

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ARPA
REMOTE ONLY
TUESDAY
MARCH 29, 2022

6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M

RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Special Meeting of March 29, 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 Tatta, 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 March 15, 2022.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE TOWN COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ARPA FOR MARCH
15, 2022.**

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

4. Discussion on Law Department Memos regarding ARPA.

Edward Bradley, 2 Hampton Trail, talked about fraud and wanted to know how monitoring for fraud and inappropriate use will be handled. Councilor Laffin stated regular recordings will be required to report and we can ask the consultant at the next Town Council meeting.

Councilor Testa stated the legal memos were helpful in some ways. His primary concern is if deadline requires us to make determination on how much of funds to devote to municipal services, and if we need to commit to the number before the deadline.

Councilor Laffin stated he talked to the Mayor last week and we don't have a concrete answer. Councilor Laffin said he is not worried and we still have the month to figure it out.

Mr. Ryan remarked to Councilor Testa that he is not against funding municipal projects. He stated we need to determine what need is before we allocate money for projects, and that he shares Councilor Testa's frustration.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, inquired if we've asked the consultant what the deadline is. Councilor Laffin said we were not given concrete answer. Mr. Gross suggested to find out what need is and go from there and stated Meriden bought a fire truck and New Haven bought cameras.

Maria Harlow, United Way, stated it is true that non-profits receive funds from the town, but that should not disqualify them from this. She also said the rules and criteria have to be clear and non-profits provide a great deal of detail on how money is spent and that non-profits are a mission driven business. She will be happy to answer United Way questions.

Councilor Testa said he loves the idea of starting to allocate funds and stated nothing is more important than understanding what the deadline is for a fact and noted we need that answer.

Councilor Laffin stated needs will be addressed by the applications.

5. Discussion and possible action on Draft Applications to the Community for ARPA Funding.

MOTION WAS MADE TO MOVE DRAFT APPLICATIONS FORWARD FOR REVIEW BY FULL TOWN COUNCIL.

**MADE BY: ALLINSON
SECONDED BY: ZANDRI**

Councilor Laffin stated these are the tightened up drafts and mentioned the line that said 25 or fewer employees was removed. He also stated that four employees that work ten hours per week equal one full-time employee. Councilor Laffin said "if no, why not" were added and the goal is to recommend this to full Town Council at the next meeting.

Councilor Tatta stated she is not in favor of these applications going out first. With regard to question #25, she feels should also ask if special tax credit, employee retention credit, unemployment compensation, or any other tax credits were received; if employees were laid off and include tax documentation for financial statement. On the second page, top line of ARP Program request form, Councilor Tatta suggested adding State or Local and Councilor Laffin suggested removing Federal, keeping it vague. Councilor Tatta said she was good with removing Federal.

Councilor Tatta also asked about adding a line for unemployment and Councilor Laffin thought it would be too tough to figure out unemployment. Councilor Tatta stated some people were making more money on unemployment and she would like to see tax returns

or financial statements. Councilor Laffin stated these are qualifying applications and he is okay with applications for the first round. He went on to say that he doesn't want people to do all this work and then not get anything.

Mr. Ryan mentioned that we did have tax returns on the applications and the consultant recommended not to, and that he agrees there needs to be validation. More discussion was had and it was agreed to ask the consultant at the next meeting.

Councilor Testa stated he is not comfortable with understanding valid losses and asked what we are looking to reimburse. He also stated that some businesses went under and some made it through and weathered the storm and that he is not on board with replenishing bank accounts.

Councilor Zandri echoed some of Councilor Testa's sentiments. He is not in favor of removing 25 and capping it at 60. Councilor Zandri stated financial statements are important for 2nd or 3rd round. He discussed various scenarios that would show upon financials and pointed out that some bigger businesses may have been affected more.

