



**Agenda Item: Resolution**

**Title:** Resolution 2020-26, Authorizing the Acceptance of Donations to Supplement Available Grant Funds within the COVID-19 Small Business Relief Program

**Recommended Council MOTION:**

Move to Approve Resolution 2020 – 26, authorizing the acceptance of donations to supplement available grant funds within the *COVID-19 Small Business Relief Program*, and authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign.

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**Administrative or Policy Goal:** Public-private partnership for economic development and stabilization of the local economy for current and future prosperity.

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**Background:** During its April 7, 2020 meeting, Council passed Resolution 2020-23 establishing a partnership with the Laramie Chamber Business Alliance to establish a COVID-19 Emergency Relief Program for Small Business and pledging up to \$200,000 from the Economic Development Fund to provide grants for business workforce stabilization and long-term resilience.

In the time since the passage of Resolution 2020-23, staff has prepared an MOU with LCBA outlining the roles and responsibilities for administration of the program and provided advise and technical support to aid in the build-out and deployment of this program. For its part, LCBA staff has drafted program guidelines, etc., and circulated those materials to its Financial Tools Committee to review and approve, and also secured board approval of the program.

As noted within Resolution 2020-23, this program is intended to build a finer mesh around federal “safety-net” programs. We recognize, however, federal programs and the local COVID-19 Emergency Relief Program for Small Business are likely insufficient to bring our community and economy back to a pre-pandemic condition. Moreover, we anticipate long-term repercussive impacts to our businesses, community, and health care system even after distancing restrictions are lifted. Numerous fundraising efforts are underway, through entities like LCBA, United Way and many of our Community Partner agencies. Additionally, Laramie Main Street, LCBA, and Albany County Tourism have been proactive in showcasing the different ways in which customers can support business, and in turn, helped businesses to communicate their needs to their supporters. At the same time, we’ve had an outpouring of questions from the public, including our own City staff, asking *what else can I do to support our community?*

With these concerns in mind, approval of the resolution will create a portal for residents to donate to the grant program for small business relief. The City’s program is not intended to compete with, replace, or supplant any other community fundraising effort, but instead, to offer citizens an additional option as they seek to support Laramie businesses. The City’s website and social media feeds will be the primary fundraising platform for the program, but staff is exploring other options as well. The program will be advertised in utility bills, on the City website, in press releases, and on social media. We also hope Council will help to spread the word about this program, alongside other opportunities for community support.

**Responsible Staff:**

Janine Jordan, City Manager

Sarah Reese, Administrator – Economic Development & Community Initiatives

Malea Brown, Chief Operating Officer