

November 1, 2021 Special Selectboard Meeting via Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bannon opened the meeting at 6:00pm; those present via zoom: Ed Abrahams, Leigh Davis, Eric Gabriel, Garfield Reed. Town Manager Mark Pruhenski.

2. SELECTBOARD'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS

- a. E. Gabriel stated that the Housatonic Improvement Committee charette was successful.
- b. L. Davis stated she would abstain from ARPA funds discussion tonight and go forward.
- c. S. Bannon stated that the meeting will include a presentation from M. Pruhenski and will be a listening session for the Selectboard to hear from the community on ARPA .

3. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)

a. Public Input Session

- i. M. Pruhenski presented background, objectives, and categories of eligible uses for the federal ARPA funds available to the Town. He stated the current objective is to engage community for input via this meeting and an electronic/paper survey. Next step is to create a staff review committee to consider community input, establish process/priorities/capital plans - and present recommendations to the Selectboard.

S. Bannon noted there are 43 people participating tonight and opened for comments.

- ii. Allison Marchese, Executive Director of Community Development Corporation of Southern Berkshire stated the most critical economic impact of COVID is centered on affordable housing as a critical issue for people and businesses.
- iii. Randi Jordan asked what are the Town's obligations as recipients of ARPA re: federal statues and mandates? M. Pruhenski stated he will look into it.
- iv. Daniel Seitz asked what are conditions for the acceptance of federal funds? E. Abrahams asked what are the concerns? D. Seitz replied for example, schools that receive funding must comply with mask mandates.
- v. Frances Kollman requested assistance to extend the sewer line up Blue Hill Road to help multiple homes/owners as septic is a long-time problem.
- vi. Jim Santos/Caleb Stone requested funds for the South Berkshires Ambulance Squad for 1) stipends for frontline EMTs and paramedics and 2) a new chassis for their truck. S. Bannon asked the cost for the truck; reply was \$140k.
- vii. Jane Ralph, representing Construct, asked that funds be set aside for affordable housing. She stated GB is primed to make a significant difference due to a history of developing housing of all sizes and a deep understanding of the needs.
- viii. Erica Mielke agreed that affordable housing was a big concern also compensation/wages for essential workers.
- ix. Judy Kales stated that the sewer situation on Blue Hill Road is a significant concern for residents.
- x. Allison Marchese stated economic development and small business assistance is needed.

- xi. Vivian Orlowski asked could she submit suggestions from the Agricultural Commission by month's end? S. Bannon replied yes. She also recommended that funds be set aside for future needs.
- xii. Michele Loubert asked about any federal mandates connected to the funds. She supported the ambulance squad and essential workers ideas. She also requested support for the arts community. Also, support to improve quality of water in Housatonic through filtration or otherwise.
- xiii. Jeanne Chesanow requested support for the sewer line on Blue Hill Road.
- xiv. Phillip Orenstein suggested support for improved drinking water and sewer infrastructure; Southern Berkshire Ambulance Squad; new broadband access; affordable housing and rent subsidies.
- xv. Matthew O'Brien asked what are the federal obligations for receiving the funds?
- xvi. Kristin Grippio asked about Town obligations for funding and supported using funds for affordable housing.
- xvii. Don Eaton, as board member of the Community Development Corporation of Southern Berkshire, supported small business and affordable housing funding.
- xviii. Michelle Loubert stated that there should be funds for septic system upgrades.

S. Bannon asked if any additional comments, none raised. He thanked the participants for their input.

4. CITIZEN SPEAK

5. SELECTBOARD'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS

- a. E. Abrahams asked about the Blue Hill issue. S. Bannon stated it has been discussed with the Selectboard prior to E. Abrahams' tenure.

6. MEDIA TIME

7. ADJOURNMENT – Chairman Bannon adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 6:42pm