



# COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

## City Manager's Office

Agenda Item:

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### GENERAL INFORMATION

Agenda Date: 09/06/05  
Agenda Item Type: Resolution

Communication No.:05-486  
Roll Call No.:

Submitted by: Richard Clark, Acting City Manager

### SUBJECT—

Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts

### SYNOPSIS—

This action authorizes the City Manager to reallocate funds to enable the City to make a contribution to support those impacted by Hurricane Katrina in the amount of \$200,000 and to identify a program for the distribution of these funds. In addition, this action expresses strong support and appreciation for the City employee driven effort to raise additional funds to support efforts in the Gulf-Coast region.

### FISCAL IMPACT—

\$200,000 will be reallocated from the three accounts listed below:

- \$61,000 1993 Flood Relief Funding, SP761 CMO970808  
\$61,000 remains from the generous donations given to the City of Des Moines in response to the flood of 1993.
- \$50,000 Election Funding, GE001 CCL010000  
\$150,000 was allocated to fund this year's municipal election. \$50,000 of this was intended for a primary election, but now can be reallocated for this purpose.
- \$89,000 Fund Balance

Though unreserved undesignated fund balance should not be utilized on a regular basis, the dire circumstances of the Gulf Coast which is now impacting many segments of the economy should be considered such a unique emergency that it rises to the level of importance that a one-time use of our unreserved undesignated fund balance is not setting a precedent for future allocations for other needs.

### RECOMMENDATION—

Approval

### BACKGROUND—

On August 30, 2005 the Gulf Coast area of the country was hit by Hurricane Katrina, a powerful hurricane that caused extensive and severe damage over 180,000 square miles of the southern United States including the City of New Orleans. Katrina will likely be judged as the worst natural disaster to

hit the United States to date. Disaster Relief plans are in operation in the affected communities, but some experts predict one million people could become homeless as a result of the storm. Currently, five million people are without power in the Gulf Coast region, and it may be two months before all power is restored.

The aftermath of the storm compounded problems. In particular, the breaching of some levees protecting New Orleans caused water to flow unabated into the city. There remains a humanitarian disaster with many people stranded due to flooding. Responding to thirst, hunger, and lack of facilities, a state of emergency has been declared.

When the City of Des Moines experienced devastating flooding in 1993, the City received overwhelming support and has in turn pledged financial support to other communities in need. On September 21, 2001, by roll call 01-2804 the City of Des Moines donated \$198,682 to the City of New York for relief efforts. This action would similarly pledge \$200,000 to support victims in the Gulf Coast Region. This action authorizes the City Manager to identify how these funds will be distributed to allow additional time to identify an opportunity to best leverage these funds.

In addition, the City of Des Moines City Council is issuing a strong endorsement of an employee driven program to collect contributions to support relief efforts. Jerry Palmer, an employee in the City's Public Works Department approached the City Manager to request that the City devise a plan to collect employee contributions organization wide. In response to his request, the City's Human Resources Department has created a dedicated employee giving program to support the Red Cross' Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort. Employees will be given an opportunity to donate to the relief effort directly through payroll deduction through their wages distributed on September 16 or September 30. In addition, a Katrina Relief Organization will be added to the City's 2006 Combined Charities Campaign and incorporated into Combined Charities Campaign events.

City of Des Moines Fire Personnel will also be directly contributing to the relief efforts in the Gulf Coast area. The Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) has requested assistance from Fire Departments by providing 1,000 two-person firefighter teams to assist citizens affected by Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. The City of Des Moines will offer to participate by sending six-fire personnel to the Gulf Coast Region. These personnel will perform non-operational community relations focused activities that consist of direct outreach to persons in the affected areas. They will assist victims in understanding how to pursue Federal assistance, distributing information, providing minimal first aid, and taking reports. City of Des Moines Fire personnel will be working in the region for at least a 30-day period and associated expenses will be reimbursed by FEMA.