resources. Keep in mind that we are allocated for 65 officers right now. We've been operating about 10 short. That's a lot of officers, that's almost an entire shift short of officers. Now we've improved on that significantly in the last several months and working in conjunction with the FOP representation, we completely changed how it is that we do our hiring processes and have been very successful in doing our hiring processes in a different way. There was a time that we would literally do like an NFL combine where we would have a 100 plus people invited, you know officer candidates invited, and they would do a one physical agility test and then a written test in the afternoon for those who passed the physical agility test. If we would invite 100 people to that, we would traditionally get about 50% of them to show up. Last couple of times we did large invitations like that we were lucky if we got 20 people to show up. That's not unique to Lawrence. That's something that every Police Department in Central IN, in fact throughout the country is experiencing. So, our FOP and our administration went to work collaboratively and applied some new processes where we're inviting fewer people, probably doing a better job of staying in touch with them, but we're really focusing on the quality of candidates. Instead of the quantity of candidates and that's been pretty successful. So we're going to continue with that process that we have implemented. Now we're doing more processes throughout the year, but we're inviting less people per process. We might invite 30 people for instance as opposed to 100 and maybe get 11 to 15 to show up. And out of that, we may get 5 candidates that actually pass all the testing. We're not going to lessen our standards. That is the biggest thing that we are all committed to and Chief Bigsby remains committed to that. We are not going to lower our standards when it comes to hiring. So we do not have mobile surveillance trailers. Yeah, if we could afford one moving forward, we may ask our friends on the council for one moving forward. We'll see what that looks like for the 2024 budget. But as far as the recent acts of violence, I can tell you just today Chief Bigsby convened a command staff meeting. Out of that came several thoughts. One of them we are authorizing some overtime. A good amount of overtime for officers to come in extra to patrol our parks and neighborhoods, some of these hot spots that have popped up. We've seen this before and crime is cyclical. So this is nothing we haven't seen before. I don't want to be cavalier about saying that because Lawrence overall is a very safe community to be in and we're very proud of that. But, you know certainly the incident that happened in Lawrence Park overnight is disturbing for all of us. Myself, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor Hoffman, a lot of us. We played in that park as kids ourselves. The Mayor grew up right across the street from there. I grew up just down the street from there. So we, I say to you, we take ownership of that. We take it very serious. I was out there last night. I saw all those shell casings on the ground. It is absolutely unacceptable that an incident like that would be visited here in our community. Our first responding officers and our detectives work incredibly. They just do amazing work. As far as identifying who's responsible for committing crimes like this and holding them accountable in the criminal justice system, they really do magnificent work.

Q: What is LPD doing to address these senseless acts of violence?

We're putting overtime out there for additional patrols and additional officers. There'll be both marked and unmarked cars and officers out there. There'll be some specialty units. We have a detective at a unit called the Indiana Crime Guns Task Force. That's 20 detectives who are focused on crimes like last night and focusing on the people who are the trigger pullers and those incidents. So our detective is already mobilized the Crime Guns Task Force unit and we're going to be focusing some of those resources here in Lawrence in the next coming days too. We already are. They already have been, but we'll continue to do that.

Q: What can residents do to help the police department address these issues

As cliché as it sounds, if you see something, say something. I know that sounds like super cliché. It's like an advertisement we see on TV and all that, but it works. You are the eyes and ears you as citizens out there as people who are living in the neighborhoods, you know driving around. You see things that we don't necessarily see and for you to share that information with us is absolutely critical. If we can prevent, be proactive and prevent something from happening before it happens, like we saw in the park last night, we're well ahead of the game if we can do that. So if you see something literally it can be something that seems relatively innocuous. Well, I'm not sure where that should call the police on this or not. Call us, we'll respond, we'll come out and check it out and we'd rather respond to some incidents that, maybe aren't quite what they saw. Or maybe just seeing a police car roll through might prevent something from happening. So literally being the eyes and ears of your community, of our community, is one of the best things that people can do for us. And you literally if you see something, say something and give us that opportunity to respond and hopefully proactively prevent something from happening. I can tell you I will put our response time here in Lawrence. Our police and fire response time here in Lawrence, up against anybody's. Any other community that I know of, our response time is amazing. Our first responding officers, when we get a report of something, especially if it's a crime in progress, they are on it. I see a few heads kind of nodding up and down. One of the differences here in Lawrence is you know us, we know you, here's our long-serving retired member Tom Ashcraft sitting here in the audience who just retired last year. From from LPD and you know I mean he has seen all the changes as of many of us, but my point is that what people like him do, have been there and done that and the next generation of just amazing police officers. The officers are coming in now or so up on technology. You know a lot of this technology we're giving them to leverage is that we're putting out there you know I'm of the I'm of the age group that we were we were lucky to turn on our Texas Instruments calculators you know. But these officers are just amazing when it comes to technology and their desire to want to detect and interdict crimes from happening. So we're very proud of that.

