

Town of Greenwich

Working Group – American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Town Hall Meeting Room

Thursday, September 9, 2021

Present:

Committee: Fred Camillo (left at 2:53 PM), First Selectman (Chair), Benjamin Branyan, Town Administrator & COO, Andreas Duus, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer, Leslie Tarkington

Staff: Caroline Baisley, Director, Health Department, Demetria Nelson, Commissioner, Department of Human Services; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller

Selectmen: Jill Oberlander, Select Person

The meeting was called to order at 2:09 P.M.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Branyan called the meeting to order and informed the Working Group that the Interim Final Rule has been finalized and it is now in final form. The Final Rule is used as a guideline for expenditure spending from the U.S. Treasury for ARP funds.

2. Approval of the Minutes (July 19, 2021)

Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Duus to approve the July 19, 2021 minutes. The motion passed, as amended, on a vote of 6 to 0. The amendment was to include an attendee omitted from the minutes.

3. Discuss Next Steps

Mr. Ramer started the discussions by saying he had a discussion with a Planning and Zoning Board member, Margarita Alban, who stated that she had heard anecdotally that the Town of Westport, Connecticut was looking at expending funds in the area of Affordable Housing. Mr. Ramer suggested following up with the Town of Westport to determine if they were looking at funding for Affordable Housing with ARP monies.

Mr. Duus further stated that he was in contact with Bob Barolak, Planning and Zoning Alternate, who was doing research and work in the area of Affordable Housing and he would follow up with a discussion with him about the potential for funding Affordable Housing with ARP funds.

First Selectman Camillo stressed the importance of addressing flooding issues throughout the Town. This was prompted by the very recent flooding issues that affected the Pemberwick Park

from the remnants of Tropic Storm Ida. First Selectman Camillo offered to the Working Group that this would be a well-deserved area for the use of ARP funds.

Ms. Tarkington felt the three areas that should be addressed should be, 1) Infrastructure Upgrades at the Town Sewage Treatment Plan, 2) addressing Cybersecurity needs and 3) applying funds to offset the recent added Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) for the Pension Plan, due to the arbitration settlement with the Town of Greenwich Fire Department contract.

Mr. Branyan responded to Ms. Tarkington's comments by telling the Working Group that he has planned to meet with Town Departments, starting next week, to initiate talks regarding the annual 15-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process for the upcoming budget. He added that his goal is to tie the CIP needs of the departments to eligible projects that would be considered eligible expenditures for ARP funds. Potential stormwater projects would be one of them to lead the list.

Ms. Moriarty stated that after hearing all of the previous comments, it is necessary to develop a process. She said that we need to develop a list including a universe of all potential areas of eligible expenditures and then narrow it down. Ms. Moriarty initially offered three areas to look at, such as 1) not for profits that have been negatively affected by the COVID experience, 2) direct support for residents and finally 3) potential additional aid to the Town's school system. She Stated that this would be in addition to the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) funds.

The Working Group concurred with Ms. Moriarty's comments that they collectively need to develop a list of areas of potential ARP funding.

Mr. Branyan also agreed and mentioned that he felt there are three potential buckets where funding is needed. He listed them as 1) infrastructure needs, 2) funding for non-profit organizations in need and 3) identifying household and individual needs.

Ms. Oberlander cautioned the Working Group that everything has to be linked to an eligible project, but she also warned that we should not lead the public to over-expect if we can't deliver adequate funding.

Ms. Moriarty told the Working Group, that based on her notes from all of the discussions so far, she had developed a listing of nine (9) potential areas as follows:

1. Affordable Housing
2. Stormwater Management and sea level rise
3. Grass Island (Wastewater Treatment Plant) Remediation
4. Cybersecurity
5. Funding Pension COLA's
6. Potential CIP Projects eligible for funding
7. Direct Support for Impacted Residents and/or Businesses
8. Non-Profit Organizations impacted by the COVID Pandemic
9. Town's School System needs above the potential reimbursements from ESSER III

Ms. Tarkington suggested to add Broadband projects and support for senior population in addition to her previous recommendations.

Mr. Ramer told the Working Group that he would like to add the following additional suggestions:

1. Mental Health and Substance Abuse funding
2. Premium Pay to Essential Workers such as Nathaniel Witherell, the Health Department and Public Safety
3. Water Projects
4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and testing for COVID
5. Eviction Protections for Tenants

Mr. Duus cautioned the Working Group that they should be cognizant of taking on too many small items that may tend to slow the process down. He suggested concentrating on fewer and larger areas that would be easier to manage.

Ms. Nelson responded and offered to reach out to the Untied Way and her Human Services contacts to develop some vital statistics to establish or quantify the needs of the community.

4. Schedule next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 1:30 PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room

5. Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 P.M.

Peter Mynarski, Recording Secretary

Fred Camillo, Chair ARP Working Group