

**TOWN OF STONINGTON**  
**BOARD OF FINANCE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**District Office Board Room – 40 Field Street Pawcatuck CT**  
**Wednesday, September 15, 2021**  
**7:45 PM**

The Board of Finance of the Town of Stonington held deliberations immediately following the Public Hearing at the Stonington School's District Office Board Room, located at 40 Field Street, Pawcatuck, on Wednesday, September 15, 2021.

Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:45 PM.

ARPA Request: \$1,540,000                      Town Hall and Human Services HVAC

Public Works Director Barbara McKrell with Mr. Chris Greenlaw, Town Engineer in attendance, spoke to the Board. Noting in 2019 a mechanical assessment of the Human Services building resulted in replacing the boiler, additional items were listed as needing to be addressed. In 2020, a mechanical assessment was completed at the Town Hall that reported there was no fresh air ductwork on the second floor. The estimate from the mechanical engineer did not involve an architect or the logistics of completing the construction. Director McKrell said that COVID impacts the construction as well, with cost and delays in fabrication of equipment and parts. As the project started coming more to a fruition, the experienced services of Weston & Sampson revisited the evaluations from 2019 and 2020 and provided an estimate of the cost of the work given this new climate. Director McKrell reported that the new estimate for Town Hall is \$1.89 million and Human Services \$720,000.

Director McKrell noted they are at the planning level for this estimate and can not be confident of the estimate until the project is designed and they get a feel for what the bidding climate is. Director McKrell stated that the systems in Town Hall and Human Services are past their useful life and recommends that the funding move forward with the project with the Board of Finance determining whether they want to increase the ask or minimally provide the original ask so the project can proceed, supporting the building and employees working there and the services to the public.

Ms. Lynn Young asked Director McKrell with the increasing cost estimates, what are the most important issues to address immediately. Director McKrell advised replacing the boiler and providing fresh air to the second floor in the Town Hall. Chairman O'Brien inquired if funding the Human Services at the original \$340,000 provides adequate funding to make progress on that system. Director McKrell advised replacing the air conditioning system as it currently uses R22 refrigerant which has been phased out and no longer available and replacing the system with a higher efficiency, ecologically friendly unit.

Mr. Michael Fauerbach asked Director McKrell about the integrity of the Human Services building and if she was concerned about anything structurally in the building. The Director stated the building is sound and as soon as the roof is replaced the building will have no issues.

ARPA Request: \$1,400,000 SMS HVAC (removed from ARPA budget by Board of Selectmen

Chairman O'Brien stated he was at a meeting with Pete Anderson, Dr. Van Riley, Gary Shettle, State Representative Greg Howard, State Senator Heather Somers and First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough to hear and discuss other funding options possibly available. The current estimate to replace the system is \$2.8 million.

Asking Finance Director Shettle how much has been spent outside of budgeted last year, Chairman O'Brien reports \$424,000 for the rooftop at Stonington High, \$350,000 in Energy Efficiency and \$571,389 in additional funding to cover PPE required for COVID.

Mr. Bob Stachen inquired about the timeline of securing additional funding and the ARPA funding. Chairman O'Brien stated by the end of October Senator Somers and Representative Howard should know their outcomes and regarding the ARPA funding, which is similar to the budget process, the decisions made tonight will determine if a project moves forward with the information provided.

Mr. Stachen asked what was mandating the sense of urgency to make decisions as he was aware other Towns are not going at the speed the Town of Stonington was moving.

First Selectman Chesebrough addressed the question, it was her understanding that the ARPA funds were given to municipalities to spend with a sense of urgency, to utilize the money and infuse it as quickly as possible to help struggling components within the municipality. The longer a delay, the further out the distribution of funds could take place. It was the Selectman's opinion from the meeting regarding the school HVAC that they understood the ARPA funds were not the appropriate place for them to request money for that project and further exploration into other funding was there best avenue.

