

**Town of Willington**  
**40 Old Farms Road, Willington CT**  
**American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Commission**  
**Special Meeting | March 21, 2022**  
**6:30pm**

*THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN HYBRID FORMAT. THE RECORDING MAY BE VIEWED ON [WWW.YOUTUBE.COM](http://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM)*

**1. Call Meeting to Order:**

C.Mailhos called the Meeting or Order at 6:45pm.

**2. Call to Order:**

Members present:

Erika Wiecenski	Stuart Cobb
Thomas Smith	Samantha Hills
Jennie Arpin	Troy Sposato
Christina Mailhos	Robin Campbell
Michael D'Amato (7:00pm)	

**3. Presentation of ARPA Commission Funding Request Approval Process**

Chairman Mailhos gave an overview of the funding request approval process. There are 25 requests so far, 4 were approved at a Town Meeting in August. Step 1: Funds are requested through an online form and assigned a project number. Step 2: The ARPA Commission will formally "receive" the project at the following regular meeting. Step 3: The ARPA Commission will "hear" about the request. Step 4: The ARPA Commission may bring it to a Public Hearing. Step 5: The ARPA Commission will take action (decide to approve or not and at what amount.)

**4. Public Hearing**

Funding Request Submissions for Public Input:

**a. ARPA-3: \$100,000 for the purchase of a second ambulance (WFD1)**

Chief Moore gave an overview of the request and need for the second ambulance.

Joan Taraskiewicz: Spoke in favor of this request.

Matt Clark: Asked if \$100,000 is needed, are there any less expensive options? Chief Moore said they were still researching options. Matt Clark suggested it be tabled until we know if there are less expensive options available. First Selectman Wiecenski – made a clarification that it isn't the "new" ambulance that is in the CIP plan – this is different and additional request.

Samantha Hills: asked for clarification that this isn't to replace the current ambulance, it is in addition to it. Chief Moore explained that it is.

Peter Latinsics – has a concern that these funds should not be used to create a new ongoing expense for the Town. Chief Moore said it can stretch the life expectancy of the primary ambulance.

Had we not had ARPA funds, would you have asked for this? Yes, went to BOF regarding this before ARPA Commission was formed. Decided this would be best place for the request.

Samantha Hills: has concern that this creates an ongoing expense with increased maintenance and insurance. Asked if the Attorney has weighed in on if we could commit to an ongoing expense?

Christina Mailhos – said the spirit of the communication from the Attorney was more about the legality of the commission appropriating, otherwise we have the final rule to go by and we need to make sure expenditures are line with that. We have to do due diligence.

First Selectman Wiecenski – everything would have an ongoing expense, gave examples

Mike Makuch – Chairman of BOF, agrees having a functional ambulance is critical and suggested on behalf of Board of Finance that instead of spending \$100K to buy a second ambulance and then spending \$300K to replace the primary ambulance with taxpayer dollars, more prudent for ARPA to increase spending up to \$200K and for a brand new ambulance (Uconn just did at \$175K) that could be the primary. Instead of spending \$400K, we would spend \$200K and have an ambulance sooner. Hopes the Commission will consider as an option. Chief Moore said that BOF didn't send anything forward to ARPA or FD – also noted that specs are by the FD, not the BOF.

Tom Smith – Asked Chairman Makuch if it was a vote of BOF? Answer: No. BOF input weighed heavily on the motion to purchase out of respect for the BOF after the recommendations from the last meeting. Wanted to clarify that it wasn't a vote.

Matt Clark – Would make a lot more sense to replace problematic ambulance with a new one. One new ambulance is better than 2 used ambulances. Alex Moore stated that the ambulance coming is an off-budget item.

Jennie Arpin – Question about what would happen if 2 calls came in at Senior Housing at the same time and we only have 1 ambulance. Chief Moore explained about mutual aid agreements and that this ambulance would be used as a back-up, not hiring more staff to drive it.

First Selectman Wiecenski - reiterated that there is no plan to add staffing.

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

Chief Snyder gave an overview of the request and the need for the new air packs. He indicated that the current air packs were due to expire in January of 2023 and that they were last replaced in 1994.

Peter Tanaka: Spoke in favor of this request and the importance of the Fire Department having access to proper breathing equipment. Also mentioned that this is different from the ambulance because

Peter Latincsics: Spoke in favor.

**c. ARPA-6: \$69,000 for Generator for DPW (DPW)**

Troy Sposato presented the project request to the ARPA Commission. Mr. Sposato outlined the need for the project and the funding request. The ability to repurpose the existing generator currently at the Public Works garage was also discussed.

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

Superintendent Stevens presented the project request to the Commission. He indicated that this has been a CIP project request for several years and that the primary purpose of this request was for security purposes. The Commission discussed the potential benefits of pursuing a unit that could both heat and cool vs. just cool the band room.

Kathy Demers requested clarification regarding the applicability of the BOE's request under the ARPA final rule and the use of the ARPA funds that were provided directly to the BOE.

Matthew Clark questioned if the Town, Board of Education or ARPA Committee had looked at using ARPA funding to replace the school's roofs.

A general discussion was held between Commission members and the Superintendent of schools about the which projects have been reviewed previously, the status of the school's roofs and the applicability under ARPA's scope.

**e. ARPA-15: \$34,379 for Premium Pay for Human Services Staff**

Chairman Maillhos gave a brief overview of some questions and concerns that had been raised previously, specifically as they related to how the Commission should consider requests that would



then move to the operating budget as a yearly/ongoing cost to the Town. First Selectwoman Wiecenski provided additional information as to how a request such as this would be handled via the operating budget.

