

Town of Willington  
40 Old Farms Road, Willington Connecticut  
American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Commission  
Regular Meeting March 7, 2022  
1:30 PM

THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN HYBRID FORMAT. THE RECORDING MAY BE VIEWED ON YOUTUBE.COM

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Mailhos called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. It was noted that Mike D'Amato and Stuart Fisher were absent. Members of the public were logged in via zoom platform; including Board of Finance Chairman, Michael Makuch.

2. Roll Call

Jennie Arpin, Donna Latincsics, Robin Campbell, Christina Mailhos, First Selectwoman Wiecenski, Stuart Cobb and Troy Sposato were in attendance in person. Samantha Hills & Tom Smith were in attendance via zoom platform. Stuart Fisher arrived at 1:42 pm via zoom.

3 Correspondence

Chairman Mailhos read correspondence from Chairman Makuch of the Board of Finance. The letter was drafted as a result of a motion and discussion regarding ARPA funding requests. A copy of the letter is attached to the minutes.

4. Present to Speak

No one was present to speak.

5. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting were not available. This item has been tabled until the next meeting.

6. Unfinished Business

a. ARPA Commission Ordinance

Chairman Mailhos asked if we have received clarification on the Ordinance. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the Town Attorney has spent a tremendous amount of time working on a formal opinion. First Selectwoman Wiecenski added, until such time as we are told it is not legal; the Ordinance shall be treated as legal and binding. It was voted on by the legislative body at a town meeting. While the Board of Finance asks us not to conduct business, we have a legal Ordinance in place; giving authority to this Commission. The Legal Opinion is going to take some time and could cost us a pretty penny to get. Once it comes, then everyone will feel as confident as she does.

In the meantime, the recommendation from the Town Attorney as it stands is to reference the Ordinance when approving items; "as authorized by Ordinance approved at meeting effective January 4, 2022 (which is when the ordinance became effective).

S. Hills asked if the correspondence is referencing only added or ongoing expenses incurred to the budget? First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified it isn't ideal use of these funds, as it is recommended that they be one time funds; but there are some things that could have ongoing effects. She gave the examples to the Board of Finance; such as the Human Services Department addition – it would have to be phased in over time; but the ARPA funding would ease it into the budget.

**b. Update on already approved expenditures**

First Selectman Wiecenski gave a brief update on the following projects.

1. ARPA 9 –\$35,000: AC Units at Senior Center - This project was completed and the final cost came in just over \$30,000; with a savings of \$5,000.
2. ARPA -10 - \$28,500: – Meeting Room Equipment (Mic & Speakers) At TOB - This project has not had any spending yet.
3. ARPA 11 – \$57,500 - Basement cleaning and concrete floor at TOB - this project is almost complete, with the exception of a commercial de-humidifier, which Troy will be getting specs on next week. So far, \$38,495.72 has been spent to date and we are expecting to have leftover funds once the de-humidifier has been purchased.
4. ARPA 12- \$2,500 - Air purifiers at TOB - We were able to purchase 4 air purifiers at \$2,260, coming under budget.

**7. New Business**

**a. Funding Request Submissions to be RECEIVED:**

Chairman Mailhos noted that she would like to acknowledge the requests that come in.

ARPA 4: \$38,000 Radios for DPW use

ARPA 5: \$137,000 SCBA Air Packs (WHFD)

ARPA-6 - \$69,000 for Generator for DPW (DPW)

ARPA-7 - \$20,000 for AC for HMS Band Room (BOE)

ARPA-8 - \$30,000 for Workout Pavilion at River Road (WPRC)

ARPA-13 - \$38,460 for devices for Town Staff and Senior Center (BOS)

ARPA-14 - \$300,000 for Small Business and Nonprofit Assistance Program (EDC)

ARPA-15 - \$15,556 for Premium Pay for Human Services Staff (WHS)

