



FRANK WHITE, JR.
Jackson County Executive

October 28, 2024

Dear Members of the Jackson County Legislature,

I am writing to address Resolution 21769 and to propose a path forward for the allocation of our remaining ARPA funds. I want to acknowledge the effort each of you has put into this issue and understand the disappointment some may feel about my decision not to support the Resolution as approved. While I respect the resolution's intent, I believe we have an opportunity to do something better for Jackson County by balancing the immediate needs of our community with the long-term needs of our county facilities and services.

As we move forward, I am fully committed to working with you to find a balanced solution. I understand that compromise will be essential, and I look forward to reaching a consensus that meets our residents' needs both now and in the future.

To allow our community to benefit from these funds sooner rather than later, I am proposing an interim compromise. This \$32.4 million allocation reflects areas of broad agreement among us, including funding for senior home repair, utility assistance, food security, and improvements to nonprofit facilities, alongside critical capital projects for county infrastructure. This approach builds on the priorities outlined in both Resolution 21764 and Resolution 21736 and addresses immediate needs in the community.

If we move forward with this compromise, we can start issuing requests for proposals immediately, ensuring these resources reach our residents before the holidays. At the same time, we can continue to work together to determine the best allocation for the remaining \$38 million in ARPA funds.

As you know, Jackson County's infrastructure is in serious need of investment. Our downtown courthouse alone requires over \$300 million in repairs, with deferred maintenance already costing millions in unplanned expenses due to incidents like elevator breakdowns and water main failures. This work is essential to prevent future disruptions and to protect our budget, avoiding the need to pass these costs onto residents through higher taxes or cuts to critical services.

I am encouraged that multiple legislators who voted for Resolution 21769 have expressed a desire to see more of our ARPA funds directed toward addressing the county's infrastructure

needs. This growing support highlights a shared recognition that investing in Jackson County's stability and resilience is fiscally responsible and necessary to meet our community's needs.

It is clear that we must work together to reach an agreement. However, I do not believe that public airing of grievances or political finger-pointing will help us achieve this goal. Therefore, I do not plan at this time to engage in a public argument that may draw attention and excite some but ultimately risks making compromise more difficult. Instead, I am focused on collaborative solutions that will allow us to serve our residents effectively and responsibly.

Finally, I want to ensure that these funds are allocated through a fair and competitive process based on need and qualifications, not political alliances. By following this approach, we can ensure that every dollar is used efficiently and transparently, delivering maximum benefit to Jackson County's residents.

Thank you for your time, your hard work, and your commitment to Jackson County. I look forward to continuing our discussions and working alongside each of you to reach a balanced, responsible plan that strengthens our community now and lays a strong foundation for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Frank White, Jr.', with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

Frank White, Jr.
County Executive
Jackson County