

Regular Meeting of the American Rescue Plan Task Force
April 25, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers, 111 North Main Street Bristol CT 06010

Members Present: Mayor Jeff Caggiano, Cindy Bombard, Michael Dumas, Donna Osuch, Susan Sadecki, Howard Schmelder, Thomas O'Brien, Mark Peterson, John Smith, Glenn Heiser, and David Maikowski via Zoom. David Preleski entered at 4:30 p.m.

Absent: Mickey Goldwasser, Orlando Calfe, and Eric Clemons

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

1. Call to Order

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

2. Public Participation

None

3. Approval of minutes from the April 11, 2022 meeting.

Commissioner Smith made a motion seconded by Commissioner Schmelder "to approve the minutes from April 11, 2022." Motion approved.

4. Consideration of projects to approve for funding

Donna Osuch stated the subcommittee is bringing forward the BARC project to approve for \$1.5 million for expansion and administration relocation of services on Lake Avenue.

Commissioner Osuch made a motion seconded by Commissioner Sadecki "To approve the BARC project for \$1.5 million." Commissioner O'Brien amended the motion, contingent upon approval receipt of the federal funds, seconded by Commissioner Bombard. Motion approved.

Commissioner Schmelder stated this project will require RFP's and when these RFP's are returned it will be determine how the funds are allocated. Jack explained if the construction project is over \$1 million project justification will be needed for the City files. The federal rules for ARPA funds with regard to prevailing wages is unique. If other federal dollars are being used, you have to use the most stringent rules out there which will be highly likely in this case and must follow the Davis-Bacon Act. Mary Etter, BARC, applied to Senator Murphy's Office, but didn't receive the estimates from D'Amato until today, and she will be going back and increasing the grant application. Jack explained for construction projects, 12/31/2024 is the date for committed funds to be under contract and spent by 12/31/2026.

Commissioner Smith stated that Eagle Environmental has not been able to test the Barnes Chapel yet, therefore the cost to repair will most likely increase, however until the testing is performed a cost is unknown at this time.

Mayor Caggiano stated with this all approved projects are \$24,705,980.

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

Jack provided updates to the Task Force. UHY is working with the City's procurement staff to develop a model contract, quarterly reporting requirements and monitoring procedures.

The BOF Purchasing subcommittee is amending the Purchasing manual to incorporate ARPA requirements into the Purchasing manual which the Board of Finance will approve tomorrow.

An orientation will be held by UHY next Monday for all approved applicants which will review the contracting process, process for drawdown of funds, procurement rules, monthly and quarterly reporting requirements and monitoring.

Under the federal rules, the City is allowed to claim revenue loss. It's a broad formula due to the City's current economic status, the best way to declare revenue loss is to use the \$10 million standard exemption under ARPA. A formal recommendation of this policy is recommended. Under the calculation the City comes in under the \$10 million, and it doesn't change the way the money is spent, just the reporting to Treasury.

UHY has worked closely with City staff for the March report filing which will be filed by end of the day on Friday.

Donna questioned the nonprofit reimbursements for utility and COVID expenses. Jack explained these are purchases of goods and services not subject to purchasing guidelines. They will have to produce documentation that those invoices were paid, and not by other any other federal funds.

6. Any other business

Mayor Caggiano stated the Task Force has received the proposal for premium pay from Bristol Labor Council as presented by Mike Petosa which was received after the January 31, 2022 deadline. Commissioner Schmelder stated the deadline was publicized and if the Task Force accepted this proposal it could open up the Task Force to criticism of other groups who missed the deadline.

Commissioner Smith also stated that in order to consider this it has to go through the same rubrics all other applications went through, and secondarily the second strike would be that it came in late. Commissioner Heiser stated that all front line workers not just City workers who were affected by the pandemic. If something of this nature was going to be addressed with ARPA funds it should be for the benefit the entire community.

Mike Petosa stated premium pay is eligible under ARPA and City workers represent the community. They put themselves at risk during the COVID period. There is a lot of money that came into the City under the ARPA funds. Council 4 did send a letter to the Mayor, as to why the City didn't file an application as the Employer on behalf of the workers. Commissioner Maikowski stated this application missed the deadline.

Jack stated there are restrictions as to who is eligible, the regulations prohibit anyone who was telecommunicating during that time. There are also some restrictions based on FSLA status, and compensation level. There is a rigorous and intense calculation that must be done by Human Resources and Payroll to determine eligibility and the calculation. Premium pay may be eligible to workers up to \$13/hour x 2000 hours for a maximum of \$26,000. However, not one client has gone to that level. For those of his clients that have chosen to do premium pay the range is a lump sum of \$1,500 to \$5,000.

Mike explained the unions in his calculation include Fire, Police, Local 233, 1338 and BPSA which is about 518 workers provided by the various unions. Commissioner Bombard has been approached by businesses who missed the deadline, and fair is fair.

Mayor Caggiano stated putting the front line workers of police and fire in the same category of the other works who possibly telecommuted doesn't make sense. Mayor Caggiano stated this isn't a transformational project serving the entire population of Bristol. Commissioner O'Brien stated he doesn't feel this is an appropriate use of funds as there are many other workers who would also deserve the use of these funds such as teachers, grocery workers and funeral directors.

Commissioner Dumas questioned what is being done with the remaining funds. Mayor Caggiano stated the remaining \$4 million was going to be used as matching funds for shovel ready projects specifically to match infrastructure projects within the City.

The Bristol In Demand Workforce project was discussed as the Northside Square developers want to change the space and terms of the lease agreement. The smaller space attached to Bristol Tunxis, and the American Job Center, would be the new home and require some reconfigurations.

7. Adjournment

Commissioner Bombard made a motion seconded by Commission Sadecki "to adjourn" at 5:50 p.m.

Jodi A. McGrane
Recording Secretary