TO: The Members of the St. Charles County Council  
The Honorable Terry Hollander, Council Chair  
The Honorable Joe Cronin  
The Honorable Joe Brazil  
The Honorable Mike Elam  
The Honorable Dave Hammond  
The Honorable Nancy Schneider  
The Honorable John White

FROM: Robert Schnur, Director of Finance

DATE: May 6, 2020

RE: Coronavirus Relief Fund

This bill appropriating the CARES Act, Title V funds is an unprecedented approach to federal funding of local disaster costs. As you know, when a tornado touches down in our community or the rivers rise and cause major damage, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is usually sent to our local community for Individual Assistance and Public Assistance programs. Usually the FEMA rules require local governments to share the cost of the disaster response. Post-Katrina, local burden of Public Assistance has ranged from 15% to 25% of eligible costs. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic Congress passed and President Trump signed into law H.R.748, The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security ("CARES") Act, which contained, among other items, funding for State, Tribal and local governments to deal with the cost of COVID-19 public health mandates, testing, protective equipment and other COVID-19 costs. Only states and local governments with more than 500,000 residents were entitled to CARES Act Title V dollars. No local match is required for Title V funding.

While the CARES Act does not require the State to provide funding to counties, the Missouri General Assembly passed, and Governor Michael Parson signed into law the State FY20 Supplemental Budget, which included appropriation of CARES Act fund to local governments and mandated that such funds be used in accordance with the CARES Act and federal treasury department guidance related to the CARES Act. The State has operationalized that appropriation as an appropriation to the counties and the City of St. Louis.

All funds provided under Title V of the CARES Act are required to be used to address COVID-19 issues such as COVID-19 preparedness, COVID-19 public health needs and other COVID-19 related expenses related to the function of government and community public health response. There is a strict requirement in the CARES Act that funding cannot be used for revenue replacement nor can it be used for items which are appropriated in the most recently enacted budget of the government utilizing such funds.
Certain costs have immediately been identifiable: the County and other jurisdictions within St. Charles County have a need for personal protective equipment and sanitation supplies; testing of County residents, first responders, public health and medical staff for COVID-19 diagnosis and for COVID-19 antibodies is important to rapidly identifying those with the disease and who they have been in contact with, as well as important in understanding the spread and severity of the disease in the community. Additionally, correctional officers and offenders are both at risk within the jail for the spread of COVID-19 and modifications are necessary in the county jail to inhibit the introduction of coronavirus into the jail through staff and inmates and that risk can be mitigated by modifications to separate the intake process, provide for negative pressure cells and make modifications to cells. Our municipalities and other public entities have also borne costs related to making their public services accessible to our citizens. And the County and the municipalities all have the costs associated with the benefits Congress set out in the second COVID-19 legislative act, the Family First Coronavirus Response Act. Additionally, St. Charles County assisted with the multi-jurisdictional morgue requested by the hospitals.

The CARES Act contains a variety of federal funding for dozens of different purposes. This bill addresses the funding the State has allocated to St. Charles County. It covers costs incurred to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic from March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020. Because the operational period extends through the remainder of the year there are appropriations we know need to be made and others that may yet need to be developed.

cc: Steve Ehlmann, County Executive
    Joann Leykam, Director of Administration
    John Watson, County Counselor
    Brenda Hinton, County Registrar
    Donna Vogt, Executive Assistant, St. Charles County Council