ARPA-16 - \$235,000 for Radios for Fire Departments use (WHFD & WFD1)

ARPA-17 - \$35,000 for Lights around Walking Track at RRAC (WPRC)

ARPA-18 - \$20,000 for Drainage at RRAC (WPRC)

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to receive the items.**

**S. Hills seconded the motion.**

S. Cobb noted that some of these projects have definitive info and funding requests, and some do not. He recommended having the projects get at least one quote for the scope of work. First Selectwoman Wiecenski argued that it could be difficult to get quotes during this time. Vendors are leery about

wasting time on a job that may not be funded or have someone else get the job if they bid lower. She did agree that all projects should at least have a scope of work and give them the opportunity to get it before they meet.

**Vote: All in favor 0 No 0 Abstain**

b. Funding Request Submissions to be HEARD:

1. ARPA-5 - \$137,000 for SCBA Air Packs (WHFD)

This project has gone through CIP and transferred to the ARPA requests. S.Cobb noted that the air packs may have a different cost than the original request as it went up in November, and then again in February. S. Cobb added that the vendor has told they are only able to hold the price quotes for 2 weeks. WHFD Chief Snyder and WFD Chief Moore who were present at the beginning of the meeting, left on a call, and were not available to answer questions. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that this project was on CIP but was also projected to purchase in the next year, therefore it can be discussed at a future meeting and will give them time to get an updated quote for the product.

Chairman Mailhos then asked if this is an off-budget expense or operating budget expense. First Selectwoman Wiecenski suggested that they see if there is a better way to phase it into the budget if they all expire on the same date (in the future). S.Cobb said the cylinders will all expire at the same time (and we have experienced that in the past); but it is the pack models that change all of the time, which affects training in the departments. It is best to change them all at the same time.

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to move ARPA#5 to possible action at next meeting.**

**S. Fisher seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All in favor. 0 No 0 Abstain.**

2. ARPA-6 - \$69,000 for Generator for DPW (DPW)

Troy Sposato noted that Public Works does have a generator but it is 25 years old, and needs to be manually started by one of the crew members in the event of a power loss, which sometimes proves challenging, when the crew or emergency apparatus are in need of fuel. He is looking at an auto-start model that would run on propane. He received a verbal quote from a contractor.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that this is something that is necessary and it speaks to public safety and was an item that was on CIP. She supports to give it the go-ahead to go out to bid.

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to move ARPA 6 to POSSIBLE ACTION.**

**T. Smith seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All in favor 0 No 0 Abstain.**

T. Smith suggested holding a public hearing for the items that are planning on being funded. First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed, and said she likes the idea of holding a meeting in the evening where people could attend at a more convenient time.

3. ARPA-7 - \$20,000 for AC for HMS Band Room (BOE)



Superintendent Stevens was not at the meeting. S. Cobb spoke briefly of the project as he heard about it during the CIP sessions. The band room at HMS has a single window on ground level. The concern would be if the window is kept open, anyone could have access to the building. By installing a new unit in that room, would offer security.

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to keep ARPA 7 to be heard.**

**S.Cobb seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All in favor 0 No. 0 Abstain.**

**4. ARPA-8 - \$30,000 for Workout Pavilion at River Road (WPRC)**

S. Fisher clarified that the pavilion cannot be done until the drainage is fixed. S. Cobb then asked which project is more important, the pavilion or the lighting around the track. S. Fisher replied that the Recreation Commission wants the lighting project done.

