

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ARPA**  
**REMOTE ONLY**  
**THURSDAY**  
**MARCH 3, 2022**

**6:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M**

**RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES**

The Special Meeting of March 3, 2022, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. There was a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Autumn Allinson, Thomas Laffin, Christina Tata, Vincent Testa, and Jason Zandri.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Approve Special Meeting Minutes of the Town Council Subcommittee on ARPA for February 16, 2022.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
OF THE TOWN COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ARPA FOR  
FEBRUARY 16, 2022.**

**MADE BY: TATTA  
SECONDED BY: ALLINSON  
VOTE: ALL AYE  
MOTION: PASSED**

Minutes were approved as amended.

4. Review and possible action on the draft outline ARPA applications as provided by the consultant and Law Department.

Councilor Laffin asked for questions from the public.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked who drafted the list and Councilor Laffin replied the consultant. Mr. Gross stated he hoped that ARPA funds would be spent to make public aware of what the funds could be spent on. He feels it's too late to send out applications to individuals and doesn't know whether small businesses are aware of programs that are available. He stated people are looking for town projects such as fixing the gazebo and town sidewalks, projects that make the town nicer. He stated if you make the town attractive, businesses will come.

Jessica Wysocki, 352 Grieb Road, wanted to get access to applications.

Sean Doherty, YMCA, wanted to speak on behalf of non-profits and stated the YMCA serves 11,000 -12,000 folks per year. They provide childcare, youth programs, and senior programs. They have 31 full-time employees and when looking at the application, we would not be eligible to apply. Mr. Doherty would like Town Council to consider expanding criteria and stated the YMCA doesn't turn anyone away based on ability to pay.

Councilor Laffin asked Mr. Doherty how they file, as a small business or a non-profit. Mr. Doherty responded as 501 C3-Nonprofit.

Jackie Valentine, Words on Wood – Center Street, stated they opened their doors four years ago. They host DIY events and parties and gave \$30,000 to charity in 2018. Ms. Valentine stated shutting doors was devastating and they saw a huge loss. They received a small amount of PPE and were not eligible for restaurant grants. She urges Town Council to please consider putting small businesses first.

Councilor Laffin asked Ms. Valentine how many employees she has, she stated three, her husband, herself and her daughter.

Lorraine Connolly, 63 Hillhouse Way, stated the final report for ARPA is available online. She suggests ARPA funds be spent on public health, small businesses/ Individuals, municipal projects such as broadband.

Councilor Tatta feels that it is purely a Council decision on how ARPA funds are spent and feels the Administration is steering toward not doing government projects.

Councilor Testa agrees with Councilor Tatta in asking from whom the appeal for funds would come from.

Councilor Laffin stated there is a legal mechanism there.

Debbie Gross, Long Hill Road, suggested a question on the application be “Did you receive other government funds”. She stated the application seems clunky. She feels we should narrow the buckets down and invest with things that will stick with us forever. She stated this is an opportunity to do something great.

Fran LaFrance Proscino, 14 Jackson Avenue, stated that we have a good size population of disabled individuals that can't go up and down Center Street. There are lots of seniors and veterans that would be a boost to businesses on Center Street if there was better transportation for the disabled.

Councilor Laffin wanted Ms. Proscino to clarify if she was looking for better transportation for the disabled.

Joe Mirra, EDC, talked a lot about opportunities in different categories and noted that government is trying their best to get us out of this.

Ray Ross, 656 Center Street, stated that COVID affected many of his friends greatly. He feels sidewalks are a budgetary item and that non-profits service families and we should be looking to give them funds.

Councilor Allinson said to Ms. Proscino that she is an advocate for accessibility. She would like Ms. Proscino to email the Council with problems regarding accessibility.

Mark Gingras, EDC, wanted to remind everybody that this comes under the umbrella of CARES Act. He thinks it's important to know how many businesses are out there in need and would like to see focus on business, non-profits, and individuals. He went on to say if money is left over, then do Cap projects.

Councilor Testa thanks Mr. Mirra and Mr. Gingras for clarifying their position. He stated we have a difference of opinion. He feels we should select individual town projects that fit with the spirit this was created for. We should better prepare ourselves for the next time this happens. He also thanked Ms. Proscino for bringing up the disability issues.

Councilor Allinson questioned if we can decide to release a certain amount of funds to release the application process so we can gage need. She feels we're going around in circles every two weeks.