Q: What is being done to address continued blatant disregard, by many, to Stop Signs and Speed Limits within residential areas? My specific concern is in Spring Run and the surrounding Winding Ridge community. There is almost not a time driving, this has not been witnessed. The Stop Signs are barely treated as a Yield. Sad part is, there are many officers that live and community and they must see it as well. Is it going to take someone getting hit while crossing a street or a vehicle t-boned? Requesting a grester presence to witness. Of course though, with visible LEO vehicles, it will likely not happen. Can cameras be uses? High Timber is horrible at intersections with Loudon, Glass Chimney, and the Long Lake/High Grass intersections. Thank you.

Q: How much does it cost per police vehicle?

It costs \$40,000 per vehicle, meaning \$400,000 for 10 vehicles.

Q: Why do we carry the paramedic on the ladder truck?

We carry, as most fire departments do, we carry paramedics on all the vehicles and the reason for that, there's some cases where those ambulances are out so we can start treatment right away. They've got ALS equipment on those engines and ladders. ALS is as advanced as life support, so they can do almost just as much on the scene as they can in an emergency room. In fact, some of the protocols even changed. Now if somebody's in cardiac arrest they want us to work in 20 or 30 minutes on the scene to get those drugs in them and start working them and then they'll transport. But there's a lot of cases because there's so many transports we wouldn't care to be given to those people right away. So the most efficient. we see an engine or a ladder truck found an ambulance. Why is that? It depends on the nature of the call. The dispatcher can only go by what they were they're told on the phone and if somebody's having chest pain, it's a lot easier to disregard that extra equipment. But if somebody is in cardiac arrest it takes 4 to 6 people to work that and we want to give that person the most, the best percentage of a sustaining life. So like I said depends on respiratory distress, gunshots, knifing, cardiac arrest, those will all call for an ambulance and another piece of fire equipment to just enhance the response to do that. But that's basically why. A good example is like if our ambulance is on the more the West side of Lawrence is out of service or they're on another run that engine still in that house and could provide medical care until that ambulance arrives.

Q: What can the council do now to approve the 2023 ARP funding so the citizens can continue to see Lawrence move forward. (for Freeman)

I can only speak for my District 3, I am not really sure what the other councilors have in mind or how their plans are to bring the rest of everything together. But I can only speak for my District 3, and you can see District 3 is booming. We have our library coming, the hotel is already there. We have five retail centers coming. We have the Civic Center going, but I am not sure what's going on with the other councilors because I can't speak for them.

Q: What proactive programs or initiatives do you have in mind to address the underlying factors that lead to crime and insecurity?

And we always try to be proactive as opposed to being reactive, that is for sure. We do have several community outreach projects that we do. I'll give you, for instance, just this past Saturday, I spent four hours, Councilor Freeman was nice enough to come and join us for part of that, as was Deputy Mayor, Mayor Hoffman and many others, in front of the Kroger, we did a Pack the Cruiser campaign. What does food insecurity have to do with crime? Well, you know, sometimes people who are going to be out there looking to commit crime may do so literally because they're hungry. Especially like petty theft, and things of that nature. And once a person starts down that crime path, sometimes they continue down that crime path and wind up committing additional crimes or even worse crimes. So, tackling that root cause,

that potential root cause right there at the contact level where literally there were three police officers standing in front of Kroger asking for somebody who was shopping at Kroger to maybe spend another 10 bucks in groceries and pack our cruiser. I can tell you that the back of one of our SUV police vehicles was packed full of food for our Lawrence Township school food pantries. So that food that was collected on Saturday in a four-hour period will be directly going to our loan at Lawrence Township students who are experiencing food insecurity. So that's just one example of the things that we do. We have a licensed social worker that is our crime watch coordinator, so we will work with businesses with HOA's with our citizens in order to try to prevent crime from happening in the 1st place to talk about strategies, talk about concepts called CPTED, which is an acronym for improving a neighborhood so that it's less conducive to crimes occurring there. There's all kinds of things that we do but I hope that partially helps answer your question away. That question is a really big picture. So anytime we have the opportunity to be proactive as opposed to reactive, we try to do that. Having additional officers available to us will also afford our officers to be able to be more proactive than reactive. We've been somewhat in reaction mode for quite some time now. Now a lot of our officers are still out there very aggressively responding to crimes or proactively seeking out people who may be looking to commit crime. We can do more of that with more people and we're working on that every day. So hope that helps.