S. Hills recommended removing the project entirely as it isn't ready and the lighting project is more important.

**S. Cobb moved to table ARPA 8 and review at a later date.**

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 7 Yes (Arpin, Latincsics, Campbell, Mailhos, Cobb, Wiecenski, Smith)**

**2 No (Hills, Fisher)**

**0 Abstain**

***Motion Passes***

**5. ARPA-14 - \$300,000 for Small Business and Nonprofit Assistance Program (EDC)**

S. Hills spoke briefly about the project, noting that the EDC wants to get money back into the hands of our businesses. The EDC is looking at giving small businesses (less than 100 people); they must have operations in Willington and be in good standing. The grants in the amount of between \$5,000 and \$15,000; depending on how many businesses apply. The eligibility details and application requirements were discussed.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked how many small businesses & non-profits would fall into the category and then asked who (from EDC) would be spearheading the initiative? Several questions were asked regarding this project; how far is \$300,000 going to go; what are the qualifiers? What is the approval process. S. Hills stated she was not sure how many businesses (she did not have the info in front of her) but she noted that the project is mirrored of what was done in East Windsor. The process is expected to run about 18 months. The EDC would have to create a process as they move along; and will prioritize to those businesses who were affected and prioritize once they receive them.

S. Cobb noted that the application process is very detailed, however the approval process is not. He recommended having the EDC put more thought into the evaluation portion. D. Latincsics noted that there would be an auditing process at the end as well.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that East Windsor's program ran over the summer last year and did not take 18 months. She then noted that she believes this is a priority and she thinks the faster we can get this moving the better.

S. Hills stated that she will bring the questions to the EDC.

Chairman Mailhos asked how many businesses in E. Windsor actually applied and what was their level of funding? She said that she hates to tie up \$300,000 to only find there is less than \$100,000 eligible to be spent, or possibly more than that because we just don't know who will apply. First Selectwoman Wiecenski agreed, noting that she supports the process, but it just needs a few details worked out.

**D. Latincsics moved to place ARPA14 on the "to be heard" at next meeting.**

**T. Sposato seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All in favor 0 No 0 Abstain**

6. ARPA-15 - \$15,556 for Premium Pay for Human Services Staff (WHS)

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that the real funding number for this item should be: \$34,379; which would be a total increase over a 3 year span. 75% in year 1 (\$16,098) , 50% (\$11,816) in year 2, and 25% (\$6,465) in year 3. The funding would cover an increase to the Assistant Human Services Director (bringing up from 8 hours per week to 30) and adding a Senior Center Director. These increases would have a direct impact on the operating budget. By fiscal year 25-26 it would be at minimal impact to taxpayers.

T. Smith asked if this has been presented to the Board of Finance and if the Board of Selectmen are on board to fully support this? First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that the Board of Selectmen did discuss as they began building the budget. The budget was presented to the Board of Finance last Thursday; but it hasn't been discussed in its entirety.

Chairman Mailhos stated that this really should be decided on before the BOF brings the budget to the public hearing. She then added that it may have to be done in 2 different processes; the creation of the new position and the increase, because they are both lumped together, it is hard to see it the way it has been presented. She added that because it has an implication in all of the years, it really should go before the Board of Finance; as it really isn't appropriate for this board to decide. It is not a standalone thing. First Selectwoman Wiecenski clarified that this is really where we should be looking at spending our ARPA funds.

J. Arpin defended the request, noting that she has seen an uptick of 32% of clients in y1 since COVID began. This is covered by herself and one 8-hour per week assistant. She added that she cannot cover this entire town. She added that she shouldn't have to be one of the lowest paid department heads and run the senior center on top of it all. She believes it is a small ask. Chairman Mailhos said she does not disagree and believes that the Board of Finance is where this discussion should be held. J.Arpin disagreed, stating that the BOF does not understand her department and the services she provides. First Selectwoman Wiecenski said she sees it both ways – if the BOF doesn't support this going forward after 3 years, we may have to decide if we can afford it in the future. She added that we are looking at



how we are going to spend dollars that were given to us as a result of a pandemic – this is where we want to put our resources into.

**T.Smith moved to table ARPA15 to the next meeting for “possible action”.**

**D. Latinsics seconded the motion.**

First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked Chairman Mailhos (who also sits on the Board of Finance) to discuss this topic and bring forth the information at their next meeting, which is on Thursday, 3/10.

