

FY 2023-2024 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT(S): Parks and Recreation Department

CBQ NO.: 163

REQUESTED BY: Pool

DATE REQUESTED: 07/27/2023

DATE POSTED: 08/10/2023

REQUEST: What is the total amount spent by PARD to repair equipment damaged from Winter Storm Mara? Do these repairs qualify for FEMA reimbursement, and if so, is that being sought? Do General Fund Department normally absorb repair costs following natural disasters if FEMA reimbursement is not available?

RESPONSE:

When a disaster strikes, the City's first priority is to provide an effective response, and therefore it begins to incur expenses immediately. Once the crisis has been addressed, department and corporate financial staff analyze the magnitude of these expenditures in the context of the department's overall budget to determine whether they can be offset by anticipated savings in other areas. In the case of unanticipated expenditures that are necessary to provide an effective emergency response and of such a large magnitude that they cannot reasonably be absorbed within a department's existing budget—as were, for instance, many of the City's expenditures associated with responding to the COVID-19 pandemic response—the City may book these expenditures to the General Fund Emergency Reserve. At the same time, the City will work with state and federal authorities to pursue Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement for any eligible expenditures. These reimbursements, if they occur, generally take several years to be received, at which time they are booked to the same Fund that incurred the expense.

The Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) incurred an estimated \$3.4 million in expenses in FY 2022-23 associated with its response to Winer Storm Mara. Financial staff determined that PARD could absorb these expenses within its existing operating budget appropriation as a result of vacancy savings that were tracking significantly higher than the budgeted amount. The City is pursuing reimbursement from FEMA for these expenses and, because these expenses were incurred by PARD's General Fund operating budget, and future reimbursement will be booked to the General Fund under the PARD department code.