Councilor Zandri stated that Councilor Allinson summed up what he was going to say. He suggested making a decision to release \$1 million to businesses, \$1 million to non-profits and \$1 million to individuals through non-profits. This will get things started and move the ball forward.

Councilor Laffin asked who we are releasing funds to.

Councilor Zandri asked what the process is.

Councilor Laffin likes where this is going and asked if we are good with the applications. He suggests we get a meeting set up to allow people to speak. He stated we need to get applications out and non-profits to get funds out to individuals.

Councilor Zandri stated there is no mechanism to get started.

Councilor Laffin suggests \$1 million to EDC for businesses and \$2 million to Y&SS with \$1 million to make non-profits whole and \$1 million for individuals.

Councilor Zandri would rather see non-profit funds to execute projects not to make non-profits whole.

Councilor Laffin agrees with a lot of what Councilor Zandri said.

Councilor Testa stated he shares the desire and sense of urgency but does not think we gain anything by releasing a certain amount. He suggests getting applications out, come to an agreement, and focus on the applications. He stated he likes block grants and feels EDC should manage outflow to businesses and sees no use putting arbitrary limits on it.

Councilor Allinson would like to finalize the application process and feels we seem to have a sticking point on what we spend funds on. She thinks \$3 million is a reasonable amount and the next step is to put application on screen and get feedback.

Maria Harlow, United Way, stated the first decision is who is responsible for each bucket, each needs to develop specific criteria. She went on to state EDC grants to businesses – they create their own application. Individuals – Y&SS – SCOW – already have an idea how much funds they need. Non-profits will help narrow down criteria – needs a lot of work and improvement. She also stated it's going to be very difficult to anticipate funds in each bucket unless we do that.

Debbie Gross stated the process is extremely challenging and brought a lot of things to light. She suggests putting things on a list and decide what's appropriate. She feels it's a great opportunity to look at the way we maintain things as a whole.

Ray Ross, stated it's the American Recovery Act to help people recover. He is against new projects and wants to make people whole.

Councilor Tatta feels the application is the last step not the first step. She has spent a lot of time gaging the needs of the people and a lot of people are asking for projects. As far as government/community projects if they weren't allowable they wouldn't be allowed, she states there are a lot of great ideas that reduce everybody's taxes. She feels we are doing this backwards.

Councilor Laffin states as far as the dollar amount, the rotary accepts applications every year and gives out funding and they decide how much to give.

Councilor Tatta feels government is picking who gets funds and is concerned about how we are going to deal with that, winners/losers.

Councilor Laffin is confident Y&SS can handle it. He stated some people will be told no, not everyone gets what they ask for and some may not get any.

Councilor Zandri would prefer no identifier and to take out 25 or less and to loosen non-profit eligibility.

Adrianna Rodriguez, SCOW, pointed out how \$500 to a needy family puts food on the table, helps register children for programs and is a partial payment for utility bills. She remarked \$500 goes a long way and to let her know how she can help.

Councilor Laffin questions throwing out “making whole” for non-profits.

Councilor Zandri says he just doesn’t want them restricted to only that.

Councilor Allinson asked if we could create a question on the application “Is this a project or relief” then have questions outline what you are going to use this for. She said let them explain more and solicit feedback that we will review.

Councilor Laffin asked if we should mark-up the draft we have?

Maria Harlow asked if she could submit a proposed application for non-profits.

Liz Davis, Wallingford Center Inc., thinks there can be more detail with some of these questions and suggests working with Joe or Mark.

Councilor Laffin suggests to mark-up drafts from our standpoint.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO NOT MOVE FORWARD WITH APPLICATION PROCESS.**

**MADE BY: TATTA  
NO SECOND.**

Councilor Laffin said we will report to Town Council on Tuesday and sets meetings for March 15<sup>th</sup> and March 29<sup>th</sup>.

- 5. Discussion and possible recommendations on ARPA funds.

Discussion was included with Item 4.

The Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

**RECEIVED FOR RECORD** 3-7-22  
**AT** 4:45 P.M. **AND RECEIVED BY**  
Deborah McKernan **TOWN CLERK**

Deborah McKiernan, Town Clerk

Date

Thomas Laffin, Vice Chairman

Date

*In accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act- Individuals in need of auxiliary aids for effective communication in programs and services of the Town of Wallingford are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance Coordinator at 203-294-2070 five days prior to meeting date.*