**Vote: 8 Yes (Latinsics, Campbell, Mailhos, Cobb, Wiecenski, Smith, Hills & Fisher)**

**0 No**

**1 Abstain (Arpin)**

**7. ARPA-16 - \$235,000 for Radios for Fire Departments use (WHFD & WFD1)**

Troy began the discussion stating that he received correspondence from J&S Radio that the price will go up 9% on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The increase will mean \$21,150 to the Fire Department radios and an additional \$3,500 to the public works trucks.

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to move ARPA16 and ARPA4 to “possible action” today.**

**T.Smith seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 8 Yes (Latinsics, Campbell, Mailhos, Wiecenski, Arpin, Smith, Hills & Fisher)**

**0 No**

**1 Abstain (Cobb)**

**Motion carried**

Superintendent Stevens arrived at 3:11 PM to discuss ARPA 7. He noted that the window in the band room, which is ground level in the back of the building. He is concerned with the window being open during session poses a security issue. By installing an AC unit would allow the window to remain locked at all times. He noted that the quote he is using is an old number and would be able to furnish an updated quote.

**D.Latinsics moved to bring ARPA7 to “possible action”**

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All in favor. 0 No. 0 Abstain.**

c. Funding Request Submissions – POSSIBLE ACTION:

1. ARPA-3 - \$100,000 for a purchase of a second ambulance (WFD1) RECEIVED 2/28/2022, HEARD 2/28/2022

S.Cobb stated that the Fire Department sees 1-5 ambulances that are available that meets their needs, but do not have the funding at the moment.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked if there would be any ongoing budget implications? The Fire Department stated that they do not anticipate any increase in the maintenance or personnel.

WFD Chief Moore was present via zoom said the hope is to offset with the current budget they have with running both trucks will bring the maintenance down on the current ambulance and they do not expect to increase staff. If the new apparatus is going to run, it will be driven by the volunteers. He noted if both vehicles are running at the same time, it could potentially bring in additional revenue.

Chairman Mailhos noted that we are adding a new vehicle and also purchasing a new ambulance through the CIP. This particular purchase isn't going to be a replacement, it would be an addition. Why not just purchase a brand new ambulance to replace the one you have now? S.Cobb said that you still would only have now; it could be out for maintenance and it is much different than a personal vehicle, where if your car breaks down, you could rent one to use while it is being fixed, but you can't do that with an ambulance.

Chief Moore noted that many of our surrounding towns have multiple vehicles because they have to have that functioning spare. You can't borrow other agencies ambulances – and while we have gotten away with borrowing from neighbors in the past, we are no longer able to do so, because it isn't insured the proper way.

T. Smith said this has been discussed for a number of years and he is surprised that we haven't taken the plunge and gotten one yet. By having a second ambulance, it is a win-win; it serves to stimulate volunteers to step up– a use of funds in the ARPA frame work.

S. Hills asked if we have to pay other towns if and when our ambulance is down and we borrow one? Chief Moore said luckily, we have a good relationship with Stafford and no, they don't charge.

**First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to approve up to \$100,000 for a second ambulance for Willington Fire Department #1 as authorized by Ordinance approved at Town Meeting effective January 4, 2022. S.Hills seconded the motion.**

T.Smith noted that he is not necessarily ready to vote on this today, as he would rather hold a public hearing to involve the public and also based on the correspondence from the Board of Finance.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that there are only a handful of these items that would be moved on that are direct results of public safety and covid. She sees the need for it – especially since we had a time during covid where we had trouble staffing an ambulance – it is important to our residents.

