



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK

Office of the Board of Selectmen

302 Main Street • Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475

Telephone (860) 395-3123 • FAX (860) 395-3125

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES HYBRID MEETING

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

5:00 p.m.

Old Saybrook Town Hall – First-floor Conference Room

To access a recording of this meeting: <https://youtu.be/kaT30ixQaCo>

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by the chair, Mr. Carlson.

Members Present: Bruce Carlson (Chair), Susan Esty (Vice-chair), Maureen Zavatone (Secretary), Brad Thorpe, Kristin Roberts and Elizabeth McEvily.

Members Absent: Kacie Hand, Judy Sullivan

Others Present: Carl Fortuna, Matt Pugliese, and Jennifer Donahue.

II. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the October 24, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Mr. Thorpe made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. McEvily seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

IV. DISCUSSION ON ALLOCATION OF REMAINING ARPA FUND

Mr. Carlson noted that there is still about \$1.2 million in ARPA funding remaining which must be allocated by the end of the calendar year and spent by the end of 2026. Approximately \$1.7 million has been allocated. Prior to the meeting a list of suggested expenditures for the remaining funding was circulated. Mr. Carlson suggested discussion for each of the proposed expenditures.

\$500,000 for Affordable Housing – Although this was identified as a priority of the committee as of yet no project has been identified. Putting funding in a flexible off-budget account that could help with testing of potential land for affordable housing or purchase of land, both of which could offset costs and assist in attracting development, was discussed.

\$100,000 for Saybrook Point Seawall Repair – Funding this could help leverage a DEEP Recreational Trails Grant to complete the riverfront walkway in this area and add a trail

connecting Gardiner's Landing to the adjacent historical sites. The riverwalk cannot be completed without the repairs. This project meets the committee's goals to get people outside and improve public spaces. It would also have a positive economic impact.

\$100,000 for Heritage Fund – This allocation would create a fund to be used to protect and preserve historic assets of the town. It might also allow for additional fundraising. Mr. Fortuna suggested this might be organized as an off-budget account with oversight by a town committee. Ms. McEvily offered to help with this project if approved.

\$250,000 Mariner's Way Catalyst Project – With the latest study in this area nearly completed, a recommendation to create a development agency to oversee revitalization of the area is being considered. It is also important to illustrate how this study is different so it is desirable to show some visible action or change in the near future. Committee members agreed that it is time for change and to show that revitalizing this area is not just a concept.

\$150,000 for Outdoor Recreation – Mr. Carlson asked Ms. Esty to look at the Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan and bring forward some specific projects for the committee to consider. Other committee members suggested funding be used for indoor recreation facilities or additional capacity for golf instruction.

\$100,000 for Acton Library Renovations – The library has secured a \$2 million grant with \$1 million in additional funding committed for a \$5 million renovation. An additional \$2 million must be raised. Co-working space, something the committee had discussed supporting, is planned to be part of the renovations. ARPA funding could contribute to the remaining funding need. Committee members agreed this was a good idea.

After the favorable discussion on the suggested options, Mr. Carlson suggested that the town submit applications related to affordable housing, the seawall repair and the heritage fund. Mr. Pugliese suggested that with the deadline for the DEEP Trails Recreation Grant coming up on March 11 that showing support for seawall funding now could be helpful in the grant application. Mr. Thorpe made a **MOTION** to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that \$100,000 in ARPA funding be allocated to repair of the seawall at Saybrook Point. Ms. Esty seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

Ms. Esty will submit an application for recreational funding and Mr. Fortuna agreed to contact Amanda Brouwer, the library director, about submitting an application on behalf of the renovation project.

V. DISCUSSION CONCERNING EXPENDITURES FOR PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PROJECTS

Discussion of previous expenditures was tabled until the April meeting after which the most recent quarterly project reports for ongoing projects will be available for review. Discussion of possible reallocation of funds may occur based on the reporting.

VI. COMMENTS FROM ARPA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

There were no further comments from committee members.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thorpe made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 5:55 p.m. Ms. Esty seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

The next meeting of the committee will be held on March 2, 2024 at 5:00 pm in the Town Hall first-floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Donahue