

Regular Meeting of the American Rescue Plan Task Force
March 28, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers, 111 North Main Street Bristol CT 06010

Members Present: Mayor Jeff Caggiano, Cindy Bombard, Eric Clemons, Michael Dumas, Donna Osuch, Susan Sadecki, Howard Schmelder (left at 5:05 p.m.), David Maikowski, Thomas O'Brien, Mark Peterson, John Smith, Glenn Heiser, Mickey Goldwasser and David Preleski (entered at 4:42 pm). Orlando Calfe was present on Zoom.

Absent:

Also present: Diane Waldron, Robin Manuele, Raymond Rogozinski, Dawn Nielsen and Justin Malley

1. Call to Order

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Mayor Caggiano welcomed everyone and did introductions of the Task Force members.

2. Public Participation

Mike Petosa, Greater Bristol Labor Council, appeared at the last ARPA meeting to speak about premium pay for employees which is allowed under the ARPA Treasury guidelines. He would like the Task Force to consider this request as employees put themselves and their families at risk every day during the pandemic. The Mayor stated no application was filed by the Unions, but the City could have filed an application as well. If there is a second round this could be looked at further at that time.

Carol Kalberg, 29 Bridget Court, Vice President of Advocates for Bristol Seniors for the Bristol Senior Center submitted a request. It was very disappointing to find out the Senior Center was left out as the seniors were the most vulnerable during the pandemic. Seniors make up 24% of Bristol's population and the staff of the Senior Center worked diligently during the vaccine process assisting BBHD and City staff in the distribution of vaccines and they deserve to be selected for funding..

Mayor Caggiano stated the City has received \$28 million, to date through the Task Force. Approximately \$17.5 million has been appropriated to projects. \$4 million is set aside for potential projects the City may need for matching for grants. Technically, \$6.4 million is remaining to be allocated for projects.

3. Approval of minutes from the March 14, 2022 meeting.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion seconded by Commissioner Smith "To approve the minutes from the March 14, 2022 meeting." Motion approved.

Mayor Caggiano stated MOVIA was approved by the Board of Finance, but not by the ARP Task Force and would like to amend the minutes to include this.

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion seconded by Commissioner Bombard "to approve the MOVIA project in the amount of \$500,000" Motion approved.

4. Presentation by Collaborative Workforce Development Training Program

Commissioner Bombard left the meeting for the presentation.

Larry Covino and Jaime Rechenberg presented the Collaborative Workforce Development Training Program. The vision of the program is to build a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the needs of the City and businesses. The program will be overseen by a 501(c) 3 Board of Directors under the Chamber of Commerce and employ three staff members, a Program Director, an Administrative Assistant and an Employability Skills Trainer. The plan would remain flexible to meet the business and training needs of the community with marketing strategies to support the development and sustainability of the programs. There will be four pathways served including Early Childhood Education, Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Information Technology. The program will be free to Bristol residents during the initial funding and out of town residents would be charged a fee if there is space. The Program Director will be responsible for working with the Board of Directors to generate grant funding to sustain the program, develop public and private partnerships, collaborate with Capital Workforce Partners to leverage their grants and funding allocations and utilize state grant funds through the Governor's Workforce Council and CareerConneCT.

Betty DaCruz, CFO DaCruz Manufacturing, works closely with Adult Ed and the manufacturing cohort. She spoke highly of their program and the people who have come through the program with soft skills with an interest in manufacturing.

Larry stated Waterbury just opened a similar program and West Hartford is developing one. It is entry level for 18+. Jaimie stated this about serving the Bristol community, not the Bristol public schools.

Jamie discussed the development of the budget for the ARPA submission which started at \$4.3 million and is now down to \$3.2 million. When the application process started it had asked for more funding for a larger idea but over the past few months they went through the numbers, worked with Tunxis and reduced the funding request. The facility will need to pivot to address the needs of the community.

Commissioner Sadecki stated the key to the program is the employability specialist, that everything is all in one place and the people in this program will have all services under one roof in Bristol. Larry explained once the space is converted they will be able to open approximately January 2023. Four classrooms need to be built to meet the needs, which will include one focused on healthcare and one on manufacturing.

Commissioner Osuch stated Capital Workforce needs to be a bigger partnership.

Commission Bombard reentered the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

5. Discussion with UHY Advisors N.E. LLC.

Jack is working with City staff to outline the next steps of the process. He would like to schedule an orientation for the successful applications for the monitoring of the projects, which will start as soon as the projects are funded.

Commissioner Smith would like the City riding side saddle with UHY for all discussions as well as the Comptroller's Office taking a major seat with the accepted projects and with the denials coming from the majority of the business community, ECD can assist with that.

Justin Malley stated ECD has certain programs that are easier to manage, such as the Small Business Grant project which may be able to assist some of these small businesses. Many of the projects submitted were long lasting beautification projects that weren't transformational. ECD and the Mayor's Office are working on the development of this program.

Mayor Caggiano received a sample grant agreement from another municipality which will discuss at a future meeting.

6. Consideration of projects to approve for funding

Commissioner Preleski made a motion seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser to approve up to \$100,000 to the Bristol Sports Amory to be monitored by City staff in progress payments. Motion approved.

Commissioner Preleski made a motion seconded by Commissioner Bombard "to fund up to \$235,000 to the Bristol Bazaar LLC for working capital and startup expenses" Motion approved.

Commissioner Osuch has asked BARC to bring back more information within 30 days.

Commissioner Smith will have more information on the Barnes Chapel at a future meeting.

7. Any other business

Commissioner Goldwasser responded to the request from Mike Petosa that the ARPA committee use ARPA funds for Employee Premium Pay for their work during Covid noted that since a proposal was not submitted for consideration of this request it could not be acted upon in the first phase (\$24 million) of the ARPA allocations. Mickey suggested that Mike submit a detailed proposal with the specific ask and rationalization that could be considered in the second phase of allocations.

8. Adjournment

Commissioner Smith made a motion seconded by Commission Sadecki "to adjourn" at 5:42 p.m.

Jodi A. McGrane
Recording Secretary