

TOWN OF STONINGTON
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
October 18, 2021

A Special Town Meeting of the Town of Stonington was called to order at 7:07 p.m. on October 18, 2021 at the Stonington High School, by First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough. Also, in attendance was Selectwomen June Strunk & Deborah Downie. Town Attorney Brian Estep was also present.

First Selectman Chesebrough asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. First Selectman Chesebrough then asked for nominations for Moderator. Selectwoman June Strunk nominated Theodore Ladwig and being properly seconded by Selectwoman Downie, Mr. Ladwig was unanimously elected Moderator of the meeting. Town Clerk, Cynthia Ladwig served as Clerk.

The Moderator asked for a motion to dispense with the reading of the Call recorded immediately preceding this page. Hearing no objection, First Selectman Chesebrough read the following Resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF STONINGTON IN LAWFUL MEETING DULY ASSEMBLED, THAT:

The following being sufficient sum or sums of money utilizing the budget of expenditures of the Town's planned American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) distribution, and use of the federal grant funds, received by the Town all of which have been approved and recommended by the Board of Finance to the extent of the amount appearing opposite each. A summary of American Rescue Plan Act grant funding budget is as follows:

Facilities	\$3,240,000
Infrastructure	1,231,668
Housing	150,000
Transportation	50,000
Economy	140,000
Services	203,618
Security/Health	181,309
Grant Administration	34,332

TOTAL ARPA GRANT BUDGET \$5,230,927

Before opening the floor to discussion, the Moderator recognized First Selectman Chesebrough and Town Attorney Estep to give an overview as to how the funding was approved by the Bd. of Finance and the Bd. of Selectman and to explain that no line item could be changed.

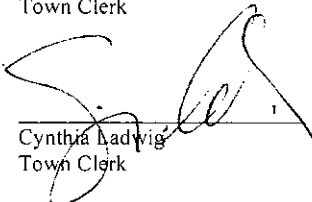
The Moderator opened the floor to discussion. Speaking on the Resolution was Steve Hobaica, Bd. of Finance member Mike Fauerbach, Nicholas Kepple, Ross Biddle - a student at Stonington Middle School and Selectwoman June Strunk.

Hearing no further discussion, the Moderator called for a paper ballot vote. Town Clerk, Cynthia Ladwig and Deputy Town Clerk, Sally Duplice checked electors and property owners from the voting list and the most current grand list. Votes were tallied and the Moderator read the results. Those in favor of approving the Resolution was 37. Those opposing the Resolution was 2. The Moderator declared the Resolution was approved.

There being no further business to come before the Special Town Meeting, the Moderator declared the meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

/s/ Cynthia Ladwig
Town Clerk

Received for record this 19th day of October, 2021.


Cynthia Ladwig
Town Clerk

TOWN OF STONINGTON
ARPA GRANT - AGENCY FUNDED REQUESTS
BOARD OF FINANCE RECOMMENDED TO TOWN MEETING
OCTOBER 18, 2021 TOWN MEETING

BOARDS OF SELECTMEN AND FINANCE - FUNDING ADJUSTMENTS

LINE #	Implementation Agency	Expenditure Classification	REQUESTED Fiscal Year 2021-22	Board of Selectmen Adjustments 2021-22	Board of Selectmen Budget 2021-22	Board of Finance Adjustments 2021-22	Sent to Town Meeting 2021-22
1		FACILITIES					
2	Town	Town Hall HVAC	1,200,000	-	1,200,000	-	1,200,000
3	Town	Human Services HVAC	340,000	-	340,000	-	340,000
4	Town	Salt Dome	600,000	-	600,000	-	600,000
5	School	SMS HVAC	1,400,000	(1,400,000)	-	100,000	100,000
6	Outside Agency	Inclusion Foundation (Old Mystic Site)	196,950	(58,950)	138,000	(138,000)	-
7	School	Child and Family Stonington Office	250,000	(50,000)	200,000	(200,000)	-
8	Town	Contingency	-	-	-	1,000,000	1,000,000
9		TOTAL FACILITIES	3,986,950	(1,508,950)	2,478,000	762,000	3,240,000
10		INFRASTRUCTURE					
11	Town	Water Line Loop	900,000	(300,000)	600,000	(600,000)	-
12	Town	Fourth District Voting Hall drainage and paving	150,000	-	150,000	-	150,000
13	Town	Town Hall drainage and parking lot	375,000	-	375,000	-	375,000
14	Town	Sewer I&I	150,000	-	150,000	(150,000)	-
15	Town	Radio Loop/Microwave	135,000	-	135,000	(135,000)	-
16	Town	Paving	500,000	(385,000)	115,000	591,668	706,668
17			-	-	-	-	-
18		TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE	2,210,000	(685,000)	1,525,000	(293,332)	1,231,668
19		HOUSING					
20	Town/Outside Agency	Stonington Housing Fund	500,000	-	500,000	(350,000)	150,000
21	N/A	ALICE	120,000	(120,000)	-	-	-
22			-	-	-	-	-
23		TOTAL HOUSING	620,000	(120,000)	500,000	(350,000)	150,000
24		TRANSPORTATION					
25	Town	Stonington Transportation Fund	50,000	-	50,000	(50,000)	-
26		General Assistance	-	-	-	50,000	50,000
27		TOTAL TRANSPORTATION	50,000	-	50,000	-	50,000
28		ECONOMY					
29	OCCC	Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce	100,000	-	100,000	(25,000)	75,000
30	SCCC	Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition	100,000	-	100,000	(48,000)	52,000
31	Mystic Chamber	Mystic Chamber	33,000	(5,000)	28,000	(15,000)	13,000
32			-	-	-	-	-
33		TOTAL ECONOMY	233,000	(5,000)	228,000	(88,000)	140,000

