



City of Chicopee, Massachusetts

ARPA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES 2/2/22

Attendance:

J. Vieau, M. Pise, S. Riley, M. Laflamme (late), J. Tillotson, G. Balakier, K. Lingenberg, L. Sanders, S. Kulig, K. Donahue, E. Batista

Excused: None

Guest: Chicopee Fire Department Rep.

I. Mayors Update:

The Mayor updated the committee regarding the issuance of the ARPA final rule. Due to the cautious approach that the city had taken, we would now be able to allocated \$10million in Loss revenue without the challenges of regulations and calculations. S. Riley explained that the Revenue would hit the City Budget as free cash that could then be used for general government services.

Motion by K. Lingenberg, 2nd by J. Tillotson to recommend that the Mayor allocate \$10,000,000 to Loss Revenue consistent with the ARPA Final guidance. All in favor.

II. Minutes Approval

Motion by J. Tillotson, 2nd by G. Balakier to accept the minutes as presented in the meeting packet. All in favor.

III. ARPA Research

K. Lingenberg reference the eligibility material that had been included within the meeting packets. J. Tillotson had requested research on use of ARPA funds to expand policing in Downtown. K. Lingenberg reported that research indicated that while this was not eligible, funds to support mental health/ addiction/ homeless services could be. K. Lingenberg gave overview of program that had demonstrated interest from Elms College and VOC.

Prior meeting had also raised issue of support for tax delinquent homeowners. M. Pise reported that while assisting homeowners was important this was not an eligible use of ARPA but that the City had existing programs. Mayor added that the Housing Resiliency Program that had ARPA funding could support struggling homeowners.

The Mayor provided an update on Incentive Pay. Given the challenge of Premium Pay for Essential Workers and the caps on assistance, he was researching the use of the ARPA Lost Revenue funds to support an Employee Retention fund. His hope was that the Retention bonus would not have the same complex regulatory issues.

M. Pise added that there were communities that were proposing to use Lost Revenue funds to support vaccination bonuses to all vaccinated staff. Discussion around equity of bonuses and methods of ensuring compliance with HIPPA.

IV. Proposals/ requests:

- a. **Fire Department Staffing 3rd shift:** Mayor reminded members that he would keep this as a placeholder during the pilot projects 6 month of operations.
- b. **Infrastructure:** All projects that had been on hold have since been funding by General Government budget. E. Batista raised the Fairview project where the project scope and budget had expanded. She explained that she would be seeking appx \$5,000,000 for the project at the next meeting. Discussion on funding available for infrastructure projects.
- c. **Economic Development:** K. Lingenberg explained that during the Citizen input process, there had been a number of requests regarding Economic Development/Business Assistance. While Community Development was able to assist many of the responding businesses, she inquired if the City had interest in doing additional research on eligible programs. There were companies seeking equipment and capital improvement and there was a state-funded ARPA program through Senator Gomez. General committee consensus was to hold until the state program had more clarity.
- d. **Workforce Development:** K. Lingenberg repeated that like Economic Development there had been a number of submittals during the Citizens input that spoke to funds for training and employment programs. VOC was working to launch one in Holyoke. Discussion on needs of city and businesses to target programs that address those labor shortages. General committee consensus was to obtain models of ARPA funded programs.
- e. **Assistance to Non-Profits/Non-Profit Facilities:** K. Lingenberg reported that the Citizen input had included assistance to non-profits and in evaluating those submittals for ARPA eligibility; they seemed to break into two "buckets". Funding to address capital needs, which would require the non-profit to actively be delivering services and Lost Revenue, if the non-profit could document loss of income due to Covid-19. Discussion on assistance to VFWs and American legions. K. Lingenberg shared that we would need to determine the services delivered by each non-profit. Discussion of three proposals submitted:
 - i. Polish Center: M. Pise announced that as a Board Member, he would not be participating in the discussion. K. Lingenberg stated that their request was related to loss revenue of appx \$25,000. Discussion with Committee consensus that if the loss could be documented, the ARPA funds should be committed.
 - ii. Bellamy House: K. Lingenberg shared that through discussion with Board Chair she determined that the City had provided for an assessment of the property. The assessment led to a rehab budget of \$1.2 million. Discussion of ARPA eligibility as the organization is not delivery services. K. Lingenberg offered to research if CDBG funds could fund the roof replacement to halt further deterioration of the property.
 - iii. Boys Girls Club: K. Lingenberg shared that the BGC had submitted a project based upon a Capital Needs Assessment that had been funded by Community Development. Part of the project addresses infrastructure/site needs; the other part of project was construction of new teen center on the property. Discussion of funding available to BGC and of the necessity of the project. General Consensus that the Committee would be interested in more detailed material on the infrastructure/site improvement project at this time.

IV: Projects Under Consideration:

- a. **Chicopee Library Redevelopment:** K. Lingenberg shared that the architectural /engineering team was in the property today to continue investigations necessary for any reuse. She had instructed them to keep an open mind, especially in light of "push back" from the private sector about creating a product that competes with a very soft market- specifically the creation of

offices when downtown offices are renting for \$150 per month and commercial kitchens when there were four vacant ones in downtown.

V: Funded Project- Status Update

Summary was submitted in packet.

Next Meeting: Feb 22, 2022 at 9AM

Action Items:

- Research ARPA Workforce programs (kl)
- Solicit information on BGC project (kl)
- Solicit information on Polish Center project (kl)
- Submit Fairview DPW pending project (Stan/ Liz)
- Obtain status of Fire fighter gear purchase (Marie)