

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)

August 14, 2023 – Special Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectman

Via Hybrid

RECEIVED
COLCHESTER, CT
2023 AUG 15 AM 8:48

Members Present: Chair Dave Koji, Vice Chair Greg Barden, Stan Soby, Jenn Cox, Marjorie Mlodzinski, Denise Mizla

Others Present: First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos, Rosemary Coyle, Debbie Bates, Denise Turner, Claire Collins (UHY), Stacy Farber (UHY)

1. CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Bisbikos called the Board of Selectman meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

2. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dave Koji called the ARPA Committee Ad-Hoc committee to order at 6:02 pm.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Deanna Bouchard asked for clarification regarding disaster relief funds. She believes that the funds from the town would not be considered income, therefore would not affect Medicaid, WIC, tax, etc. She would like the town to move forward with this grant and use 300% of the Federal Poverty Levels (FPL).

Mike Egan expressed the desire to help more by using social services.

5. DISCUSSION OF COLCHESTER GRANT PROGRAM

- a) A Bisbikos asked C Collins to elaborate on the question of discrimination. C Collins stated that there is no discrimination language per se on town versus individual.
- b) Review and discuss the UHY emails on income levels. A Bisbikos had a discussion with UHY regarding income. Colchester took a revenue loss and therefore has a lot of leeway in how the ARPA funds are administered. Median income in Colchester is \$104,000. Those below the median income are automatically qualified for assistance by the Town of Colchester. Approximately 800 households would meet the criteria. Val said that there is nothing that prevents Social Services from implementing the program, but helping people over \$100,000 is not the typical. Currently, Val reported that there are some things that are hard to pay for, but she has grants for several expenditures. Car repair is hard because a purchase order is required. Val said that there is no easy way to get payments through the town. Val is not limited by income, but if a family went to Val and they were a family of 3 and they make a good salary, then Val would be hard pressed to offer assistance under their current program guidelines.

The \$100,000 Social Services Grant has certain guidelines. A direct program would be different.

D Koji commented that he wants ARPA to consider the \$30,000 fee for UHY to administer.

R Coyle stated that the task should be the current motion, which is for ARPA, UHY, and Social Services to develop a program for the Board of Selectman to consider.

D Bates also stated that she would like to see ARPA, UHY, and Val come up with a program.

R Coyle stated that she would like to see Social Services be expanded to include more families.

D Bates would like to expand Social Services for more people.

D Turner would also like to use funds in a better way, for example, the boiler example.

A Bisbikos stated that he would like to help help 40% of the community.

R Coyle said that the individuals would still be applying for something. A Bisbikos agrees.

D Koji stated that we (ARPA, UHY, Val) will work toward a plan

R Coyle asked Val to consider how people will know that services have been expanded at Social Services.

D Mizla asked about the threshold of \$75,000 and would it be increased based on the number of people in the household. C Collins reiterated that 300% of Federal Poverty Level could be used, but there could be extenuating circumstances. She also asked about the ARPA timeframe.

D Koji stated that we should show a grid. R Coyle asked about difference between the 250% and 300% of Federal Poverty Level.

A Bisbikos stated that he definitely wants to include 40% of the residents. He feels like this is a hybrid program.

R Coyle asked why Social Services does not have a credit card. Historically, a credit card wasn't recommended, but perhaps there could be a path to making purchases easier.

6. CITIZENS COMMENTS

Mike Hayes would like to know how many households fall under the \$75,000 dollar income level.

Deanna Bouchard thinks we have discounted Jason's program. She also discussed that there is a stigma attached to going to Social Services. She is also concerned that Val's department does not have manpower to implement a program.

MOTION TO ADJOURN BY: R. Coyle

SECOND BY: D. Bates

MOTION TO ADJOURN BY: G. Barden

SECOND BY: M. Mlodzinski

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Notes submitted by Jennifer Cox