Chairman Mailhos stated that she would feel better if three things happen:

- 1) We get the letter of opinion from the Town Attorney
- 2) The BOF specifically weighs on this – it has not even been on the CIP or discussions in the past
- 3) We hold a public hearing to discuss in public

**T.Smith moved to table the motion on the floor.**

**R. Campbell seconded the motion to table the motion on the floor.**

**Vote: 7 Yes (Latincsics, Campbell, Mailhos, Wiecenski, Arpin, Smith, & Fisher)**

**1 No (Hills)**

**1 Abstain (Cobb)**

Chairman Mailhos said she is going to prepare our Public Hearing and will discuss at the Board of Finance at their next meeting. R. Campbell suggested, since we would be holding a public hearing and are still waiting for the legal opinion, why wouldn't we just hold a regular Town Meeting? First Selectwoman Wiecenski disagreed she believes we have a legal notice that answers the questions. We are working to prove something that is already there.

T. Smith said he is hopeful that we have the legal opinion by then, but by at least holding the public hearing will give us time to get the word out and give people an opportunity to weigh in.

S. Hills asked if we table this to be heard at the next meeting, would it make it not be able to be heard at the April 1<sup>st</sup> regular ARPA meeting. She said she does not want anything to fall under the cracks. Discussion was held on a date for a public hearing. It was decided to hold a special ARPA meeting on Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM to educate the public. The meeting will be publicized on the town's website and social media and be held in the Common Room at the Town Office Building. The meeting will be hybrid (in person AND via zoom).

The items that will be presented are:

ARPA-3 second ambulance WFD#1 (\$100,000)  
ARPA-16 Radios for Fire Departments (WFD#1 & WHFD) (\$235,000)  
ARPA-4 Radios for DPW (\$38,000)  
ARPA-15 Premium pay for Human Services (\$34,379)  
ARPA-5 SCBA Air packs (\$137,000)  
ARPA-6 Generator for DPW (\$69,000)  
ARPA-7 AC for HMS Band Room (\$20,000)

8. Present to Speak

No one was present to speak

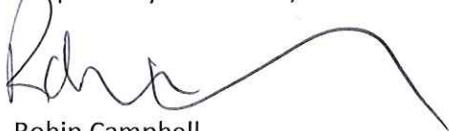
9. Adjourn

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:00 PM  
T.Sposato seconded the motion.

RECEIVED  
WILLINGTON, CT.

2022 MAR -9 A 11: 22

Respectfully Submitted,



Robin Campbell  
Town Clerk  
(filling in for M.D'Amato/Secretary)

  
TOWN CLERK

Attachment: Correspondence from Board of Finance re: guidance for ARPA spending Dated 3/4/22



**Re: Board of Finance guidance**

Mailhos, Christina <cmailhos@willingtonCT.gov>

Fri 3/4/2022 9:13 AM

To: Makuch, Mike <mmakuch@willingtonCT.gov>

Chairman Makuch,

Thank you. This will be forwarded on to the ARPA Board and included in the correspondence for the March 7, 2022 meeting.

Christina Mailhos  
Chair, ARPA Commission  
Town of Willington

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**From:** Makuch, Mike <mmakuch@willingtonCT.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, March 3, 2022 9:39 PM

**To:** Mailhos, Christina <cmailhos@willingtonCT.gov>

**Subject:** Board of Finance guidance

ARPA Chairperson Mailhos,

At tonight's Board of Finance meeting (03/03/2022), the board again discussed the ongoing questions about the ARPA approval process. While we wait for the final legal advice, the board is aware that our typical financial responsibility is probably not applicable, but our responsibilities may be affected downstream by ARPA expenses having impact on other funds, and/or costs related to ARPA initiatives that need continued support. Thus, the Board of Finance unanimously voted to send your commission non-binding guidance in the form of the following motion:

To recommend respectfully to the ARPA commission that

- 1) it decline to approve any projects or purchases that carry future ongoing costs in payroll, operating or capital budgets
- 2) it not approve requests until the legal issues for allocating funds are addressed by the town attorney and can be reviewed by the BOF
- 3) it consider approving funds for qualifying CIP projects in order to free up capital money for other pressing needs.

Mike Makuch  
Chairman-Board of Finance  
Willington, CT