

**TOWN OF SALEM  
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2022 – 6:00 P.M.  
SALEM TOWN HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

**CALL TO ORDER**

First Selectman Ed Chmielewski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**ELECTION OF MODERATOR**

**M/S/C: V. Waters /L. Flugrad, to elect Selectman Kevin Lyden as the Moderator for this Special Town Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, all in favor. The motion carries.**

**Selectman Lyden welcomed and introduced Town Attorney Brian Estep to our meeting.**

**Town Clerk Linda Flugrad read the Warning and Notice of this Special Town Meeting.**

Selectman Lyden explained the history and what the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding is for and how it can be used. Every municipality is receiving funding; we are getting a total of \$1.2 million. We are required to report to the State how our funding is being spent. This money will be audited and have the same procedures as any other money we have in town. We will abide by our purchasing policy. Approved purchases have to be signed by two selectmen and our treasurer. Our auditor comes in monthly to review these purchases. ARPA funds will be audited. This is money coming to the Town. It will not be taken out of taxes. Additional requests came in for funding after the first half (\$604,000.00) of the expenditures were decided. The items listed here qualify for the funding. The money must be spent by December, 2024.

\$15,000 of the total \$604,000 (the first half of the funding) was expended on Uncas Health District, Conference Room 1 Video/Audio upgrades and SCCOG-ARPA funds advisor. For explanation of the remaining \$589,000 (see attached), TVCCA provides oil assistance and other services for the Townspeople; Safe Futures was formerly known as the Women's Center; Care & Share Food Bank services our Town; the Homeless Shelter is located in New London and is available for Salem townspeople; (7) cleaning supplies are for the town office building, Library, Public Works and the Center School; the Salem benevolent fund is currently supported only by donations; (16) Ambulance additional nominal fees: \$50,000 had been budget, but that money has already been expended, the additional \$36,000 will cover additional expenses through this fiscal year; (17) AED replacement was on the Capital budget. The Board of Finance suggested we use ARPA funding. (18) Repurpose Old Salem Library. Upgrades will include a new septic system, handicap bathroom and electrical work. (20) Generator replacement at Salem School for designated shelter. We are required to have a shelter available; this generator is for the gym, lower-level classrooms and bathrooms. The Board of Finance requested ARPA funding be used for the Emergency Operations

Services and Upgrades, the Generator Replacement at the School for Designated Shelter, and the Record Service Management, which totals \$237,000.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Questions arose:

If funding for this first half issued is not expended within the allotted time frame, do we have to give it back, to which Selectman Lyden replied that the funds can be reallocated and used for another qualified project.

Will any money be allocated for a Senior van? Selectman Lyden replied we can currently use the ECTC van if there is enough interest.

Regarding item (17): an individual stated she thinks we need equipment and training for lifting handicapped individuals.

Item (2): Is New London not able to give enough money to Safe Futures? Selectman Lyden answered that they are not able to fund the entire budget of this regional resource.

The question was raised as to whether any of this money can be used for salary for someone to work with social service issues. At this time, we have not budgeted for that; however, it may be looked at in the future.

L. Hotary spoke on behalf of the Democratic Town Committee that they support the proposal. The two requests they have is if the benevolent fund can be audited and what is the process for establishing a more diverse group of townspeople in determining where the second half of the funding will be spent. It was suggested that the Town solicit a call for ideas from other Townspeople.

Regarding the trails, M. Sturgeon is concerned about safety on the trails. Selectman Lyden encouraged her to fill out citizen comment forms for specific concerns.

The question was reiterated as to what happens to the funding if it is not expended by 2024? A resident who has done some research said he believes the funds must be allocated by December 31, 2024, but expended by December 31, 2026.

Another resident commented that most of these items on the list have to be done anyway so he felt it should be approved.

V. Smith spoke for the Republican Town Committee stating that they support the plan.

J. Rucci was dismayed that there was no Board of Education input. She is hoping they will be asked for input with the second half of the funding. When asked by a resident how much the school is getting from ARPA, J. Rucci indicated that she did not know the exact amount; however, thought it was around \$300,000 and most had to be earmarked for specific purposes.

Regarding item (12), a resident stated that not much is being allocated for small businesses. Selectman Lyden responded that the Economic Development Commission asked for less than what has been allocated, but the ARPA committee decided on more support. The Town did a great deal of business within the community during the height of the COVID pandemic.

There was no further discussion.

**M/S/C: B. Ross/G. Closius, to act on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee approved requests of \$589,000 by a yes or no vote.** By a show of hands, there were 50 yes votes and 2 no votes. The Motion carries.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: G. Closius/V. Vesey, to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 p.m. Voice vote, all in favor.**  
**The motion carries.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Linda Flugrad, Town Clerk