Q: How do you plan to collaborate with community organizations, law enforcement agencies, and social services to implement comprehensive strategies aimed at reducing rates?

And when we told you we had those 11 or 1200 kids come through, I failed to mention we also have the police there with us. So hopefully that interaction getting to know the police officers and the firefighters and going through a police car, I mean even to maybe some of those kids would be interested in a career in either law enforcement or the fire service. So I think that helped bridges some gaps too and we try to make ourselves available to like the HOA. The HOA is good because you get a wide range of people there and I've always enjoyed that because it gives us a chance to talk and mingle with the people. And I think that's just another outreach because there are some public safety entities that don't do that, and we've been fortunate that that's another place where it's a team effort.

One of Chief Bigsby's initiatives that he talked about when he was appointed Chief was he wants to start several youth programs. And one of the things I hope I'm not getting out ahead of this, you want to talk to it, go ahead. But he's talking about starting 18 Academy kind of like a citizens Academy for teenagers and we think that's a good type. We think that's a great idea and that's one of the initiatives that Chief Bigsby is, is it feels very strongly about and knowing him the way I know him he's going to get that done.

And that teen Academy, so look for that we do as citizens Academy for adults. You know we just graduated at almost twenty citizens from this our latest citizen of our graduates. Councillor Freeman is a is a is a citizen Academy graduate. We're grateful for that. There are a few others in the room as well, but having that teen Academy getting to these teenagers and having those positive interactions with law enforcement and a nonenforcement setting that's a net positive for everyone.

One other thing that we do is we actually have partnered with CAFE and we host two job fairs, one in spring and one in fall. So again where unemployment can be a concern and again create those needs and start with petty theft to meet some of the needs and grow. So a lot of different preventative things like that. We're working as a community. So the crime prevention officer and the Mayor's office continue to

look for other partnerships like with CAFÉ, to be able to host and do those types of events to really help reduce crime.

Safety Day is another opportunity. It's a free event for families. The police and fire and EMS is there. They have static displays. They also do demonstrations. And we sold everything down and it's probably one of the best ways for the public to see what we do and keep them out of harm's way. We've been doing that for several, several years and I said there's not very many events that are free to families. But it's and we make a point that people aren't there to sell products they have to be in the community giving stuff away and it's a great day for our family and it's like 4 hours long. But we get a great turnout from the community and that's another way to interact with not only just the police and fire but all our departments in the city.

Q: Is 56th Street part of Lawrence or is that Indianapolis?

That's actually in Indianapolis thoroughfare that's not really ours too, all we do is maintain it, which means chuck holes and all that. As far as restoration, new construction, that's on Indianapolis.

Q: Is the ARP fund a yearly fund?

Our funding is a one-time deal. It was a response to the pandemic. This money was, think of it as a one-time grant, it's a grant money and once it's spent it's gone.

Q: If the money in the budget for the streets does not get completely used, will it be available in the upcoming year?

We have gone back and forth on streets that Indianapolis is responsible for, and there are several streets that are newly paved. 79th St. for example. There's an Indianapolis St., it's a thoroughfare. That there's a point at which you just say basically the heck with it, let's get it done if we can. And so to Jim's credit, he does the best he can in maintaining and strip patching and paving. But there are times. We just have to simply say for the safety of our citizens, we're going to have to go ahead and spend MVH funding whatever it may take to get these streets paved. 79th Street is a classic example of that. Anybody who drove that street, it was like driving through a street in Fallujah for a while and we got that paid. We will continue to do that. German Church Road, another example of one that we paved that was really wasn't ours, but we're no longer concerned about what's ours and what's theirs. We're at the point now we can do ours and take care of that. I'm not going to pave any Indianapolis Street, so I can tell you that right now, so.