

Town of Willington

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

August 1, 2022
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order:

C.Mailhos called the meeting to Order at 1:30pm.

2. Members Present:

E. Wiczenski	M.D'Amato(absent)
C.Mailhos	S.Cobb
T.Sposato	T.Smith
S.Fisher	J.Arpin(via Zoom)
D.Latinscics(absent)	R.Campbell (via zoom at 1:35pm)
S.Hills (not present)	

3. Minutes

No meeting minutes were approved

4. Correspondence:

C.Mailhos indicated she had received an email from D.Berg.

5. Present to Speak:

Don Berg addressed the Commission regarding the project request that is currently before the Commission for a generator.

6. New Business:

None

7. Unfinished Business

a. Requests to be CLOSED

ARPA-4. Radios for DPW Use (DPW)/ Total Appropriated (\$38,000)- Total Expenditure (\$28,946.01)= Amount to return to Fund 19 (\$9,053.98)

E.Wiczenski made a motion to close ARPA-4 and return \$9,053.98 to Fund 19. Second by T.Sposato.

All in Favor. Motions Passes Unanimously

b. Updates on PREVIOUSLY FUNDED Requests (no discussion necessary if no updates)

S.Cobb gave a brief update on ARPA-3 (Second Ambulance) and indicated that there was still items they were waiting to received before it could be closed.

E.Wiczenski gave an update regarding ARPA-13 (Devices for Town Staff) and stated that the devices and monitors had been received but that the docking stations had yet to be delivered. The Town's IT staff was starting the process of setting them up in each office. She further indicated that it might be several months until the new wireless access points were received.

c. Updates on PREVIOUSLY HEARD Requests (no discussion necessary if no updates)

ARPA-39- Repair of Library Building Structure (WPL) \$27,000.

No Update

d. Updates on Requests heard at PUBLIC HEARING on 7/11/22 (no discussion necessary if no updates)

Town Attorney Ryan O'Donnell joined the meeting to advised the ARPA Commission as to their powers and duties based upon the Ordinance that was passed by the Town. Specifically, the Commission discussed their ability to bring a project request to a Town Meeting. Attorney O'Donnell advised them that he did not see an apparent conflict with bringing a project request to a Town Meeting as an additional method of outreach by the ARPA Commission. Doing so would not be done to circumvent or remove the Commission's responsibility to approve project requests but would be an additional method of public engagement.

The Commission further reviewed if any additional actions should be taken given the apparent complaint that was made to the Treasury about the misappropriation of ARPA funds. E.Wieczenski indicated that she has not been able to obtain and has not been provided with any documentation to support the claim that such a complaint was made.

R.O'Donnell indicated that absent the provision of actional evidence, the Commission should continue to move forward. He further stated that there are many reasons that such an allegation could be made but that typically, a Board/Commission with a charge such as ARPA would not hold up their process without actual evidence of a problem. He further stated that the Board should invite the individual that has presented this allegation to provide whatever information/evidence they have to the ARPA Commission for review. He suggested that the Board should continue the allocation process until such time as this information was provide.

E.Wieczenski asked for clarification regarding the process following a Town Meeting for an ARPA project should the Board choose to move in that direction and if the appropriate would then need to go before the Board of Finance.

R. O'Donnell indicated that it would not need to go before the Board of Finance. He further clarified a question from R.Campbell who referenced a State Statute which requires the Board of Finance to be involved with all appropriations. Given that these funds are not appropriated in the same way and coming from the Town's budget, that specific statute does not apply in this case.

The Commission then held a general discussion regarding a previous motion to send **ARPA-32 (Retention Bonuses for Town Employees)** and **ARPA-36(Retention Bonuses for Fire Department Employees)** to a Town Meeting.

T.Smith indicated his thoughts about acting on these requests given the lengthy discussion that had occurred for each. He further stated his concerns with sending these projects to a Town Meeting for a vote or simply acting on them as a Commission. He suggested that perhaps the Commission could send them to the Board of Finance for concurrence.

E.Wieczenski indicated that she had concerns about singling specific project requests out and sending those projects to Town Meeting, particularly when this project was unanimously supported by the Board of Selectmen. She further stated that the Town of Mansfield is considering a similar project which would include their school and Region 19 staff. She stated that she would not be against asked to Board of Finance to weigh in on the merits of the project.

T.Smith and C.Mailhos stated their concurrence with asking the Board of Finance to weigh in on the merits of these project requests.

C.Mailhos withdrew her motion to sent ARPA-32 and ARPA-36 to Town Meeting. S.Fisher withdrew his second to the motion.

C.Mailhos made a motion to bring ARPA-32 and ARPA-36 to the Board of Finance for consideration and input. Second by E.Wieczenski.

*All in Favor with T.Sposato, J.Arpin, R.Campbell and S.Cobb abstaining
Motion Passes Unanimously*

i. ARPA-17/18- Walking track improvements at RRAC (Drainage & lights) (WPRC)- \$196,979.

T.Smith made a motion to approve ARPA-17/18. Second by E.Wieczenski.

E.Wieczenski stated her concerns with the size of the project, the adequacy of any contingency funds and the current status of rising construction costs.