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BOARDS OF SELECTMEN AND FINANCE - FUNDING ADJUSTMENTS

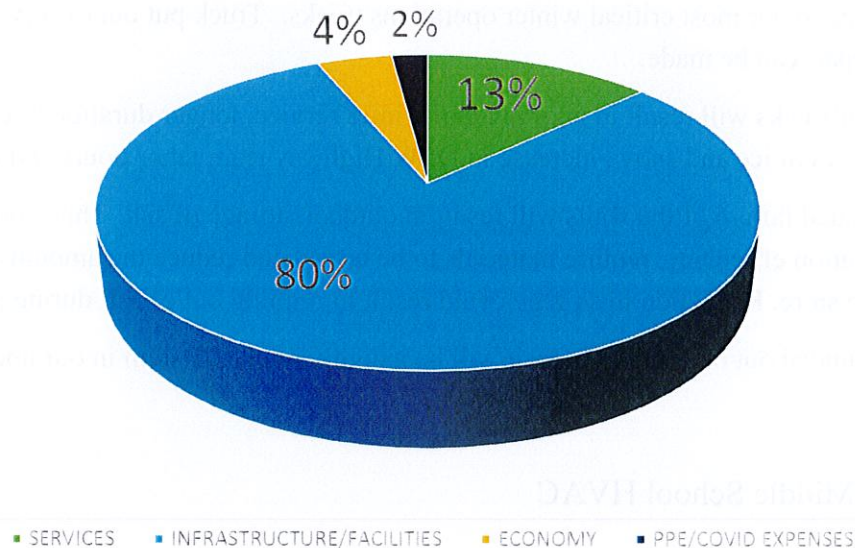
LINE #	Implementation Agency	Expenditure Classification	REQUESTED Fiscal Year 2021-22	Board of Selectmen Adjustments 2021-22	Board of Selectmen Budget 2021-22	Board of Finance Adjustments 2021-22	Sent to Town Meeting 2021-22
34		SERVICES					
35	Town	Mental Health 911/211 campaign and counseling	22,480	-	22,480	-	22,480
36	N/A	Child Care Subsidy	228,000	(228,000)	-	-	-
37	Outside Agency	Libraries-COVID Expenses	30,000	-	30,000	10,000	40,000
38	Outside Agency	New Heights- Program Van	45,000	(4,000)	41,000	-	41,000
39	Outside Agency	Commo- HVAC	185,000	(105,000)	80,000	-	80,000
40	Outside Agency	Always Home- Stonington Assistance Fund	10,000	-	10,000	-	10,000
41	Outside Agency	PNC- Gazebo	10,000	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
42	Outside Agency	Edythe K Richmond PPE	15,000	(4,862)	10,138	-	10,138
43	Outside Agency	Pawcatuck Little League	-	-	-	-	-
44		TOTAL SERVICES	545,480	(341,862)	203,618	-	203,618
45		SECURITY/HEALTH					
46	Outside Agency	Ambulances	19,000	-	19,000	-	19,000
47	Town	Police Dispatch	65,000	-	65,000	(65,000)	-
48	Town	Cyber	110,000	-	110,000	-	110,000
49	Outside Agency	LLHD	52,309	-	52,309	-	52,309
50			-	-	-	-	-
51		TOTAL SECURITY/HEALTH	246,309	-	246,309	(65,000)	181,309
52		GENERAL ASSISTANCE WITH GRANT ADMINISTRATION					
53	Outside Agency	SECOG	34,332	(34,332)	-	34,332	34,332
54			-	-	-	-	-
55		TOTAL GENERAL ASSISTANCE	34,332	(34,332)	-	34,332	34,332
56		TOTAL	7,926,071	(2,695,144)	5,230,927	-	5,230,927
57		Available Funds	5,230,927		5,230,927		5,230,927
58		Difference	(2,695,144)		-		-
59		Unrestricted Use Funds-1.9million available	1,210,000	(385,000)	825,000	591,668	1,416,668
60		Restricted by Interim Rule Guidance	6,716,071	(2,310,144)	4,405,927	(591,668)	3,814,259
61		TOTAL	7,926,071	(2,695,144)	5,230,927	-	5,230,927

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ARPA FUNDS OVERVIEW



Town Hall and Human Services HVAC

Project Estimate: 1,540,000 **ARPA Request:** 1,540,000; **Budget Line #:** 2+3

This includes all engineering and construction costs to address all items in the Mechanical Evaluations for each building. Human Services is \$340,000 and Town Hall is \$1,200,000. Both projects are deemed a need. They were both priority CIP items last year, removed with the idea that ARPA funds would be used to cover the expenses.

DPW Salt Dome Replacement

Total Cost Estimate: \$600,000; **ARPA Request:** \$600,000; **Budget Line #:** 4

The DPW salt dome was constructed in 1990 and is experiencing structural deterioration of the facility concrete walls. The salt and moisture that has penetrated into the walls is causing significant pieces of concrete spall into the salt being stored in the dome. Due to the exposure of the wall reinforcement the loss of concrete will continue. This creates a significant hazard.

During winter operations to address snow and ice on roads the salt is loaded into our large trucks with salt spreaders. These spreaders are designed to process and distribute salt granules on the Town's roadway, not pieces of concrete. Therefore, when a piece of concrete is accidentally

placed into a truck it will damage and most likely put that vehicle out of service. This will have a compounding negative effect on the Town in the following ways:

1. Damage to our most critical winter operations trucks. Truck put out of service until parts and repair can be made.
2. Loss of trucks will result in poor level of winter service, longer duration to clear roadways of ice and snow, increase in DPW Highway team labor hours and costs.
3. Continued failure of the walls will result in outdoor storage of salt. This would reduce application efficiency, require materials to be tarped and reduce the amount of salt we are able to store. Reduction in storage could result in running out of salt during a storm.

If this is not funded out of ARPA funds, it will be a highly rated CIP item in our upcoming budget.

