

Southborough ARPA Committee
January 25, 2022
Virtual Meeting held via Zoom

Voting Members Present: John Wood (Temporary Chair), Andrea Hamilton, Tim Martel, Joe Palmer, Anne Rubenstein

Non-members Present: Lisa Braccio, Meme Latrell (nominee for membership of the ARPA Committee by the Planning Board), Carla McAuliffe (Southborough town accountant), Jennifer Thompson (Capital Strategic Solutions, consultant on ARPA funding)

I. Re-introductions for new members

Members introduced themselves to other members of the committee.

II. Call Meeting to Order

At 7:35 p.m. Ms. Braccio called the meeting to order.

Mr. Palmer made a motion to appoint Mr. Wood temporary acting Chair for a week till the next meeting (at which point a vote could be taken to fill officer positions by a full committee). Seconded by Ms. Rubenstein. The Committee voted 4-0-1 by roll call vote to approve the motion. [Hamilton, aye; Martel, aye; Palmer, aye; Rubenstein, aye; Wood, Abstain].

Ms. Rubenstein made a motion to table the vote for committee leadership positions till the following meeting in a week. Seconded by Mr. Palmer. The Committee voted 5-0 by roll call vote to approve the motion. [Hamilton, aye; Martel, aye; Palmer, aye; Rubenstein, aye; Wood, aye].

III. Review/discussion of ARPA guidelines

Ms. Thompson stated she would work at the committee's request, and outlined the general services her firm provides (Out reach efforts, spending considerations, spending plans, macro community insights into other towns/cities). She and others complimented the powerpoint presentation created by Marnie Hoolahan for the Committee. There are 4 spending categories to the ARPA legislation: Public health/ Economic Assistance, Essential Pay, Revenue Loss, Infrastructure. The town is liberated from many restrictions being under the \$10M ARPA allocation spending rules.

Ms. McAuliffe informed the committee that the town would start quarterly reporting of spending to the federal government starting in April, but did not know the specifics of that process yet. Ms. Thompson said project reporting would be more specific than general fund tagged expense reports. However, many capital projects that might not normally be accepted under ARPA infrastructure parameters could be funded under a general fund determination.

Ms. Thompson informed the Committee there were 4 ways ARPA money could not be spent: it cannot be used for Pension obligations, pay debt service, Legal or other settlements, or stabilization or reserve funding.

Ms. Thompson answered Ms. Hamilton that there is an additional 4 billion in state funding that will be distributed through programs that Southborough will be eligible for. Some programs could impact the Committee's decisions, through overlapping mandate, funding restrictions, etc.

Land may be purchased with ARPA funds with little restriction. Economic relief may be offered in rent and mortgage assistance, utility assistance, small businesses grants and payments, non-profits (mental health among others). State ARPA is also offering business grants, and rent and mortgage assistance programs, and attention should be paid to the terms and considerations when dispensing local funds.

Mr. Martel added that those in economic distress should be encouraged to contact the Southborough Commissioner of the Public Trust.

IV. Next Steps (Outreach & Strategy of evaluation)

The Committee is interested in outreach to the community and departments of the town to discover actionable projects and services will be advantageous and efficient use of the ARPA funding and mission. It will meet with department heads for projects already available for funding, determine the best ways to reach out to the community (surveys, meetings, etc.) to determine a ranking system, and investigate what is desired and actionable. The Committee believes in finding groups in need, distressed citizens, taxpayers, businesses, and be aware of the level of distress, and how it might be able to use funds wisely to address issues. It will continue to discuss the best methods and conduits to perform the charge given under the committee charter.

The next meeting will be 2/3 at 7:30. The chair will invite department heads and committee chairs to make proposals for current spending items and needs that ARPA might fund.

V. Other matters properly before the Committee

None

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Palmer made a motion to adjourn at 9:13pm. Seconded by Ms. Rubenstein. The Committee voted 5-0 by roll call vote to approve the motion. [Hamilton, aye; Martel, aye; Palmer, aye; Rubenstein, aye; Wood, aye].

Minutes submitted by Joseph Palmer Committee Member.

Documents Referenced During Meeting:

- 1) Update ARPA Guidance from the Federal government
- 2) Powerpoint presentation created by Marnie Hoolahan for the committee