Matthew Clark: indicated that he did not feel funding staff positions was a prudent use of ARPA funds. He suggested that it should be funded through the Town's operating budget.

Peter Latincsics: is in favor of having the program, but thinks using ARPA funding to do it is wrong

Kathy Demers: Spoke in support of the request and the benefits that a position such as this would bring to Willington and the Senior Center

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

Chief Moore presented an overview of the project. He indicated that if approved, it would bring the offices and fire trucks to a radio system that aligns with the State of CT's system. Chief Tom Snyder echoed Chief Moore's presentation and the need for the new equipment. It was also noted that as of April 1, 2022 a 9% increase may be applied to the costs. Troy Sposato also spoke to his experience with using this system and the importance of having a system that was reliable. Stuart Cobb also pointed out that this would allow Fire personnel to communicate directly with the DPW staff.

**g. ARPA-4: \$38,000 for Radios for Public Works' use (DPW)**

Troy Sposato outlined the request and that the cost would allow for the purchase of a base unit system to further facilitate communication between DPW and Fire.

Sarah Smith: Indicated that she felt that requests of the Human Services Department and the Fire Department's radio request were both appropriate and needed.

**h. ARPA-14: \$300,000 for Small Business and Non-profit Assistance Project (EDC)**

Michael D'Amato and Samantha Hills outlined the project request and the intent of the EDC to issue business grants to small, Willington based businesses that were able to demonstrate negative impacts from COVID-19.

ARPA members had a general discussion about how other communities have handled using ARPA funds for this purpose. How the grant applications would be reviewed, the duration of the application window and total request amount as also discussed. Robin Campbell suggested that the Commission consider two categories of business grants to satisfy businesses that may have had smaller amounts of revenue loss:

Chairman Mailhos closed the public hearing at 8:18pm

**5. Correspondence**

Chairman Mailhos stated that a document had been provided to the Commission from Town Attorney Ryan O'Donnell, Esq. to clarify and affirm the legality of the ARPA's Commission's authority to directly administer funds.

**6. Funding Request Submissions: POSSIBLE ACTION**

**ARPA-3: \$100,000 for the purchase of a second ambulance (WFD1)**

T.Smith made a motion to take the previously stated motion regarding the purchase of a new ambulance for WFD1 off the table. Second by S.Hills.

**All in favor, motion passes.**

T.Smith and E.Wieczenski and spoke in support of the need for a new ambulance as it is a vital part of the community and something that has been identified by the Town's public safety personnel as strongly needed. S.Hills also spoke in favor of the need for a new ambulance but also suggested that using additional funds for the purchase of a brand new/additional ambulance might be prudent. Chairman Mailhos stated that as a representative of the Board of Finance she was not in favor of approval of this request as that was the consensus of the Board of Finance.

Original motion made on 3/7/22 that was tabled:

*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.*

E.Wieczenski, R.Campbell, S.Cobb, T.Sposato, T.Smith, J.Arpin, M.D'Amato voting YES.

C.Mailhos, S.Hills voting NO.

**7 Yes, 2 No: Motion Carries. Funding Request Approved**

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

E.Wieczenski made a motion to approve, second by R.Campbell

***All in Favor. Motion Passes Unanimously. Funding Request Approved***

**ARPA-4: \$38,000 for Radios for Public Works' use (DPW)**

E.Wieczenski made a motion to approve, second by T.Smith

***All in Favor. Motion Passes Unanimously. Funding Request Approved***

**ARPA-15: \$34,379 for Premium Pay for Human Services Staff**

E. Wiecenski made a motion to approve up to \$34,379 for Senior Center Staff for the purpose of a new coordinator. Second by T. Smith

E.Wieczenski, C.Mailhos, R.Campbell, S.Cobb, T.Sposato, T.Smith, M.D'Amato voting YES

S.Hills: No

J.Arpin: Abstain

**8-Yes, 1-NO, 1-Abstain: Motion Carries. Funding Request Approved**

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

Motion by T.Smith, Second by J.Arpin to approve the expenditure \$113,338 for SCBD Air Packs as presented.

A general discussion was held about when the price of these units may increase and if this expenditure could wait until after July 1, 2022, to free up funds within the Town's first ARPA disbursement for other more time-sensitive projects.

E.Wieczenski suggested a friendly amendment to T.Smith's motion to indicate that the up to \$137,000 would be disbursed as soon as the second installment of ARPA funding was received by the Town.

*All in Favor. Motion Passes Unanimously. Funding Request Approved*

**ARPA-14: \$300,000 for Small Business and Non-profit Assistance Project (EDC)**

S.Hills made a motion to approve up to \$300,000 for ARPA-14 for the Small Business and Non-profit Assistance Project, second by E.Wieczenski.

E.Wieczenski, C.Mailhos, R.Campbell, S.Cobb, T.Sposato, T.Smith, J.Arpin, S.Hills voting YES  
M.D'Amato-Abstain.

*8-Yes, 1-Abstain. Motion Passes. Funding Request Approved*

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

E.Wieczenski: Motion to approve up to \$69,000 for a generator for public works. Second by T. Smith.

*All in Favor. Motion Passes Unanimously. Funding Request Approved*

**7. Present to Speak**

Peter Laticsics: Expressed his concerns for the ARPA Commission's authority and the authority for the Commission to administer the funds.

**8. Adjourn**

Motion to Adjourn by E.Wieczenski second by R.Campbell.

*All in Favor. Motion passes*

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WILLINGTON, CT.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08pm 2022 MAR 28 A 11: 36

  
TOWN CLERK