Mr. Stachen expressed his concern that there was support in funding the Town Hall HVAC system but not for the school system. Mr. Stachen said he understood the concern for transparency on the funds already received by the school, but again, he has issues in the fact that they were moving forward on the Town Hall system. Mr. Stachen noted that the Town Hall was for adults, and everyone there can choose to be vaccinated, whereas the middle school population does not even have access to vaccines. Mr. Stachen asked if the BOE had withdrawn their request for the \$1.4 million.

Mr. Farouk Rajab, Board of Education, spoke to the Board, noting he supported putting the \$1.4 million request into the funds as he believed the school system should have an updated and working HVAC system.

Mr. Michael Fauerbach stated he would like to see the project get completed, but would like to see if there is an opportunity for Senator Somers and Representative Howard to secure funding. Mr. Fauerbach would not like to zero out the line item but would like to fund it at \$50-\$100,000 to send a signal to the BOE of their commitment to working with them while researching other sources of funds.

Chairman O'Brien asked for a sense of the Board of funding the line item. Mr. Fauerbach said he was in favor of proposing \$100,000, showing the Board is committed to partnering with the Board of Ed to get the project done, but would like to see what other funding options are available to take advantage of and see more transparency and full reconciliation of how the BOE is spending their COVID funding.

Ms. Deb Norman concurred. Ms. Lynn Young said she would like to see the project done, but also would like to see the reconciliation of the \$4.1 million in ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) Funds and the ARPA Funds received by the Board of Ed.

Mr. Glen Frishman would like to see full transparency of the \$4.1 million in ESSER Funds received by the Board of Ed before moving forward on providing Town ARPA Funds.

Mr. Dave Motherway suggested modifying the proposal and put \$25,000 towards the line item and allocate \$75,000 for a full audit of the ESSER and ARPA funds received by the BOE. This would provide an accurate baseline and proactively protect the Town from any penalties or loss of future funds or grants from issues surrounding the distribution of funds. Mr. Motherway suggested without the visibility and control of the money, the Town could put themselves in jeopardy. Mr. Frishman agreed. Further discussion resulted in the decision the ARPA funds could not be used toward the payment of an audit.

Mr. Fauerbach proposes \$100,000 for the SMS HVAC line item.

Ms. Deb Norman agrees with the \$100,000 for the SMS HVAC line item

Mr. Statchen feels the amount is inadequate and does not support the amount proposed.

Mr. Motherway proposes \$25,000 for the SMS HVAC line item.

Mr. Glenn Frishman agrees with the \$25,000 for the SMS HVAC line item.

Ms. Lynn Young supports the \$100,000 noting it would be an invitation to the BOE to submit their proposals and estimates of the cost of the project and allow time for a transparent reconciliation of previous funds received by the BOE.

Chairman O'Brien supports the \$100,000

The majority vote of the Board supports funding Line Item #5 – SMS HVAC for \$100,000

ARPA Request: \$600,000                      Public Works Salt Dome

Ms. Lynn Young inquired to Director McKrell if the \$600,000 was a recent number and if she felt it was sufficient for what was needed. Director McKrell stated the number was calculated by calling area Towns and asking what they had spent on their salt domes over the past few years. Director McKrell, noting they are just looking to replace the existing salt dome, feels comfortable with the request and hopes to have a new one in service by Winter 2022.

All members were in favor of funding \$600,000 to Line Item #4 – Public Works Salt Dome

ARPA Request: \$1,200,000                      Town Hall HVAC

Ms. Lynn Young expressed concern about the unknowns with regards to costs of many of the projects and would these projects need to be completed through CIP funds in a year or two. With regards to the Human Services HVAC project Ms. Young felt that it could be piecemealed, as the Town Hall could, and the numbers on the budget could be sufficient to move forward. Chairman O'Brien spoke from his point of view, the numbers could be left as is and if there was CIP money it could be increased that way to further invest in the project.