Stonington Middle School HVAC

Total Cost Estimate: \$2,800,000; **ARPA Request:** \$1,400,000; **Budget Line #:** 5

Stonington Middle School (SMS) is in need of a full HVAC/air quality system. The school has requested assistance through CIP and other funding in the past, but have not been able to move forward with this important need. With the two new elementary school buildings and the efforts to update Stonington High School, the District Office HVAC, ventilation systems, the last district building needing attention is Stonington Middle School. To that end, the district has set aside over half of the available District ARP funds to assist with this critical building improvement. Of the approximate \$2.5M District ARP funds, \$1.4M has been allocated to improving air quality at SMS. The Board of Education requests that the Town consider matching the \$1.4M in order to meet the estimated total project cost of \$2.8M. *Note: SPS also received approximately \$1.398M in 'ESSER I and II' funding, prior to the ARP Funds.*

Old Mystic Town-owned Site (former District Office)

ARPA Request: \$138,100; **Budget Line #:** 6

This funding is both needed and an exciting potential partnership. This site has been 'stuck' as there is no sewer, and it is unlikely given the Mystic sewer challenges that there will be a sewer option in the near future. Before being able to move forward with any potential plans, there is significant due diligence needed to understand the capacity of the site.

Inclusion- A Sylvestre Family Foundation has offered to partner with the Town to help take the first phase of this work forward. In exchange for the funding, they would project manage, saving Town staff time, which is a significant help. The due diligence will be owned by the Town and shared publicly with anyone wishing to later put in a RFP for the site. The objective is to get this to stage where a sample site plan could be presented, so we can then do research on septic and see how much of said site plan could move forward given the septic limitation. Once this is complete, the Town will be in a much better position to work with potential partners to give the site new life. To date, two exciting prospects have been shared- one an affordable, mixed income housing for seniors and the other housing for neurodiverse adults, who are ready to live on their own. Both parties have also met and discussed plans for future, possible development and seem keen to work together to make this site a productive use that will meet the needs of our community.

Child and Family

Total Cost Estimate: \$250,000; **ARPA Request:** \$200,000; **Budget Line #:** 7

There are limited mental health resources for lower income families in the Stonington area; for example, our Human Services counseling budget is \$36,000 each year (with a wait list at nearly all times). Stonington families served by the Groton CGC often face transportation barriers. Children in these families have primarily been treated for trauma-related diagnoses: 30% TRAUMA; 20% anxiety; 20% adjustment; 15% depression; 10% ADHD; 5% other dx.

The goal would also to provide access to child psychiatry, a vital resource and one which is currently extremely scarce in CT, especially for low-income families. Stonington families would have access to a variety of Evidence Based models of mental health care, which could have long lasting positive impacts in our community.

The location identified is the old Chorus room in District Office. The school would provide this location free of charge, and have requested the Town use ARPA funds to cover the cost to create the counseling center. This partnership between the Town, School and CFA would benefit many residents. It should be noted that this can only move forward with State funds to help offset the operational expenses. Our State Representative is working to secure this funding.

Water Loop

Total Cost Estimate: \$2.8M; **ARPA Request:** \$900,000; **Budget Line #:** 11

In the winter of 2016, the Pawcatuck Fire Department notified Stonington town officials of their concerns regarding the redundancy of the water supply distribution system in Pawcatuck. Their concern resulted from new and proposed development along the ends of the system, where the

system is its most vulnerable. In this instance, there are two “dead end” water distribution lines within the village, and it is the fire department’s position that these lines need to be connected: thereby creating a “looped” system. As part of the proposed project, the loop will be created, which will improve system redundancy, and also improve the flow and pressure to meet AWWA water supply standards.

“Dead end” lines create operational risk for the fire department and building owners, because pipes could break – resulting in short-term occupancy impacts until corrective measures can be implemented. While no such break has occurred, the number of populations at-risk is noteworthy and worthy of a mitigation plan. Further, critical public infrastructure - the Town’s Police Station, Emergency Operations Center, and Emergency Shelter – are served by this water supply.

The Town Engineer and volunteer Charles Sheehan (who was the CEO of the Metropolitan District Commission (Hartford region's water and sewer authority), with input from the Pawcatuck Fire Chief, put together a proposal for a grant to the State of CT, but the program is now 1-a loan program and 2- highly complicated based on the fact that Westerly Water is located in RI. We also engaged our State Rep and Senator; however, in the end it does not appear there is State funding currently available to Stonington. Based on that, the First Selectman pursued Federal Earmarks through both Congressman Courtney and Senator Murphy for \$1.9M in funding for the project. In the end, Stonington was selected and it is very likely that this money will be voted on and approved by this Fall.

There are potential options to offset the cost by having private funding included with the Earmark and ARPA funding, but that needs to be further explored.

Drainage and Paving

Total Cost Estimate: \$525,000; ARPA Request: \$525,000; Budget Line #: 12+13

ARPA allows storm water management expense, and so we have put forward two important drainage projects that are also long-time CIP requests- Town Hall drainage and parking lot (total estimate at \$375,00) and the final stages of work on the Fourth District Voting Hall (\$150,000). The time has come when it is no longer an option, but a need to replace the Town Hall parking lot and also address storm water drainage. Similarly, for the Fourth District Voting Hall, this will be the final work needed to make much needed parking in the downtown area, and a great showcase for what a MS4 compliant parking lot can look like. Both projects will help protect our local waterways, and also help us make required progress toward our our State MS4 permit.

Sewer: I & I Phase II

Total Cost Estimate: \$300,000; ARPA Request: \$150,000; Budget Line #: 14

This request would go to help cover the expenses related to the second phase of the I&I study. This is a need and if not funded here would likely be a CIP request for this budget cycle. While not guaranteed, the State does have a reimbursement grant up to 55% of the total cost.

Police Radio Loop

Total Cost Estimate: \$150,000; ARPA Request: \$135,000; Budget Line #: 15

Stonington is the only police department using the State Radio system that is on a spoke for fiber, so when our fiber is down the radios are not working well. Microwave connections are the norm and fiber is normally the backup. This request would ensure there is a looped system and move us to a microwave connection. The Board of Finance could also choose to fund in the September meeting directly out of fund balance. More discussion required.

Paving

ARPA Request: \$500,000; Budget Line #: 16

In the 2020-21 budget we reduced paving by \$440,000 in order to achieve our zero-increase budget. Any additional funding would help us improve our road rating and start to catch up on deferred road maintenance. The Board of Selectman recommended that any 'surplus' of funds go into paving. For example, if the Police Radio Loop is not funded out of ARPA funds, we recommend that allotment go into Paving.