S.Fisher indicated that the Parks & Rec Commission was prepared to be aggressive in their bidding of the project should it be approved to ensure the allocation would be sufficient to complete the project.

E.Wieczenski stated that she felt it might be appropriate to increase the amount of the allocation to cover any construction cost increases.

All in Favor. Motions Passes Unanimously

ii. ARPA-20- New Furnace for Fire House (WHFD) \$20,000

T.Smith made a motion to approve ARPA-20. Second by T. Sposato.

All in Favor. Motions Passes Unanimously

iii. ARPA-28- Technology Upgrades at Senior Center. (WSC) \$3,000

S.Cobb made a motion to approve ARPA-28. Second by T. Smith

All in Favor. Motions Passes Unanimously

iv. ARPA-30A- Direct Emergency Call Line at Button Hill (WHA) \$53,000

E.Wieczenski stated that she wanted to be certain that these projects would not require further funds or ongoing costs to the Town.

The Commission held a general discussion regarding ongoing/operating costs and were in general agreement that all of the ongoing costs associated with this project would be borne by the Housing Authority.

E. Wiecenski made a motion to approve ARPA-30A Direct Emergency Call Line at Button Hill for \$53,000 from fund 19. Second by T.Smith.

All in Favor. Motions Passes Unanimously

v. ARPA-30B-Emergency Generator at Button Hill (\$77,000)

The Commission held a general discussion about the project and the specific functions of the generator. The applicant further clarified questions regarding the operation and need for an additional \$4,200 beyond the funds requested.

T. Sposato stated concerns he had with the various items that would not be connected or served by the generator, including the Senior Center.

The Commission held further discussion about the benefits of having these units connected to an emergency generator vs. the Senior Center which could serve as a resource to all Willington residents during a storm event or other emergency.

S.Cobb made a motion to remove ARPA-30B from consideration. Second by T.Smith

E.Wiecenski stated that she agreed it was a useful resource, but was not sure it was necessary at this point in time. She further stated that as presented, the project doesn't serve as much of the need as it should.

All in Favor. Motions Passes (J.Aripin and R.Campbell not voting)

vi. ARPA-31 Historical Society Archival Storage (WHS) \$15,000

E.Wiecenski made a motion to approve ARPA-31. Second by T.Sposato

E.Wiecenski stated that she wanted to be sure that all non-profit requests were handled in the same manner, specifically related to the grants that were offered by the EDC for small businesses and non-profits.

C.Mailhos stated that she felt this project was different than that fell within the criteria of the EDC grants because it was a tangible project and not a request for funds based upon a negative impact from COVID.

All in Favor. Motions Passes Unanimously

vii. ARPA-32: Retention Bonuses for Town Employees (BOS) \$32,250

Previously discussed above

viii. ARPA-33 Flags, Grave Markers and Monument Repaid (WVF) \$6,500

No action was taken

ix. ARPA-34 Storage Box at DPW for Evictions (DPW) \$6,000

E.Wiecenski made a motion to approve ARPA-34. Second by S.Cobb

T.Sposato indicated that given fluctuating pricing, it may be slightly over \$6,000.

E.Wiecenski modified her motion to approve the request for up to \$7,000.

All in Favor. Motions Passes with R.Cambell abstaining

x. **ARPA-35 Bring URCommunityCars.org to Willington (WHS) \$6,000**

T. Sposato made a motion to approve ARPA-35 for \$5,000 instead of \$6,000. Second by S. Fisher

S.Cobb asked what the ongoing costs would be moving forward if this service continued.

J.Arpin clarified there would be no ongoing costs to the Town for the project. The service is supported by volunteers and the funds are requested to get the project started but would not be required once it was off the ground and running.

All in Favor. Motions Passes with E.Wieczenski abstaining

xi. **ARPA-36- Retention Bonuses for Fire Department Employees (WFD1) \$17,000**

Previously discussed above

xii. **ARPA-37 2022 John Deere Skid Steer (DPW) \$68,000**

C.Mailhos made a motion to approve ARPA-37. Second by S.Fisher

C.Mailhos stated concerns with the fact that this item had never been previously requested for CIP funding or otherwise and that there were other ARPA dollars that had already been allocated for Public Works.

E.Wieczenski stated that there were a number of other requests that had never gone before the CIP Committee for review. She further explained in her discussions with the Public Works Director the benefits to using the opportunity to fund this request through ARPA would create.

S.Cobb made a motion to approve ARPA-37. Second by T.Smith.

*All in Favor. With C.Mailhos voting no and T.Sposato abstaining
Motions Passes*

e. **Funding Request Submissions- POSSIBLE ACTION**

The Commission held a general discussion about the time of the Board meetings and what schedule worked best for the group moving forward. The Commission further discussed the idea of meeting later in the evening on August 29th but elected to maintain the 1:30pm schedule for the time being.

The August 15th meeting will be cancelled.

8. **Present to Speak**

D.Berg thank the Commission for the consideration and evaluation of the various submitted projects.

9. **Adjourn**

E.Wieczenski made a motion to adjourn at 3:27pm

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WILLINGTON, CT.

2022 SEP 19 P 1:15


TOWN CLERK