

Town of Willington

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Commission
40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279

SPECIAL Meeting Minutes

In Person; TOB, Downstairs & Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

January 24, 2022

1:30 PM

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

Members Present: J. Arpin, S. Cobb, M. D'Amato, S. Hills, D. Latincsics, T. Smith, T. Sposato, E. Wiczenski

Members Absent: Robin Campbell

Others Present: Parks & Recreation Director Alan Humphrey, Board of Finance Member Christina Mailhos

First Selectwoman Wiczenski called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski thanked all of the members for their willingness to serve on this commission. There are 11 members on this Commission; the Board of Selectmen have appointed 9 members as of the last BOS meeting. The Board will appoint the last 2 members at their next Board of Selectmen meeting.

Appointment of Chairperson

J. Arpin moved to nominate Christina Mailhos as Chairman of the American Rescue Act Plan Commission.

T. Smith seconded the motion.

Discussion: This nomination will be tabled until the next meeting after C. Mailhos has been appointed by the Board of Selectmen to the Commission.

T. Smith withdraws his second, J. Arpin withdraws her nomination.

E. Wiczenski moved to table this nomination until the next meeting.

M. D'Amato seconded the motion.

8 YES (J. Arpin, S. Cobb, M. D'Amato, S. Hills, D. Latincsics, T. Smith, T. Sposato, E. Wiczenski) 0 NO

All in favor, motion carries.

Appointment of Recording Secretary

There was discussion in regards to Mike D'Amato volunteering for the Recording Secretary position.

Set Meeting Calendar

Discussion was held in regards to a meeting schedule and how often the Commission should meet. Most staff on the Commission are in the building on Monday afternoons. The Commission decided on bi-weekly meetings until further notice.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to hold meetings bi-weekly on Mondays at 1:30pm beginning on January 24th, 2022.

T. Smith seconded.

8 YES (J. Arpin, S. Cobb, M. D'Amato, S. Hills, D. Latincsics, T. Smith, T. Sposato, E. Wiecenski) 0 NO

All in favor, motion carries.

4. Overview of ARPA Funds and Ordinance

The U.S. Treasury has released the final rule which takes effect April 1st, 2022. At this time, the final rule can be followed, as the U.S. Treasury has made a provision allowing this to happen. The Treasury has also released a final rule summary. CCM had originally generated the American Rescue Plan Toolkit last year for municipalities; it is anticipated a new copy will be released with updates for the final rule.

Willington is receiving an estimated \$1.7 million; this will be received in 2 tranches. The first was in June 2021 and the second tranche will be received after May 2021 (one year from the first tranche). The first tranche was an estimated \$874,000. The Town is considered to be an NEU (Non-Entitlement Unit); there is reporting specific for any use that will need to be done which will be handled by the Finance Department.

Some of the uses are broken down into categories as items that respond to the public health impact: replacing lost public sector revenue, premium pay, water and sewer infrastructure, and broadband infrastructure. Within each category is an additional breakdown of how the funds can be spent for that category. A key change in replacing lost revenue is a formula that was given from the U.S. Treasury to determine the loss of revenue (Calculate actual loss using Final Rule's formula or a "standard allowance" of \$10 million to spend on government services). By using the funds as lost revenue, there is a broader use of the funds for government services.

The public health and economic impact is where the Commission would be able to give loans/grants to businesses/individuals.

Premium pay allows the Commission to give an increase in pay to front facing municipal employees (particular job classifications). The change in ruling allows more of the front facing municipal employees than the interim ruling had allowed.

These funds can be used to make water, sewer, broadband, infrastructure investments and improvements.

The Commission must decide on how each project fits into the criteria of the final rule. Each project must respond to the negative impact of the public health crisis COVID19.

Cannot use this funding to pay any previous debts (such as the Library bond or any leases), cannot use for legal purposes, cannot make deposits into a pension fund, cannot offset a reduction in net tax revenue, no debt service or replenishing financial services; cannot add to the general fund with these funds, and no satisfaction of settlements or judgment. States and territories may not use this funding to directly or indirectly offset a reduction in net tax revenue.

5. Discussion of Project Approvals

Discussion was held on how the Commission will handle submissions and approvals, how the Commission will ask for other submissions, how submissions will be weighed and then how the

Commission will determine the use of the money. Town Office Department heads have submitted their requests (this does not include the Library or the Fire Departments)

Discussion was held on soliciting ideas from town departments, as well as the town residents. Results from the ARPA survey that was put out to residents in December will be distributed to Commission members. When considering approval of a project, it needs to be determined if the project meets the final ruling and which usage category the project falls into. Discussion was held on projects that meet the criteria, prioritizing those projects, and then appointing a liaison to report the expenses of that project. The Commission will accept or reject the project by majority vote. In the next Commission meeting, it was suggested the evaluation criteria be discussed and a timeline be set of when projects will begin to be evaluated. If residents have an ARPA idea for a certain department, the resident can reach out to that Department liaison to bring forth the idea. Discussion was also held on hosting a public hearing for the public to gather ideas. The Economic Development Commission has been working on a loan/grant program for businesses (the business would need to prove a revenue loss). The Fire Department has suggestions of projects for funding, as does the Selectman's office, Parks & Recreation, and Human Services. There was a suggestion of distributing the interim ruling to town departments/agencies and encouraging these departments to submit requests that align with the final rule guidelines.

All of the ARPA Commission meetings will be held in public and residents are encouraged to attend and participate in meetings.

Evaluation criteria needs to be developed for use and then emergent projects and ideas from Town Departments can be submitted and reviewed.

First Selectwoman Wicewski stated that the Finance Department will be the final reporting party of all of the funding once it is spent. The final rule allows for funding of a temporary position on a short term basis to handle the reporting of the funds, if needed.

Prior to the Commission, the Town held a town meeting to allocate an estimated \$123,000.00 to spend on certain projects (including the remediation in the Town Office Building basement).

Discussion was held on the loss of revenue formula. When the auditors were here at the TOB for the annual audit, it was discussed that the Town could take these funds as a loss of revenue, if desired.

Different town departments may have seen a loss since COVID began such as the parks and recreation department with summer camp, the fire department with certain transports, and the human services department.

6. Discussion of Community Involvement

Discussion was held on community involvement during the funding decision process. An ARPA survey was sent out in December and the survey results will be provided to all Commission members.

Discussion was held in regards to moving forward with a public hearing and gathering ideas of how the community wants to spend this money. Meetings will be held to share with the residents what amount of money is being spent and how it will be spent / on what projects. A public hearing could be held in the evening hours or on the weekend, to give the public the most opportunity to have their voice heard and hear what their thoughts are. A quick presentation could be held on how to use the funding and the ideas that would qualify.

The next meeting of the ARPA Commission will be held Monday, February 7th at 1:30pm.

T. Smith moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:38 PM.

M. D'Amato seconded the motion.

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelsey Allard
Recording Secretary
Town of Willington

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WILLINGTON, CT.
2022 JAN 28 P 1:03


TOWN CLERK