Stonington Housing Fund

ARPA Request: \$500,000; Budget Line #: 20

This request is to start a pilot program in Stonington to offer greater access to quality housing. In Stonington, 34.8% of overall households and 46.6% of rental household are cost-burdened-spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Further, current affordable housing complexes in Stonington have wait lists that range from 2 months to 2 years. Housing impacts so

many areas of a person's life, and without access to quality housing the related stressors can reach into so many aspects of a person's life. This is why \$500,000 is being requested for two programs.

The first program is the **Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program**, which would offer low to no interest loans to enable residents to make home improvements that they otherwise may not be able to make. This could include, new windows, exterior painting, roof replacement or repair, gutters and downspouts, insulation, mold remediation, lead paint abatement/remediation and ADA accessibility enhancements. In addition to helping residents, in exchange for the loan the Town would be able to hold the second mortgage and put in an affordable housing deed restriction. This would help us preserve more naturally occurring affordable housing in our own community and improve our numbers- getting us closer to the State's 10% goal. Through the design of the program incentives could be made to keep the home affordable for longer. For example, if the loan is repaid and the home is out of the program for >5 years there could be a low interest payment, whereas if the home remained in the program for <5 years that would be no interest. Housing rehabilitation loan programs have positive effects on both physical and mental health. Findings have also pointed to reductions in children's absenteeism from school and adults from work. Further, housing rehabilitation can lead to appreciation for the renovated house as well as neighborhood effects, increasing nearby property values and neighborhood stabilization.

Another potential program within this fund could be a **Homeownership Program**, providing assistance with a down payment or closing costs. Homeownership remains a cornerstone of the American Dream – **providing individuals with a sense of emotional and financial stability and, historically, boosting household wealth through equity and appreciation over time. Homeownership also plays a vital role in helping to build strong, stable communities, with studies linking homeownership to increased volunteerism, improved health, and less crime in communities.** The focus of this program would be to help people who are currently paying more in rent than they would otherwise for a mortgage, as well as address the increasing problem of a decreasing pool of affordable rentals due to the more recent changes in the COVID-related housing market. For some in our community, they may be able to afford the monthly mortgage and the necessary funds for ongoing repairs associated with homeownership, but cannot pull together the full down payment, reach the 20% down payment needed to eliminate the mortgage insurance premiums or may even just be just shy of the costs for the closing payments. This type of program and yield multifactor benefits for individuals and families in our community. For example, in Fairfield, the Town fund covers 50 percent of the down payment cost up to \$30,000 through a, deferred, zero-interest loan; and up to \$2,500 for closing cost assistance.

Additional Points:

- Our Human Services team, with support from our Director of Economic and Community Development (who has extensive knowledge in this field from her work in Groton), would partner with a local nonprofit to ensure no new hires would be required to make this program possible.
- Most nonprofits have about a 12% fee for running these programs in partnership with a municipality. For this \$500,000 program, this would equate to \$60,000 to the nonprofit.
- The benefit of working with a nonprofit with expertise in this field is immense. In addition to the knowledge they bring, they offer take on the liability for the municipality in terms of doing the home inspection prior to the Town offering financial assistance and they also work as the liaison between the homeowner and the Town. For example, for the rehabilitation program, they would be the one hiring the contractors, overseeing the work, making the payments and confirming that quality work was completed.
- The additional benefit of structuring this program as a loan means this program could continue to sustain funding for years to come after the initial investment was made. Further, there are State programs we could apply to in future years, further enabling this program to be sustainable in the long-term without asking for further tax payer dollars to keep the program in place (we currently have a waitlist of about 2 years for current projects awaiting these State CDBG funding grants, which is why we haven't gone after them to-date).
- This program would be available to low- and moderate-income homeowners as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To qualify, the total combined annual income of all residents in the household cannot exceed income guidelines that are established annually.
- We could require loan recipients take a homebuyer education class (currently offered year-round by CHFA). These classes offer educational opportunities around budgeting finances effectively for new homeowners.
- The loan does not need to be repaid until the borrower sells, refinances, transfers the property, or passes away.
- If loans were made possible in the range of \$10,000- \$30,000, this would mean anywhere from 14 to 44 households could benefit from this program.

Since these would be Stonington programs, we have flexibility to shape these programs in a way that would work for our community. It should be noted, that the First Selectman (aka the person writing this document) is committed to working with the Board of Finance on the creation of a program that takes into consideration the many different factors that would need to be weighed to make this program successful and a positive addition to our community

Rent Subsidies for ALICE Households

ARPA Request: \$120,000; Budget Line #: 21

This proposal would provide a \$200 a month stipend for 12 months for 50 families in need. For more information visit <https://www.uwsect.org/stonington> and https://alice.ctunitedway.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ALICE-2020-Executive-Summary_-8.25.2020-1.pdf.

Stonington Transportation Fund

ARPA Request: \$50,000; Budget Line #: 25

This would go to help individuals in need of either car repairs or a down payment on a car. Transportation consistently ranks among the top challenges for those looking for, or struggling to maintain, employment. It can also be a cause for accepting lower paying jobs, because the person can not access certain public transportation or car sharing options. This could have a positive impact not only on individuals in our community, but also the economy more broadly.

Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce

ARPA Request: \$100,000; Budget Line #: 29

Stonington is delighted to have the opportunity to partner with the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce to offer a one-time allocation of funds to help small businesses and nonprofits in our community. The is intended to support investments that grow our local economy and continue to improve the quality of life for residents. For more details on how this program could be set-up please see the [Annex](#) draft program flyer. Note, both the Board of Selectman and the Chamber are very open to Board of Finance input on shaping the program and selection of grantees. \$80,000 would be directly for this program. Approximately \$8,000 would cover the administrative costs associated with running this program (10%) and the remaining \$12,000 would be to support 1- purchasing lobster pots for children to paint for the first ever, Stonington Lobster Pot Tree (will go up November 2021); and 2- support for a future Stonington event organized by the OCCC to benefit our community.

Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition

ARPA Request: \$100,000; Budget Line #: 30

The arts and culture sector is struggling to survive and the workforce has been significantly diminished. Quick action is needed to protect these community-based assets and economic. According to the Americans for the Arts' "Red Alert: COVID-19 and the Creative Economy in Connecticut" (attached), COVID-19 has devastated CT's creative economy: \$2.4 billion in lost revenue for creative economy businesses in CT in 2020; and 56% unemployed creative workers in CT. Suggested ways municipalities can deploy aid efficiently to help with economic recovery include for public health messaging, musicians for concerts, aid for reopening and more. By giving at the \$100,000 level, we would be able to tap into the extensive knowledge and skillset within the Cultural Coalition to invest the dollars into arts and culture in Stonington. The Coalition will also help track the investments made, so we can help demonstrate the return on that investment. The Coalition would host a community dialogue to ensure the funds are spent in a way that our local art and culture institutions would find meaningful. This could be shared marketing promotions, support for public art and/or music, or direct one-time grants.

Mystic Chamber of Commerce

ARPA Request: \$33,000; **Budget Line #:** 31

The Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce is seeking \$33,000 in American Rescue Funds from the Town of Stonington. We are seeking these funds through the Travel and Tourism arc of the plan.

Over the last 18 months the pandemic hit the Greater Mystic Chamber hard. Our Tourism Center, which was located next to the Seaport on Greenmanville Avenue, had to be closed because we could not afford the space. We have since moved to 22 East Main Street in a second-floor office in the heart of Mystic. A component of the old house was an active visitor center. With the [pandemic, we had to downsize our office and reduce the size of the visitor center. We are seeking to invest in an ice cream truck type vehicle, branding it the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce and use it to promote the region from the Thames River to the Pawcatuck River. We see this as a replacement for our visitor center that will provide an alternative where the truck is mobile. It can be used in Mystic but also brought to other locations and events in New London, New Haven, Rhode Island and more. It will be a traveling Information truck for Mystic and our region. We see funding sources from several different areas. We are seeking \$15,000 from the town of Stonington and the same amount from the town of Groton. We will seek matching program funds from the eastern regional tourism district. The final funding source will be sponsorships of the vehicle. The Chamber would not seek final distribution of these funds until the program and funding sources were all confirmed.

We are seeking \$5,000 to help us promote Stonington to the Pawcatuck River. We are working with the town of Groton for several maps as part of their wayfinding program. The chamber will

oversee a QR code accessed on line map of downtown Mystic and a QR code accessed map of the region from the Mystic River to the Pawcatuck River. The money will be used to fund the creation and upkeep of the online assets.

Finally, we had an outstanding police bill for the town of Stonington for the 2019 art festival. The Chamber was anticipating business as usual in 2020 and was going to pay the Stonington Police bill (from the 2019 Mystic Outdoor Art Festival). As a side note that Chamber intends to pay all future bills within 30 days of receiving. The 2021 Police Bill for the art festival was received August 24 and will be paid by September 23. The outstanding bill was difficult for us to pay in 2020 with our income limited. We are seeking this money to be paid to the chamber for the chamber to pay back to the town of Stonington.

Mental Health Services

ARPA Request: \$22,480; Budget Line #: 35

Mental Health remains a concern and impacts residents' daily lives in many ways. Aside from the importance of doing more to proactively address and support those with mental health challenges, this will also benefit our team at the Stonington Police Department and Human Services directly.

The request here is first, \$10,000 to fund our 911/211 'Which/When' campaign and related marketing on the importance of proactively addressing mental health needs. We have received a grant from a local Foundation, with the commitment that the Town would also be putting in \$10,000 of funding towards this pilot campaign. Results will be evaluated to gauge how effective the 'Which/When' campaign is and shared with Towns around the State.

The second request is for \$12,480 for a part-time counselor at human services. This individual would work 8 hours/week for 12 months at \$30/hour. This is the same set-up as we have for our other part-time counselors (2). Sessions usually max out at 12 sessions. There is currently a wait list and this has been deemed a high priority need.

Childcare Subsidies

ARPA Request: \$200,000; Budget Line #: 36

The average annual cost of childcare in CT is \$15,591. This is a large cost burden for many families. This proposal would provide a \$200 a month stipend for 12 months for 95 families in

need. For more information visit: <https://resources.211childcare.org/reports/average-child-care-cost/>

Libraries- COVID Expenses

ARPA Request: \$30,000; **Budget Line #:** 37

This could be evenly distributed among the three libraries, or follow the 'formula'. It would go to help cover COVID expenses and lack of funds from the past fiscal year, as requested in the 2021 budget cycle

New Heights- Program Van

Total Cost Estimate: \$55,000; **ARPA Request:** \$45,000; **Budget Line #:** 38

What is Vista Life Innovations? Vista Life Innovations, Inc. (Vista) is a fully accredited, nationally recognized post-secondary program offering an array of services for individuals with disabilities and their families through the State of Connecticut.

Vista is accredited by the National Commission for the Accreditation of Special Education Services (www.NCASES.org). Populations service by Vista include: autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, learning disabilities, seizure disorders, intellectual disabilities and ADHD.

Vista offers a continuum of services for individuals and their families including: transition services, employment services, life skills training, cognitive and social skills development, and community bases experiential learning.

Vista was founded in 1989 and currently operates campuses in New Haven and Middlesex Counties with a new campus launching in New London County (Pawcatuck) in Fall 2021. Vista provides ongoing programming and services provided to approximately two hundred individuals annually with approximately sixty towns throughout Connecticut currently being represented by students attending Vista.

Request for ARPA funds to purchase vehicle for student transport: There is an identified need in southeastern Connecticut for vocational and life skills training for individuals with the types of disabilities identified above.

Families and local school districts have articulated these needs and have reached out to Vista to develop and offer programming serving these specific needs. Because of the need, *Inclusions: A Sylvestre Foundation* charitable organization is making a contribution to the purchase. The Pawcatuck-based program, New Heights, will operate five days per week and is scheduled to launch in Fall 2021. One clear and core need for this new program is to have the ability to

transport program participants in a wheelchair accessible van to off-site programming and/or activities.