Mr. Michael Fauerbach asked for clarity regarding cost overruns, that there could be a contingency line item that could be part of the ARPA funding. Chairman O'Brien and First Selectman Chesebrough both agreed that there could be a contingency line item in the ARPA budget and those funds would have to be encumbered by 2024.

Mr. Glenn Frishman asked Director McKrell to prioritize the HVAC projects and the Town Hall parking lot. While the Town Hall HVAC took precedence, the Director did point out the many issues with the parking lot. Chairman O'Brien summarized, by funding the \$1.2 million for the Town Hall HVAC, that provides a new boiler for the building, a priority per Director McKrell. By this funding calculation, that would provide an opportunity to fund the Town Hall parking lot for \$375,000, where there is a safety issue.

Mr. Michael Fauerbach proposed \$1.2 million for the Town Hall HVAC system and \$375,000 for the Town Hall parking lot and \$340,000 for the Human Services HVAC system.

Ms. Deb Norman, Ms. Lynn Young, Mr. Glen Frishman and Mr. Dave Motherway were all in support. Mr. Bob Statchen did not support the proposal.

The majority vote of the Board supports funding Line Item #2 Town Hall HVAC at \$1.2 million  
The majority vote of the Board supports funding Line Item #3 Human Services HVAC at \$340,000  
The majority vote of the Board supports funding Line Item #13 Town Hall Parking & Drainage at \$375,000

ARPA Request: \$138,000                      Old Mystic Town Owned Site (former District Office)

The Facilities Task Force has been very involved with the site and have a plan and two potential entities interested in the site. The ARPA funds would be used to study the septic system, this initial investment would get the site to a point where interested parties such as the Inclusion Foundation or the Stonington Housing Authority would be able to step in with development plans.

Mr. Fauerbach asked if there was any risk the Town could be confronted with when performing this sewer inspection. Selectman Deb Downie addressed the Board stating that the Phase I would be an environmental site assessment and what if any would be the environmental or business risk. Since this was Town Property, it was Selectman Downie's opinion that would be good information to have.

Ms. Young asked why wouldn't the building just be marketed for sale. First Selectman Chesebrough stated the process of selling property is time consuming and expensive and the Facilities Committee did reach out and didn't get any interested parties other than some interest for Senior Housing from the Stonington Housing Authority and possibly adults with different and varying intellectual needs.

After a lengthy discussion on the property and its proposed possible uses, Chairman O'Brien asked for a sense of the Board on the funds request.

Mr. Michael Fauerbach stated he was interested in continuing the dialogue but already struggling with tonight's priorities adding he did not want a zero to be interpreted as no interest.

Ms. Deb Norman agreed, adding she too would like the Foundation to come back to the Board in the future.

Mr. Bob Statchen would like to see the foundation receive the \$138,000 noting that being able to move the ball forward on a project of an affordable mixed income housing for seniors or housing for neurodiverse adults with an established community organization was a very worthwhile use of the ARPA funds.

Mr. David Motherway asked for clarification of funds left over whether in contingency or savings on a project, Chairman O'Brien stated the funds could be used and did not follow regular budget rules. Based on that, Mr. Motherway suggests delaying the request and suggests revisiting the request at a later date.

Ms. Lynn Young and Mr. Glenn Frishman agree.

The majority vote of the Board supports reducing Line Item #6 – Old Mystic Site to Zero

ARPA Request: \$200,000 Child & Family Stonington Office

Chairman O'Brien stated after a discussion the First Selectman had with Director Theodore, it was determined that the project could be started with Human Services in house monies to get it going but the Director may come back as part of a CIP project.

