



# 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, January 25, 2022

5:00 p.m.

Old Saybrook Town Hall – First-floor Conference Room

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by the chair, Mr. Carlson.

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

Others Present: Carl Fortuna, Scott Giegerich, Matthew Pugliese, Susan Beckman, Barbara Labriola, Jennifer Donahue, Nancy Walsh, Joan Strickland, Chloe Carlson, Dan Welch, Dennis Tulimieri, Jr., Kathleen Connolly, Maryam Elahi, Mary Galiette and Jack Pragosa.

#### **II. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Ms. Connolly asked the committee to consider trash management and the environment in their deliberations related to each category being discussed.

Ms. Elahi asked that affordable housing, childcare and early childhood education, and mental health be considered. She suggested surveys to social workers, teachers and health workers to help address equity issues.

Mr. Tulimieri asked that those who have been most impacted be asked to participate, i.e. first responders, those with social service needs.

Mr. Welch encouraged the use of strong evaluation plans and metrics to ascertain achievement and provide transparency through evaluation, i.e. how to understand what success is and the evidence to back that up.

### III. MINUTES

The minutes from the January 11 meeting were reviewed. A **MOTION** was made by Ms. Esty and seconded by Ms. McEvily to accept the minutes as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

### IV. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Mr. Fortuna introduced Ms. Donahue as a Town Hall staff member who will be providing administrative and creative support to the committee. He also noted that ARPA funds can be invested. The members of the Board of Selectmen thanked committee members for their service.

Mr. Carlson asked committee members to give a brief statement about their ideas for the committee's goals.

Mr. Carlson – transformative change, equity, long-term investment versus just spending ARPA dollars

Ms. Roberts – small business fund; economic resilience – housing and childcare; mental health; educating community about available resources

Ms. Sullivan – small business focus, workforce development – work with community college, investigate co-working options; ice rink

Ms. Zavatone – address inequities for working families/families with young children, daycare resources; mental health crisis, particularly school-age; infrastructure

Ms. Hand – big picture/large scale things that might not otherwise be accomplished; max-impact projects; fund existing entities; forward looking; be aware of things where funding is already available; equity

Ms. Esty – housing, economics, transportation, hunger, health and safety, technical school – out-of-the-box ideas

Ms. McEvily – early childhood care; digital divide – community center, additional investment in the library; City Harvest model – redistribute restaurant food and limit waste; preventive mental health measures – community events or garden; community ownership and equity for projects

Mr. Thorpe – draw people to town, infrastructure, Park & Rec projects – bike trails, stronger downtown equals stronger community – Old Saybrook as a destination

Mr. Fortuna wrapped up noting that the Board of Selectmen planned to join the committee on the fourth Tuesday of each month to keep abreast of its progress. He also noted that Chris Costa, the town planner and enforcement officer, can speak to

affordable housing issues in town and at the state level and give innovative ideas. He also reported that the library has received a grant for an architectural feasibility study to ascertain how the community could better use that space. Mr. Pugliese added that he would like to see the committee find ways to leverage the ARPA dollars even more through grants or private investment and to initiate bigger things and provide resilience that can help the community both heal and grow stronger.

#### **V. OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Roberts reported that as people were talking she began grouping comments into like categories and suggested the committee might consider a four-pillar approach to the ideas presented.

Mr. Carlson would like to have different people come in to talk about things they are already doing. Committee members agreed that any undertakings should be sustainable beyond the ARPA funding and to be mindful of those things that may resolve themselves without additional funding. The distribution of remaining CARES money was also discussed. Mr. Carlson asked that Chris Costa attend the next meeting. He also reviewed the projects and expenditures dashboard that appears on the Town's website to show how ARPA money is being allocated.

#### **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Carlson noted that the committee is now in an information gathering phase, which he hopes will provide a set of ideas for public comment and those comments can then be synthesized into recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. McEvily suggested a series of filters or questions to apply to potential proposals to help take the emotion out of decisions regarding issues that have particular importance to people.

Mr. Carlson stated that he will work with Ms. Donahue to collect surveys that other towns have used to get community input.

#### **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Thorpe made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 6:00 p.m. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

*The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall first-floor conference room.*

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Donahue