



Minutes of the Board of Selectmen

Date: September 19, 2022
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall
Present: Chairman Woodbury, Vice-Chair Howard, Clerk Grigg, Selectman Hicks, Pepe and Administrator Bridges
Remote: None

Call the Meeting to Order

At 6:00 pm Chairman Woodbury called the Selectmen's meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance

Announcement Any members that are participating remotely in accordance with Regulation 940, CMR 29.10 of the Open Meeting Law

None

Review & Possible Action on ARPA Fund Allocation

Chairman Woodbury noted that Administrator Bridges provided funding categories for the \$3.5 million ARPA fund allocation consisting of immediate, intermediate, and extended funding requests.

Mr. Bridges reported that a community-wide questionnaire was created to gather data from residents, businesses owners, and employees. Based on the results of the questionnaire, he created baskets of eligible use of the funds which include replacing lost revenue; addressing public health and economic impacts; premium pay for essential and private employees; and water, sewer and broadband infrastructure improvements. Additional funding requests in the amount of \$92,000 for HVAC at Wire Village School; plus \$242,000 for the Library HVAC project; \$10,000 for additional technology requests, and a recent roof leak at the Fire Department may be considered for ARPA funding.

Dr. Hicks wants to address the issue of fresh air at the Library, Town Hall, Wire Village School for health and safety. Selectman Howard agreed and added the Senior Center for air handling improvements.

Mr. Grigg pointed out that the Board should first accept the ARPA funds to be used as lost revenue. Mr. Bridges explained by accepting the remainder of the ARPA funds as general revenue some of the additional rules and regulations can be avoided.

A motion to accept the remainder of the ARPA funds as general revenue as recommended by the Administrator (Howard/Hicks) passed 5/0.

The Board reviewed Mr. Bridges report on ARPA funding recommendations. Mr. Grigg indicated that \$1.7 million will fund the projects on the list with \$1.5 million remaining to move forward with the requests from the Library, Wire Village School, the demolition of Lake Street School and others listed on the report. Chairman Woodbury agreed and said he would like to include funding for businesses.

Mr. Bridges said the Senior Center air handlers would be for the basement and main level only. Mr. Pepe asked about the use of funds from Courthouse lease agreement at the Senior Center. Chairman Woodbury said the funds will be used for repairs to the Senior Center building; they are in the process of researching new windows.

Mr. Bridges asked the Board for guidance on premium pay for employees. After some discussion, the following guidelines were established as a starting point for qualification: only employees who worked during the state of emergency; only those with direct contact with the public; active and retired employees who worked with public behind the glass partitions will be considered.

Selectman Pepe questioned how the amount of \$500,000 was established to assist homeowners. Mr. Bridges said the amount was allocated with the thought that a committee would be formed to work out the criteria for all categories. The Board agreed that \$500,000 in funds for businesses and homeowners is a good starting point. Mr. Pepe noted that some projects can move forward now.

There was discussion on the \$150,000 set aside for engineering and grant assistance. Mr. Bridges noted that his preference is to hire an engineering assistant to provide support to the U & F Superintendent. Grant applications can be made for a canvas salt shed as well as many other projects.

The Board reviewed the report and agreed to the following:

- 500,000 for programs to assist homeowners (note: Selectman Pepe suggested that more research is needed in this category).
- \$500,000 for assistance to small businesses.
- \$375,300 for the paving at the Fire Station.
- \$40,000 in funds to be allocated to the Board of Health with \$37,500 for a vehicle, \$1,300 for a laptop for the public health nurse, and \$1,200 for a cell phone.
- \$95,000 LED signage for Town Hall and Spencer Fire / Police Station (note: Chairman Woodbury requests research be done on the sign at Town Hall due to its location at the intersection and noted the alignment of Route 9 may change the placement of the signs).
- \$35,000 for electronic voting system (note: Mr. Bridges said additional funds for the AV system may be needed).
- \$30,000 for the Police Department with \$25,000 for a light tower and \$5,000 for batteries for portable radios.
- \$95,300 for Wire Village air handlers.
- \$242,000 the Library HVAC project.

- Funding amounts are needed for HVAC improvements to Town Hall and the Senior Center; the demolition of the Lake Street School; the second egress for the upper floor and bathroom renovation at the Fire Station.

The Board did not agree to the \$150,000 request for engineering and grant assistance for public works projects at this time.

Mr. Pepe does not agree with the homeowner assistance amount and said additional discussion is needed on that amount. Mr. Woodbury agreed, however suggested setting the amount aside as a starting point and make changes as needed.

Mr. Bridges requested \$100,000 in funds to hire an architect to obtain cost estimates on some of the projects.

A motion to include funding as discussed, plus \$100,000 for architect funds (Hicks/Grigg) passed 5/0.

A motion to allocate the immediate funding as discussed and listed on the ARPA Recommendations Report (Hicks/Pepe) passed 5/0.

Mr. Bridges asked if he could move forward with the purchase of some items, including the police light tower and voting system. The Board agreed and added the purchase the LED sign.

Spencer business owner Bruce Desrosiers: asked the Board to provide assistance to businesses who were forced to shut down during the Covid-19 pandemic yet had to continue paying bills. He suggests a portion of the funds be allocated with a percentage provided based on the loss reflected in 2020 tax returns. He does not recommend a reimbursement on utilities.

Matt Defosse, Pauls Drive: advocated for as much funding as possible to the library.

A workshop will be held on October 24th to continue discussion on ARPA funding.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: ARPA questionnaire; report on ARPA funding recommendations