

**Town of Richmond ARPA Committee  
Minutes for the meeting of November 18, 2021  
Town Center Meeting Room and via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Josh Arneson, June Heston, Molly Dugan, Connie Bona, Rebecca Starks, Jeff Forward, Ellen Kane

**Members Absent:** Jay Furr, Linda Donovan

**Others Present:** Regina Mahoney, Jessie Heiser, Angelike Contis,

**Call or Order:** 3:30pm

**Welcome by Josh**

**Discussion of ARPA Funding with Regina Mahoney from CCRPC**

Regina shared that she and CCRPC are here to help municipalities with ARPA. This process is different than other ways to receive funding. There is no one to approve your spending but you need to follow the guidelines in order to be able to prove that you have spent the money on appropriate projects.

Regina shared a presentation regarding ARPA funding:

There is ARPA money that came to the municipalities directly and ARPA money that went to the State that they will be dispersing. The goal of the money is to help make communities whole after the COVID-19 pandemic. Richmond has \$1.2 million.

The rules have just been finalized by the federal government. There are a few adjustments but for the most part nothing major has changed from the initial rules.

The money for Counties has been allocated directly to municipalities.

Funds must be obligated by the end of 2024. Money must be spent by end of 2026. Any funds not spent by end of 2026 will be returned to the Treasury.

Framework for maximum impact and best use of Municipal ARPA funds:

- Prioritize Good Governance
- Leverage Your ARPA Aid
- Invest in Best uses for long term recover.

Seven categories to spend the money on include:

- Public Health
- Negative Economic Impacts
- Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities
- Premium Pay
- Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Broadband)
- Revenue Replacement
- Administrative

Some categories are tied to qualified Census tracts, Richmond does not have any qualified Census tracts.

Infrastructure is pretty straightforward.

There is a calculation to determine how much of your funds can be used in Revenue Replacement. Qualified funds in this category have less restrictions.

The other categories are tied to populations that have had a negative impact from COVID.

The funds cannot be spent on:

1. Non-Federal Match.
2. Pension Funds
3. Infrastructure not directly addressed in ARPA
4. Rainy Day Funds, Financial Reserves, or Debt Payments.

Things to consider:

- Pool your funds with other municipalities.
- Transfer your funds to non-profits or other eligible third-party organizations.
- Take time to be patient and think bigger.

Town is required to provide reports on the funds. Annual reports are due on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

VLCT has a lot of good resources on their website.

State is putting ARPA money into select projects and are under the same guidelines as the Towns.

Community outreach from other Towns has included: public meetings, working with neighboring towns to potentially pool funds, added webpages or surveys for feedback.

Reviewed some projects that have already been proposed by VT towns and some towns across the nation.

VLCT has Katie Buckley on staff and Sarah Macey as finance director. Both can help answer questions from municipalities on ARPA.

CCRPC is also here to help with ARPA. Can help with taking a project from the idea phase to production.

End of Presentation. Questions followed.

Molly: How does the revenue replacement work?

Regina: The idea is to replace lost revenue due to COVID. In municipalities that have big revenue from non-property tax resources that declined significantly during COVID, such as a rooms and meals tax.

Ellen: When you talk about impacted communities you could argue that the entire community was impacted. Is there any data that you need to prove that the project is helping an impacted community?

Regina: Part of the guidance is a qualified Census tract which is a low-income population, Richmond does not have any of these. But there are a number of the 66 expenditure projects that can be used to help low-income households. The program acknowledges that everybody was impacted by COVID in some way, and therefore there is a lot of money in the Broadband, to help people with working and doing other business from home.

Jeff: We do have low-income people in Richmond. I hope we can reach out to that community.

Regina: That is not what I intended. Richmond does not have a qualified Census tract as defined by HUD, but you can still do some of those projects for those communities but you just have to make the case for those projects.

Jeff: Who makes the decision on spending for the Town?

June: It is the Selectboard.

Jeff: Could there be some components of a building renovation that could qualify such as ventilation?

Regina: Yes, part of the funding is to help make buildings healthier in the future if there were to be a pandemic again.

Jeff: Does handicap accessibility qualify?

Regina: That is a good question and I have to follow up on it.

Josh: If you qualify the lost revenue item would that then qualify all our funds to be in that category?

Regina: No, only the amount of revenue that you show as lost would qualify from the funds.

Connie: But this is more related to the budget not growing by 4.1%.

Regina: That is correct.

June: What years do we compare for the revenue calculator?

Regina: Your base year is compared to 2019.

Connie: I need to dive into the calculator more to see if Richmond will qualify.

Ellen: Can you focus on multiple projects?

Regina: There is no limit to the number of projects you can fund.

Jeff: Is it fair to say that the revenue replacement is to make the General Fund whole due to loss of revenue due to COVID?

Regina: I think that was the original intent but with the calculation it has become just a shortfall in growth year over year.

Connie: We have not had revenue loss. The 4.1% is what the federal government has set as the benchmark for budget growth. This is more about budget growth than shortfalls due to people not paying.

Discussion on Richmond has received half of the ARPA funds and Connie is looking into accounts with better interest for the funds.

### **Discussion of organization of Committee and regular meeting date**

Next meeting will be Wednesday December 8 at 3:30pm. A regular meeting date will be discussed at that meeting.

Agenda:

- Organization of Committee.

- Discuss strategy for community outreach. Review other communities such as Jericho, to see what has been done and how we want to proceed.
- Discuss projects ideas that have come up so far.