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ARPA funds highlight council meeting

CHRISTY JANKOWSKI
CHRISTY.JANKOWSKI@
DANCOMNEWS.COM

DANVILLE — Reallocating remaining ARPA funds to ongoing park projects was met with passionate debate Tuesday night at the Danville City Council meeting.

The remaining ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds allocated for the City of Danville, which were given during the COVID pandemic, have to be used by Dec. 31, 2026. However, they can only be used towards projects in motion.



While the council approved the spending of the ARPA funds on the park projects over a year ago, there was debate on whether the council should have allocated funds to youth centers and the homeless.

Council members expressed their disdain in stating that originally the

ARPA Plan included funding for those areas, but they were cut.

David Ruwe with the Danville Public Works told the council how they plan to use the \$433,000 reallocated for Garfield Park.

The remaining funds will be spent on stormwater engineering.

"We still have a few construction projects that have remaining contingency that we need to keep available as contingency for those projects," Ruwe said. "As those projects get finished and we have remaining funds, we will kick those over for further design, on engineering ser-

vices, and on stormwater projects."

Alderman Doug Ahrens expressed his concerns about voting for the reallocation of funds.

"So if I understand this correctly, if we had an open project to deal with the unhoused or the homeless, it would have qualified for these funds," Ahrens said. "Or we could be spending a quarter to a half a million dollars to address our unhoused and our homeless individuals with ARPA funds, but there's more going to Garfield Park. The community is

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Submitted photo

Trish Kendall

Message of recovery with hope and help

CHRISTY JANKOWSKI
CHRISTY.JANKOWSKI@
DANCOMNEWS.COM

DANVILLE — October is domestic violence awareness month, and the victims are left with unfathomable trauma.

The Vermilion County Health Board is helping others through past trauma, addiction, and sexual assault with testimony and local resources.

Tonight at the Second Church of Christ in Danville from 6-8 p.m. keynote speaker Trish Kendall will tell her story. There will also be local groups offering resources available.

Those involved in the event are hopeful that it will help others.

"I think it's a great story for people who are struggling, and people who are helping other people who are struggling, you know?" said Pastor Dale DeNeal of the Second Church of Christ. "Because, usually when somebody's got an addiction, it affects the whole family."

Kendall will be sharing her story of childhood sexual abuse and addiction. On an event flyer, it stated that she has identified five choices she made in recovery.

Jim Russell with the mental health board said, "we're putting an emphasis on providers that do substance use disorder treatment, but we also open it up to other service providers as well."

He said there will be representatives of Rosecrance, New Directions, MPower, Crosspoint, Celebrate Recovery, CRIS Healthy Aging, Survivor Resource Center, Carle Hospital outreach program, Mental Health First Aid, and ROSC.

"There is going to be so much in her story of being a victim, and to find the help she needed, and people need to know there is help available locally," Russell said. "There is hope and help, and that is part of the message people need to take away. Recovery is possible — it can take a lot of forms for different people, but it is still possible."

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Associated Press

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., shown here holding a news conference on the steps of the Capitol in Washington on Oct. 9, is pushing for Illinois Democrats to redraw the state's congressional districts.

REDISTRICTING PUSH

Lawmakers not likely to act in Illinois

BRENDEN MOORE
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

U.S. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries' push for Illinois Democrats to redraw the state's congressional map as a counter to President Donald Trump's mid-decade redistricting project in GOP-led states has met a cool reception with state lawmakers.

"I think there is next to zero appetite to do it," one House Democratic lawmaker told Capitol News Illinois. Another lawmaker said "there is no world where I see this happening."

Lawmakers are back in Springfield next week for the final days of their annual fall veto session. Reform of the state's public transportation agencies and addressing soaring energy costs have domi-

nated the discussion. But Jeffries is making a late play with state legislative leaders to put a new map on the agenda, too, Punchbowl News, a Washington D.C.-based news organization, reported earlier this week.

The New York Democrat's move comes amid a national redistricting battle initiated by Trump to squeeze additional Republican seats out of GOP-controlled states to bolster the party's chances of retaining its narrow House majority in the 2026 midterm elections.

A spokesperson for Jeffries did not return a request for comment.

COOL RECEPTION IN SPRINGFIELD

With Gov. JB Pritzker and Democratic supermajorities in the state legislature, Illinois is one of the few states where the party can pick up another seat. The state's congressional delegation is currently composed of 14 Democrats

and three Republicans.

However, Democratic state lawmakers and party officials told Capitol News Illinois that most, if not all, the redistricting conversations have been initiated in Washington. And there appears to be little interest in Springfield for blowing up the state's congressional lines.

Among the roadblocks is the clock. The candidate petition filing deadline for the March primary is Nov. 3. If lawmakers act next week, they would have to consider moving the primary date or tweaking signature requirements for petitions.

Perhaps an even larger hurdle is opposition from Black elected officials, who worry that a new map could lead to the dilution of the state's Black political representation.

Currently, three of the state's congressional districts are at least 40% African American, according

to U.S. Census data, and Illinois has four Black representatives in Congress.

But a more aggressive gerrymander would likely require these majority-minority, overwhelmingly Democratic districts to absorb additional rural, majority-white parts of the state that overwhelmingly vote Republican.

"We're going to fight back," congressional candidate and state Sen. Willie Preston, D-Chicago, the Senate chair of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, told Punchbowl News on Wednesday. "We just won't do so at the expense of our own power."

More generally, some Democrats worry that a new map would further weaken existing Democrat-held districts and make them electorally vulnerable to Republicans.

Representatives for the state's

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