The Board reduced Line Item #7 Child & Family Stonington Office to Zero

ARPA Request: \$600,000 Water Loop

Town Engineer Chris Greenlaw addressed the Board, noting a few points in a large project that has been well discussed. The project entails the design and installation of an 8" water line to connect Greenhaven and Mary Hall Road. The water system is owed by Westerly Water. In 2016 Pawcatuck Fire Department notified officials of their concerns regarding the redundancy of the water system. In 2018 there was a Pawcatuck study of the water system. Ms. Lynn Young inquired who commissioned the study, Mr. Greenlaw said he would find out that information. The study identified sections of pipe deficiencies, both pressure and flow being below recommended standards.

Mr. Greenlaw stated this year the department solicited two large firms, both with backgrounds in water and sewer. A planning level estimate of services combined with the anticipated construction costs approximate a total of \$2.9 million. The contingency on this project is roughly 25%. The wildcard in the design is rock excavation or ledge which is what the borings could determine.

Ms. Lynn Young expressed some concerns, Westerly Water owns the system, and therefore the report that highlights the deficiencies should also be their concern. The Mary Hall connection would benefit a developer looking to develop that area, what if any would be his contribution, and noting she is not opposed to the loop but having to ask the question; why should it be town expenditures for a water system that benefits a portion of the town whereas the other part of town that has a private water company has to pay rates for whatever needs to be done.

First Selectman Chesebrough stated this has been identified as a risk to the Town. Should there be an event when a break in that part of the system occurs, it would affect the Police Station, Human Services, the High School which is the Town's emergency shelter, Stonington Arms and the businesses in that area. There would

be a risk for the Town for not addressing it. Noting it was not just about the people who are on the loop, but the broader impacts for emergency shelter, the Police Station, the school and businesses. First Selectman Chesebrough stated that Westerly Water has stated to former Selectman Simmons, to herself and many others that they will not pay for the loop.

First Selectman Chesebrough hoped that a solution could be found and noted that there is \$1.9 million in funding on the table and implored the Board to consider at least \$340,000 for the design and engineering. Coupled with the \$1.9M federal allocation, the Selectman suggested it could be enough to get the core part or at least one loop completed. The \$1.9M is not dependent on the design and engineering being completed.

Mr. Michael Fauerbach commented that he would like to find out about the \$1.9M and meanwhile create a contingency line assuring the \$340,000 for the design and engineering. In October or November, when it is determined if the grant is received, then the contingency line could be tapped for the \$340,000.

Mr. Bob Statchen proposed a stronger commitment to the design and engineering portion of the project, noting (should there be a failure in the line) the Town's emergency operations, the shelter and the elderly housing are on this line and hoped this project would be a priority.

The Chairman's summation of the sense of the Board was six votes to bring the line item to zero with the caveat there is a contingency large enough to cover the design and engineering costs of \$320,000 - \$350,000 and one vote to fund it further.

ARPA Request: \$150,000 Fourth District Voting Hall Drainage & Paving

All members were in favor of funding \$150,000 to Line Item #12 – Fourth District Voting Hall Drainage & Paving

ARPA Request: 375,000 Town Hall Drainage & Parking Lot

All members were in favor of funding \$375,000 to Line Item #13 – Town Hall Drainage & Parking Lot

ARPA Request: \$150,000 Sewer

Chairman O'Brien noted this was for the second phase of the I&I Study. The Chairman stated he had asked Finance Director Jim Sullivan if bonding could potentially cover these expenses and Director Sullivan gave an affirmative, the bonding language was inclusive enough to do this through bonding. Ms. Lynn Young proposed reducing the ask to zero. All members concurred.

All members were in favor of reducing Line Item #14 – Sewer to Zero

ARPA Request: \$135,000 Radio Loop/Microwave

Chief Darren Stewart informed the Board that he had received a quote of \$132,000 from the State of CT. Ms. Lynn Young proposed to put the ask into the CIP budget.

Ms. Lynn Young, Ms. Deb Norman, Mr. Michael Fauerbach, and Chairman O'Brien vote to move the request to CIP.

Mr. Glenn Frishman, Mr. Dave Motherway and Mr. Bob Statchen vote to fund at \$135,000.

