

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee
August 28, 2023 - Special Meeting
Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Dave Koji, Vice Chair Greg Barden, Stan Soby, Jennifer Cox, Denise Mizla.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jack Faski, Marge Mlodzinski.

OTHERS PRESENT: UHY Consultant Claire Collins, Board of Selectman Liaison Selectman Rosemary Coyle.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dave Koji called this Special Meeting to order at 6:12 pm.

2. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Michael Dubreil stated he thought the proposal for direct cash payment is the best proposal and that the Committee should reach out to other organizations for the solution.

Jason LaChappelle, advocate for direct cash assistance to citizens, stated that he called several state agencies regarding the payment being taxed and was told that the payment would not be taxed.

3. ARPA GIVEBACK PROGRAM

3.1 Discussion and development

Chair Koji shared a PowerPoint presentation with facts and information on the \$300,000 Give Back Program. The cost for UHY to oversee the program is \$30,000. The current proposal is to have Social Services oversee the program at no cost and to provide up to \$300,000 direct cash assistance (replacing current Social Services ARPA Application of \$100,000+).

An Alternate Option is to use up to \$300,000 on the existing Social Services program (adding an additional \$200,000 on top of the current \$100,000 + for Social Services ARPA application).

Discussion followed on the current proposal with UHY or to use Social Services existing supportive programs and guide to local and federal programs. C. Collins said a direct cash assistance could have tax consequences such as a decrease in government benefits based on additional income.

This direct cash assistance program was an idea submitted after the ARPA Committee reviewed and submitted all municipal project recommendations and survey. The possible approval of this program will require a reduction of \$200,000 to other municipal ARPA projects that have been incumbered. If UHY administers the program there will be an additional cost, personal tax implications and possible restrictions on dollar usage.

The members are recommending that the BOS work with Youth and Social Services to develop a "p-card" (purchasing card) option for residents, as well as an online application for residents to apply for assistance.

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Rosemary Coyle
CLERK

3.2 Possible Action by the ARPA Committee to recommend Giveback Program to BOS

Motion by: G. Barden
to recommend to the BOS that the original ARPA application from the Town's Youth and Social Services Department be revised to allow for an expansion of the programs outlined to serve a wider net of residents based on 300% income above the federal poverty level.
Second by: S. Soby.
Vote: In favor: G. Barden, J. Cox, S. Soby, D. Koji. (4-0). **APPROVED.**

4. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Gerrie Transue asked if this money is used for a giveback program what happens to the ARPA projects previously approved? The committee could only recommend the projects to the Board of Selectmen, the BOS would make the final decision and some of those projects may not be given final approval in order to accommodate the giveback program.

Chair Koji noted that the BOS has final approval over the ARPA Committee recommendations.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: G. Barden
to adjourn this meeting.
Second by: S. Soby.
Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Chair Koji adjourned this Special Meeting at 7:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jane Slade
Clerk