A critical component of program success is availability of in-person training and education. Because of COVID, restrictions on in-person learning, much of Vista’s programming was conducted remotely and in turn, families delayed placement decisions until more beneficial in-person programming could resume. As with many non-profits, this has resulted in greater than usual financial impact to operations.

As Vista has returned its programming capacity to pre-COVID levels, resource allocation is more important.

ARPA funds would provide important support to a successful program launch for New Heights, ensuring Vista’s ability to offer comprehensive and quality programming, creating an important foundation for future program success.

Total Vehicle Cost for (1) Wheelchair accessible minivan:	\$55,000
Contribution from Inclusion: A Sylvestre Foundation entity:	\$10,000
<i>Net Vehicle support request:</i>	<i>\$45,000</i>

COMO- HVAC

ARPA Request: \$186,500; Budget Line #: 39

This request is from the COMO for a HVAC system for COMO Auditorium & Gym . As part of this the Como would pay \$14,500 for the Engineering and Design work. The current estimate is 186,500. The COMI also is working to raise funds the HVAC work in the remainder of the Como building spaces, as well as its Thrift and Makerspace. Please see [annex for details](#). HVAC for COMO Auditorium & Gym

Always Home- Stonington Assistance Fund

ARPA Request: \$10,000; Budget Line #: 40

This request is from Always Home to help Stonington families improve their long-term housing sustainability. The additional ARPA funding will provide Stonington families at highest risk of ongoing homelessness with enhanced homelessness prevention services targeted to overcoming core barriers that repeatedly weaken housing stability. Please see [annex here](#) for more details on the proposal.

PNC- Gazebo

ARPA Request: 10,000; Budget Line #: 41

The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center respectfully requests that the Town of Stonington to allocate \$10,000.00 from ARPA to be used to purchase a vinyl gazebo at the PNC senior center. This structure would be located at the senior center end of the building, and would provide persons over age 55 with the chance to meet outside for activities that would include lunches, book club, writing class, arts & crafts, veterans coffee hour and senior club.

All of the aforementioned activities are presently on-going at the PNC. The gazebo would provide an outdoor venue where seniors could meet for these activities, to socialize and for PNC senior volunteers to take breaks. Other senior centers in the state have installed gazebos for outdoor use.

COVID-19 restrictions have been placed on many in-door activities and eating establishments. By providing a covered, outdoor space, seniors would have an opportunity to meet outside. Thank you for your consideration.

Edythe K Richmond- PPE

ARPA Request: \$15,000; Budget Line #: 42

Requests for PPE reimbursement to FEMA were denied. The Edythe K. Richmond Homes encompasses 8+ acres on a property donated to the Stonington Housing Authority by the Richmond family and the Town of Stonington. They provide housing that is affordable to seniors and disabled adults of all ages. Housing Choice Vouchers are welcome.

Ambulance- COVID Expenses

ARPA Request: \$19,000; Budget Line #: 45

This is based on the requests we cut in the 2021-22-year budget for Mystic and Westerly ambulance. We had indicated at that meeting we would fund the request with ARPA funds.

Police Dispatch

ARPA Request: \$65,000; Budget Line #: 46

We currently have only one dispatcher on during the third shift. This has been identified as an area of need that could be addressed with ARPA funds. The concept would be to hire someone on a

one-year contract, and track the impact the position had in terms of activation and response times, as well as feedback from the dispatchers who currently work the shift alone, and the officers who step in to help when needed. IF this is deemed a good use of funds, this is the one request of ARPA funds that could turn into a long-term request.

Cyber Security

ARPA Request: \$110,000; Budget Line #: 47

The Town has already spent \$79,000 of this request, as we needed new cyber security items for our insurance policy. This covers 3 years of cost associated with the change. Jim Sullivan can share relevant details at the Board meeting if requested. The second part of the request is for \$31,000 so we can have new wireless access points. The currently used Aruba AP100 access points in use at the Stonington Police Dept. and the Town Garage are past end of life. Without support to perform firmware upgrades, these access points are vulnerable to attack. This would be a capitol expense to design, purchase and deploy, new wireless access point system at our existing locations, and add new ones to Town Hall and Human Services. This cost includes a 5-year licensing on each access point.

LLHD

ARPA Request: \$52,309; Budget Line #: 48

This is based on 1% of our total allocation, which LLHD is requesting of each municipality they serve. LLHD has not received direct funding for CARES or ARPA, as State and Federal officials have indicated regional health districts should approach individual municipalities for funding. LLHD has served the Town tirelessly through this pandemic. In addition to all the regular work they do for the Town, they had the added intense challenge of COVID. LLHD response was excellent, always quick to respond to any Town needs or questions. They were the primary organizer for contact tracing, testing and vaccines, and were our main resource for all COVID related questions when cases came up among staff or within the community. This is an extremely reasonable ask.

SECOG

ARPA Request: \$34,332; Budget Line #: 52

This request comes from the COG to all Towns and is a percentage of the ‘county’ allocation we received. The funds would go to hire a person who would help the Towns with their ARPA related reporting and tracking to help reduce the administrative burden on Town staff who already have a heavy work load.

Annex A

1. [Stonington Public Schools PDF Attachment](#) (click here)
2. [Stonington COMO PDF Attachment](#) (click here)
3. [Stonington COVID Relief Grant Attachment](#) (click here)
4. [Old Mystic Site Due Diligence](#)

What is Inclusion: A Sylvestre Foundation? Inclusion: A Sylvestre Foundation is a Stonington based 501c3, that was founded by Alan and Tanya Sylvestre to support adults with disabilities. Inclusion collaborates with other agencies, the town, private citizens, etc to support this programming directly with monies and with intellectual and human capital. The primary population of people served by Inclusion’s support is Stonington community members.