The majority vote of the Board supports moving Line Item #15 – Radio Loop/Microwave to CIP

ARPA Request: \$500,000 Stonington Housing Fund

Mr. Bob Statchen expressed that he felt the program was worthwhile and being able to utilize the experiences noted in Groton and get a program like this off the floor is worthy. Noting that marginalized communities have been maligned due to the pandemic, the fund seemed to be in line with the ARPA funds purpose and Mr. Statchen felt that these type of economic development programs actually do help people who need the assistance and he gave his support of the funding.

Mr. Glenn Frishman stated that as fiduciaries of the taxpayers money, he did not feel this benefited a broad enough specter of the taxpayers and therefore did not support the funding.

Ms. Deb Norman proposed funding the request at \$100,000.

Chairman O'Brien proposed funding the request at \$150,000.

Ms. Young asked Human Services Director Leanne Theodore how many families could she anticipate helping with \$100,000 to \$150,000. Director Theodore stated they've never advertised a program such as this but noted the department sees 10 to 15 families annually that are in crisis mode or referred to them through blight. Director Theodore felt even that number was low and not realistic. Director Theodore noted there would be a staunch application process, working closely with Sue Cullen to develop something already in the department intake process. The Director felt there were a lot of lower income seniors that are struggling with smaller repairs that don't have the money to make these repairs and unfortunately end up being out of their homes because of it. The Department works to be supportive of people in their homes, working with a generation trying to age in place and save money. Director Theodore stated she respected the decision to start small and she looked forward to growing the program and obtaining grants to help move it forward.

Mr. Michael Fauerbach asked the First Selectman about grants that may be available once there was some funding available and did she know if Groton had sustained their fund with grants. The First Selectman said that Groton did receive CDBG grants, something the Town of Stonington had not applied for. Director Theodore also noted other grants and programs such as the TVCCA Weatherization program that may want to partner with the Town program.

Chairman O'Brien proposed funding the request at \$150,000.

Ms. Deb Norman, Mr. Michael Fauerbach, Ms. Lynn Young, Mr. Dave Motherway and Mr. Bob Statchen support the request at \$150,000.

Mr. Glenn Frishman does not support the request.

The majority vote of the Board supports funding Line Item #20 – Stonington Housing Fund for \$150,000

ARPA Request: \$50,000 Stonington Transportation Fund

Chairman O'Brien stating that he had a conversation with the First Selectman, suggested not creating a Transportation Fund, but make this a contribution into the current General Assistance Fund for Human Services to utilize for car repairs, transportation and insurance for struggling individuals or families. Director

Theodore stated this allocation would fit right into what they are already doing for their intake process in general.

The majority vote of the Board supports a one-time funding of \$50,000 to the General Assistance Fund for the purpose of assisting individuals or families with transportation issues.

ARPA Request: \$100,000 Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce

The Board supports funding Line Item #29 – Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce for \$75,000

ARPA Request: \$100,000 Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition

The Board discussed and the majority agreed to fund at \$25,000, Mr. Bob Statchen suggested funding at the full \$100,000 and did not support the reduced amount. Wendy Bury, Executive Director stated the \$25,000 just was not sufficient in terms of recovery. Noting the funds would be provided to the businesses that need it most right now, Ms. Bury said that the economic losses that businesses have endured due to COVID is enormous and they're still going to endure more economic losses as we go into fall and winter to indoor events that are being cancelled. Adding the tourism industry has had much bigger losses than other industries in the Town, Ms. Bury felt the ARPA funds were intended to help those businesses and it was worthy of Stonington to invest locally to help these struggling businesses.

After discussion the Board proposed funding the request at \$52,000, a total equivalent to 1% of the ARPA funding.

Ms. Deb Norman, Mr. Michael Fauerbach, Ms. Lynn Young, Mr. Glenn Frishman and Mr. Dave Motherway support the request at \$52,000.

