



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK

Office of the Board of Selectmen

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AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) AD HOC COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

HYBRID MEETING

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

5:00 p.m.

Old Saybrook Town Hall – First-floor Conference Room

To access a recording of this meeting: <https://youtu.be/PcLNwI8VX-Q>

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by the chair, Mr. Carlson.

Members Present: Bruce Carlson (Chair), Susan Esty (Vice-chair), Maureen Zavatone (Secretary), Judy Sullivan, Kacie Hand, Elizabeth McEvily and Brad Thorpe.

Absent: Kristen Roberts.

Others Present: Carl Fortuna, Matthew Pugliese, Jennifer Donahue, Don Hunt.

II. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Hunt noted his request on behalf of the Exchange Club for funding to be used to replace the American flags on Main Street for the Memorial Day parade.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the March 22 meeting were reviewed. A **MOTION** was made by Ms. Zavatone and seconded by Ms. Sullivan to accept the minutes as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Carlson began with the draft discussion paper he created to summarize the data the committee has collected to date. He asked if anyone had any additions to the document. Mr. Fortuna noted that he would like to see some funding be put toward town infrastructure – perhaps \$500,000. This could be used for Main Street improvements, paving resources, or the renovations to Town Park per the results of the

Parks & Rec strategic plan (it is hoped that a STEAP grant will also contribute to this project). Mr. Carlson asked Mr. Fortuna to present on this topic at a future meeting.

Committee members discussed the use of forums, solving one problem at a time (funds do not need to be committed until 2024 and must be used by 2026), not starting projects that cannot continue without ARPA funding, and the utilization of other groups and grants to carry out projects.

Committee members discussed the broad scale of the mental health issues that need to be addressed and inviting more speakers to discuss this aspect.

Affordable housing and the challenges to developing more of it were also discussed. Another partnership with Hope Partnership was suggested where the town could possibly come up with the land if Hope could come up with the construction costs. Having a speaker from Hope come in to discuss this further was also suggested.

Mr. Carlson recapped the Youth & Family Services presentation and asked for an OS Cares update. Ms. Zavatone reported that there is about \$53,000 left in the fund. The OS Cares Committee does not want to drain the fund but would like to keep it open in case of community needs that might arise. They are working with YFS to take in applications from people who have been identified as having a need and will continue to give grants to those who are eligible as a way to satisfy the needs of those who continue to need assistance.

In response to issues related to English as a second language, Mr. Thorpe suggested helping to teach parents English and providing translation technology to YFS counselors to help solve the problem.

Under the topic of small business, the case by case nature of each business situation makes it difficult to come up with a blanket solution to help everyone. Ms. Sullivan noted that businesses that are in the service and hospitality areas that don't have work-from-home options were particularly hard hit because the bills kept coming but they were mandated to close. A business strategy encouraging local shopping to broadly benefit businesses by keeping more money in the community was also discussed.

Committee members discussed the importance of the sustainability of any recommendations.

Requests for funding to date were reviewed. The Estuary will be invited to talk about its request. Mr. Fortuna brought up the subject of childcare and Ms. Zavatone noted that having affordable before and after care through the school system would solve a huge problem for many working families.

Regarding potential filters to use to decide on projects to be funded, committee members discussed having an application and using job creation as a potential measurement in addition to the ideas in the draft paper.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Carlson discussed the slate of future presentations including inviting the Public Health Nursing Board and The Estuary to the next meeting as well as having Mr. Fortuna, someone in the childcare field (perhaps someone from the Women's Business Development Center), and a representative from Parks & Rec to present at future meetings. Mr. Pugliese also suggested Kelly Vallieres, former CEO of Sound Manufacturing, a local business, who is now executive director of the Connecticut Workforce Development Unit, a division of the state's Department of Economic and Community Development.

Mr. Fortuna reported that per ARPA guidelines that allow for interest to be made on the funding, the town's ARPA funds have been invested in a bond ladder through Morgan Stanley. He also noted that the town intends to categorize the funding uses under "lost revenue" to allow for a broader range of use for the funding.

Mr. Carlson will send a list of proposed presenters and dates to Mr. Fortuna.

VI. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

There were no additional comments from committee members.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Thorpe made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 6:09 p.m. Ms. Zavatone seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday, April 26, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall first-floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Donahue