Councilor Allinson stated that people used unemployment to make themselves whole and that some made more on unemployment and to consider yourself lucky if you didn't qualify for it. She also stated she doesn't want to over account for it and noted it is a privacy issue and doesn't want to make the application process too daunting or hard. She is in favor of collecting financial information as second step.

Mr. Brodinsky, Valley View Drive, agrees with Mr. Ryan, that more information is better. He stated no one is representing the public interest and that you don't get a second chance to make a first impression. He asked who the decision makers are. Mr. Brodinsky stated that one of the slides says objectives are to fight pandemic and those struggling, emphasizing the present tense.

Councilor Laffin stated we are talking about changes to the draft now and that we've had philosophical discussions for weeks. He asked Mr. Brodinsky if he thinks there is a question that can be added. Mr. Brodinsky suggested asking the consultant for measures that could be added to applications before the next Town Council meeting to find out if businesses are struggling or not such as tax returns and financial statements for three years. Councilor Laffin stated it is too late in the game to comment - that we agreed these were qualifying applications and it will slow us down and take more time.

Councilor Tatta in response to Councilors Testa and Zandri stated that we've been looking at applications for a long time and she is not the only one who is concerned. She asked how do we decide who qualifies and noted with Capital projects you avoid picking winners and losers. Councilor Tatta suggested funding Boys/Girls Club summer camp, upgrade outdoor dining project, and community pool. She suggested changing strategy and that people are coming out more.

Ms. Miranda, YSS, said with regard to the individual household piece, they could do initial look at application then send to committee. She stated if a business shut down, the owner could apply as an individual and that YSS knows about confidentiality and information would stay within the committee. Ms. Miranda also stated that individuals/households may not necessarily get ARPA funding and there are other pools of money out there.

Mr. Gross agrees with Ms. Miranda that many programs are available and ARPA should be used last. He hopes money to businesses will be capped and stated very few municipalities are giving funds to individuals because there are other programs out there. Mr. Gross feels that even if someone is asking for a small amount of money, they should have to submit tax return.

Mr. Ryan addressed his different interpretation of Mr. Brodinsky's present tense comment. Mr. Ryan said funds are available to those who experienced negative impact caused by pandemic-past tense. He wanted to clarify that from his line of sight, that it is not just present tense. He also stated there is work to do on applications.

Mr. Welch, Coalition for a Better Wallingford, read a prepared statement.

Councilor Laffin asked about need to meet next week.

Councilor Allinson proposed moving forward with what we have so far and noted that we have a good foundation to bring to Town Council for feedback. Councilor Testa stated he does not disagree with Councilor Allinson, discuss with full Council and expect applications would be approved if they meet criteria.

Councilor Laffin stated he works for a non-profit and remarked you put in for most, and you don't necessarily get everything you ask for. Councilor Testa stated we have not determined approval criteria and something should be noted on application that says no guarantee - some type of disclaimer.

Councilor Laffin asked if there should be an equation and Councilor Testa responded that we're not there yet, just trying to establish need. Councilor Laffin asked if he wants to develop that before applications go out and Councilor Testa answered no, just let people know it's not a guarantee. Councilor Testa shares Councilor Tatta's trepidation about the applications.

Councilor Zandi supports moving it to full Council.

Mr. Brodinsky stated we have one chance to do it right, can't patch it up and we do have time to talk about criteria and maintain public trust.

Councilor Laffin stated he knows there is a need out there and wants to move applications forward to full Council. Councilor Zandri wanted to clarify "as is" and

Councilor Laffin clarified yes, "as is" and to bring it up with consultant at next Town Council meeting in two weeks.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

ALLINSON: YES

LAFFIN: YES

TATTA: NO

TESTA: YES

ZANDRI: YES

4 – AYE

1-NAY

MOTION: PASSED

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.


Deborah McKiernan, Town Clerk

4/14/2022

Date


Thomas Laffin, Vice Chairman

4/12/2022

Date

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 4-4-22
AT 11:30 p.m. AND RECEIVED BY
Deborah McKiernan TOWN CLERK

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.