Mr. Bob Statchen did not support the request as he felt it should be funded at the initially proposed \$100,000

The majority vote of the Board supports funding Line Item #30 – Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition for \$52,000

ARPA Request: \$28,0000 Mystic Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Fauerbach suggested funding the wayfinding program for \$5,000 and the outstanding police bill from the Town of Stonington for \$8,000 for a total of \$13,000. All members were in favor.

The Board supports funding Line Item #31 – Mystic Chamber of Commerce for \$13,000.

ARPA Request: \$22,480 Mental Health 911/211 Campaign

The First Selectman reported that the funds would be used to gain an extra part time counselor to mitigate the waitlist and provide extra hours of services. Director Theodore noted that the additional help is strongly needed.

The Board supports funding Line Item #35 – Mental Health 911/211 Campaign for \$22,480.



ARPA Request: \$30,000 Libraries – Covid Expenditures

The Board supports funding Line Item #37– Libraries Covid Expenditures for \$40,000 and allocating according to the formula previously set for library funding.

ARPA Request: \$41,000 Program Van – New Heights

The Board supports funding Line Item #38– Program Van – New Heights for \$41,000

ARPA Request: \$80,000 COMO – HVAC System

With the Board considering a \$60,000 allocation of funds, Mr. Bob Statchen stated he would like to see the full funding of \$80,000 be provided to the COMO for the HVAC System. Director Theodore told the Board the Human Services department, that does not have air conditioning in the community room right now, looks forward to partnering in the future with the COMO, but if they are experiencing the same issues, they are both providing a disservice right now.

The Board supports funding Line Item #39– COMO HVAC System for \$80,000

ARPA Request: \$10,000 Always Home – Stonington Assistance Fund

The Board supports funding Line Item #40 – Always Home – Stonington Assistance Fund for \$10,000

ARPA Request: \$10,138 Edythe K Richmond PPE

The Board supports funding Line Item #42 – Edythe K Richmond PPE for \$10,138

ARPA Request: \$19,000 Ambulances

The Board supports funding Line Item #45 – Ambulances for \$19,000

ARPA Request: \$65,000 Stonington Police Dept – Dispatch

Noting that the request could be an ongoing cost and potentially not ARPA funds and should be classified as operating funds. The request was zeroed out, informing Chief Stewart to address the issue through the operating budget or a line item transfer.

The Board reduced Line Item #46 – Stonington Police Dept – Dispatch to zero.

ARPA Request: \$110,000 Cyber

The Board supports funding Line Item #47 – Cyber for \$110,000

ARPA Request: \$52,309 Ledge Light Health District

The Board supports funding Line Item #48 – Ledge Light Health District for \$52,309

ARPA Request: \$0 SECOG

After discussion with the First Selectman and Finance Director, the Board agrees to funding.

The Board supports funding Line Item #52 – SECOG for \$34,332 over 4 years

New ARPA Request: \$25,000 Pawcatuck Little League – Drive In Movie Theater

The Board did not choose to fund the request, however, encouraged Mr. Morrissey to come back to the Board with the zoning questions answered and further details.

Finalizing the numbers that were heard here tonight, \$1,591,688 were unallocated monies from the ARPA funding, of which \$1,000,000 was put into a contingency fund suggested by Mr. David Motherway.

The Board agreed to add the remaining \$591,688 to Line Item #14 – Paving, bringing the total paving amount to \$726,688.

The final totals per expenditure classification is as follows:

|                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Facilities           | \$3,240,000 |
| Infrastructure       | 1,231,668   |
| Housing              | 150,000     |
| General Assistance   | 50,000      |
| Economy              | 140,000     |
| Services             | 203,618     |
| Security/Health      | 181,309     |
| Grant Administration | 34,332      |
| Total                | \$5,230,927 |

This allocates all the ARPA Funds.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jill A. Senior  
Recording Secretary