The most recent example of Inclusions work is the collaboration at 101 West Broad Street in Pawcatuck, CT. The opening of the New Heights program, run by Vista Life Innovations, is set for September of 2021. Additionally, at this site there are several health care professionals (new to the Stonington community) that will be providing direct services to Stonington residents. The planning and implementation of this project, “Project 101,” took about 5 years from due diligence to implementation. Alan and Tanya privately invested over \$2Million, Inclusion is donating over \$150,000 directly to New Heights program. To develop the site, Inclusion worked directly with the town’s Human Service, Economic and Community Development, Education, and other leadership to make sure the project was as inclusive as possible to serve the mission of Inclusion and the town’s needs. Over this period, Inclusion validated the need for quality housing for those community members.

Paralleling the project at 101 and funded by its’ own monies and time, Inclusion has formed a working group to explore the possibility of developing a site(s) that would include quality housing, a center for enrichment, an economic engine, and address community traffic needs. Partners included in this due diligence include: Ted Cutler, President of Tecton Architechts, John Carlin, President of Carlin Construction Management, and Ted Desantos, Partner at Fuss and O’Neil engineering firm. With the same collaborative approach as the development of 101 West Broad Street, this group has already collected significant and potential collaboration for implementing a site plan.

The COVID experience has accelerated the need and time frame for implementation. The request for “ARPA” funds is being made directly by Inclusion: A Sylvestre Foundation and is in direct response to the need and potential opportunity that has arisen.

Request of ARPA funds to continue due diligence on *potential site development: There is an identified need in Stonington for quality housing for adults with disabilities.

Families, town departments, and local nonprofits have expressed their needs and reached out to Inclusion: A Sylvestre Foundation to help develop due diligence on a site that would support quality housing, a community accessible enrichment/support center, and an economic “engine.” Two specific sites have been identified, with initial due diligence identifying one site with a strong near-term potential (this is in Old Mystic). ARPA funds would be used directly to support this continued due diligence and conceptual design. After completion, Inclusion would continue to work directly with the town and other nonprofits to validate the concept. For due diligence and concept design for in Old Mystic, the request is for **\$138,100**. The line items are broken out below:

Fee Analysis for Due Diligence and Concept Design

(Compiled by Tecton Architects, Fuss & O’Neill Civil Engineering, and Carlin Construction Management)

Due Diligence (\$61,300)

- Land Records Research	\$3,000
- Phase I land Assessment	\$16,800
- Land Compilation Survey	\$14,000
- Vehicular and Pedestrian Recommendations	\$8,000
- Initial Geotech – Borings	\$8,000
- Building Hazmat Survey	\$11,500

Conceptual Design (\$76,800)

- Land Planning	\$15,200
- Architectural Concept Design	\$33,500
- Conceptual Cost Estimating	\$13,600
- Grant Administration and Reporting	\$5,000
- Management information sharing and distribution	\$9,500



5.

Request and Purpose of Funds

Protecting housing stability is critical to the overall health and well-being of parents and their children. With the October 3rd expiration of the Federal CDC eviction moratorium, the unaffordability of Stonington's rental housing market and the recent surge in COVID cases, low-income families now face an imminent risk of eviction and homelessness because of eviction. It is imperative that we address the issue of housing insecurity now before it becomes a homelessness crisis.

Always Home respectfully requests a grant of \$10,000 from the Town of Stonington American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to help Stonington families improve their long-term housing sustainability. This funding will work in conjunction with the rental relief grant already awarded by the Town for FY 2021-2022 and any grant awarded thereafter. The additional ARPA funding will provide Stonington families at highest risk of ongoing homelessness with enhanced homelessness prevention services targeted to overcoming core barriers that repeatedly weaken housing stability. We acknowledge that the requested funds will be expended over a two-year period.

Need for Always Home's Services

Always Home believes housing is both a basic need and a human right. Yet the cost of housing has outpaced income growth for low-income families, many of whom are single mothers and minority. Because of our mission, Preventing Family Homelessness, we approach economic, gender and racial equity issues through a housing lens and we work to reduce inequality and move the needle of social justice by providing all the families we serve with the tools they need to advance housing sustainability.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition:

"Across Connecticut, there is a shortage of rental homes affordable and available to extremely low income households (ELI), whose incomes are at or below the poverty guideline or 30% of their area median income (AMI). Many of these households are severely cost burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing. Severely cost burdened poor households are more likely than other renters to sacrifice other necessities like healthy food and healthcare to pay the rent, and to experience unstable housing situations like evictions."

The families Always Home serves are low-wage workers who meet the Federal Poverty Level standard (\$21,960 for a family of 3 in 2021) or are an ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) household. The Coalition's Out of Reach Report for 2021 details that a renter in New London County needs to earn a full-time, hourly wage of \$30.46 to afford a modest 3-bedroom apartment, far above Connecticut's \$13 per hour minimum wage. Due to the impact of the pandemic on Connecticut's real estate market, the housing wage spiked 33% higher than 2020's housing wage. Housing has truly become beyond reach for low-income families.

U.S. Census Bureau data for Connecticut shows that women, Black and Hispanic populations have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-driven economic downturn and resulting housing crisis. Our own data reflects these same conclusions. In FY 2021, 228 (70%) of our client families were single-mother-headed households struggling to meet their children's basic needs. A total of 9 of these families were Stonington residents. Most of the women Always Home serves are minimally educated (basic level education with no higher degrees or acquired vocational skills) and when employed work low-wage, hourly paying jobs. This lack of education and/or specialized skill sets continue to diminish these women's earning capacity and their ability to achieve financial security for their families. Unable to secure full-time, salaried positions, these women often work more than one part-time position to make ends meet yet remain ineligible for employment benefits like health insurance, family leave and paid time off. Women, especially minority women, also suffer from a gender wage gap that entrenches them in poverty. Struggling before the pandemic, during COVID these women lost both their jobs and the free childcare that in-person schooling provided, thereby triggering a "She-cession".

Minority populations are also suffering the economic impacts of COVID-19 in greater numbers than other populations. In FY 2021, of the total family heads-of-households we served, 36.5% were Black, 5% were Asian American, Native American or Pacific Islander, and 26% self-identified as Hispanic/Latinx. Though the Town of Stonington's population is less racially diverse, of the 10 families we served in FY 2021, the racial breakdown was 80% White, 10% Black and 10% American Indian. All were Non-Hispanic/Non-Latinx. According to the Partnership for Strong Communities' Housing Data Profiles, New London County's population breakdown is 5% Black and 10% Hispanic. In comparison, Always Home's overall client family demographics underscore how minorities are experiencing higher rates of housing insecurity and homelessness.

Population To Be Served

In Fiscal Year 2021 (July 2020 – June 30, 2021), Always Home assisted 326 families in housing crisis. Of this total, 10 families (28 family members including 15 minor children) were residents of the Town of Stonington. Two of the families were multigenerational households living together in order to afford the monthly rent and other basic expenses.

Many parents we serve have endured prior episodes of homelessness when they were children. Helping families in housing crisis is of critical importance to the youngest members of our community as it spares them the lasting impacts of homelessness. In FY 2021, the Stonington population we served included 3 infants/preschoolers (0-4 years); 7 children (5 -12 years); and 5 adolescents (13-18 years).

Program Approach

COVID-driven impacts continue to challenge low-income families' ability to sustain housing. With this grant, Always Home will provide Town of Stonington families seeking emergency housing assistance with additional services designed to improve financial health and build housing resilience in order to avoid a future episode of eviction, homelessness or emergency shelter.

To make best use of our staff and resources, Always Home typically practices progressive engagement, first providing the minimum amount of assistance required for families to resolve their housing crisis. Only those families requiring financial assistance to stabilize their housing receive monetary support. This paradigm enables us to help more families in housing crisis and direct limited resources to those families

in greatest need. Of the 10 Stonington households served in FY 2021, 4 families successfully resolved their housing crisis with Always Home's problem-solving case management support only. The remaining 6 families received financial housing assistance, in addition to case management services, to sustain housing and avoid evictions, homelessness or time in emergency shelter.

This grant would present an opportunity for Always Home staff to work with Town of Stonington families on a deeper level and to gain a better understanding of how best to facilitate their long-term housing stability. The goal of this grant will be to move beyond the crisis intervention model instead providing long-range housing stabilization support.

Case management will be the primary tool our staff will use to assess the current housing situation and sustainability of Stonington families we serve. As part of the Town of Stonington's annual grant award, every family will receive one-on-one case management support including: individualized housing stabilization plans; budget counseling; tenant/landlord negotiations; tenancy skills; connection to other basic needs resources; and financial assistance, as needed, to preserve existing housing situations or create new ones.

The addition of the ARPA funding will give Always Home the ability to provide families who are assessed as unable to sustain housing with deeper support. These families will receive targeted assistance through the following programs:

EMPLOYMENT AND WORK SKILLS TRAINING: Unemployed and underemployed heads of household will be enrolled in training, education and certification programs with the goal of increasing opportunities to obtain full-time jobs that offer benefits, growth and increased income.

WHEELS TO WORK: Transportation emergencies will be quickly resolved so parents can get to work, earn an income and pay the rent. Support includes car donations, financial assistance with car repairs, car insurance, registration and licensing, and access to gas cards, bus and taxi vouchers.

CHILDCARE SOLUTIONS: Lack of safe, affordable and reliable childcare limits parents' ability to work. Assisting with the cost of childcare (daycare, summer camp and before- and after-school care) will help families, especially single-parent households, resume normal work schedules. Our support will supplement any federal or state resources being received (i.e., Child Tax Credit) so that childcare is truly affordable.

Program Objectives and Evaluation Methods

The end goal of all of Always Home's programs is to help families find immediate solutions to their housing crisis, avoid the trauma of eviction, homelessness or emergency shelter, and build better housing stability going forward. Success is achieved when families remain stably housed and do not seek emergency assistance at a later date.

Since March 2020, Always Home has focused on keeping as many families housed as possible to ensure their health and safety during the pandemic. Because the pandemic is ongoing, we will continue to provide crisis intervention housing support. However, we know that, for many families, attaining lasting housing stability for their children requires supplementary assistance. This grant is an opportunity to offer that integrated, holistic support.

The following chart outlines our service objectives and evaluation methods for the Town of Stonington for the period FY 2022 through FY 2023. This schedule can be altered as necessary to accommodate the Town of Stonington's timetable.

Program Objectives	Evaluation Methods
<p>1) Stonington families seeking emergency housing assistance will receive case management services to assess their long-term housing stability. <i>(Target goal of 20-25 families served)</i></p> <p>2) Families at high risk of a recurring housing crisis will receive enhanced homelessness prevention support to improve long-term their housing sustainability. <i>(Target goal of 10 families served)</i></p> <p>3) The majority of families receiving enhanced homelessness prevention assistance will remain stably housed and not require further assistance to sustain housing. <i>(Target goal of 95% of families served)</i></p>	<p>1) Number of households screened and their housing stability evaluation will be recorded.</p> <p>2) Number of households receiving Wheels to Work, Employment & Work Skills Training and/or Childcare Solutions assistance will be recorded.</p> <p>3) Number of households served who sustain housing will be recorded including those who return for additional services (case management support and/or financial assistance) to maintain housing.</p>

In Conclusion

Family homelessness is a direct result of poverty and a lack of emergency resources. When families are living paycheck to paycheck, a single, unexpected financial crisis is enough to create an episode of housing insecurity that can lead to eviction and homelessness. COVID-19 has only exacerbated this situation.

Presently, there are only 5 family shelter spaces in New London County. Over the years, success with Shelter Diversion and "Housing First" best practices reduced the need for emergency shelter regionally. With a rise in pandemic-driven housing insecurity, however, we find ourselves on the cusp of a looming housing/shelter shortage.

Housing matters. When parents have stable housing, they can focus on other basic needs and essentials of family well-being like food security, jobs and their children's health and education. The economic impacts of COVID-19 will be deep and lasting for many of our region's families. By safeguarding housing now, we seek to give families a platform from which to begin their own post-pandemic economic recovery. We welcome the Town of Stonington's continued partnership in helping our most vulnerable residents overcome this unprecedented hardship.

Thank you for reading this very long document!