



**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 15, 2022  
5:00 P.M.  
Town Hall Meeting Room, 83 Mountain Road, Suffield CT  
Hybrid Meeting**

**Present:** First Selectman Colin Moll, Michael Stevens, Brian Kost, Mel Chafetz and Tom Frenaye

**First Selectman Moll** called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m.

**Nominations and Appointment of Temporary Chairman**

**M. Chafetz** motioned and **M. Stevens** seconded to nominate and appoint **First Selectman Moll** as **Temporary Chairman**. **Vote: 5-0** in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

**Adoption of Rules of Procedure**

**T. Frenaye** motioned and **B. Kost** seconded to adopt **Roberts Rules of Order**. **Vote: 5-0** in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

**Nominations and Appointment of Chairman**

**B. Kost** motioned and **M. Stevens** motioned to appoint **C. Moll** as **Chairman**. **Vote: 5-0** in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

**Nominations and Appointment of Vice Chairman**

**T. Frenaye** motioned and **M. Stevens** seconded to nominate **Brian Kost** as **Vice Chairman**. **Vote: 5-0** in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

**Nominations and Appointment of Secretary**

**C. Moll** motioned and **B. Kost** seconded to appoint **C. Moll** as **Secretary**. **Vote: 5-0** in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

**Set Schedule of Meetings**

Discussion ensued and it was determined that the subject would be revisited after the general discussion of ARPA Funds. **B. Kost** noted that it was difficult to determine a set schedule when the group does not fully understand the rules surrounding the spending of the funds.

**B. Kost** motioned to move discussion to set schedule of meetings to after agenda item #10.

**M. Chafetz** asked if ACCE would need to be involved in the decision making process and the answer was no. **B. Kost** was of the understanding that an earlier decision had been made with regard to the ARPA funds in which the town would take all COVID funds received and put them in a special revenue account and then decide how to spend based on the rules. **T. Frenaye** noted the Board of Selectmen had already had a discussion about the approval process. He also brought up the discussion as to whether or not certain items must go before a Town Meeting. The group was mixed on whether this would be a

necessary step. **M. Chafetz** voiced concerns about NOT including the town in these decisions as some dollar amounts may be quite sizeable and bypassing the process, in his opinion, will set the town up for problems down the road. **B. Kost** did not agree and outlined a number of ways the town has spent large dollar amounts without going to the town for approval and used the Board of Education as a recent example. Differences in opinion were noted. **T. Frenaye** addressed the usual spending/approval guidelines of the town, expressing his belief that the same guidelines would apply in this new situation. **B. Kost** stated he was not in favor of going to the town for approval in this scenario. The idea of information sessions for the public was introduced and will be considered.

**First Selectman Moll** stated that he would invite the **Town Attorney Derek Donnelly** to the next meeting in order to provide guidance and answer any questions or concerns the group has. **T. Frenaye** suggested that it might be beneficial to have a legal opinion provided to the group by Attorney Donnelly. All were in agreement

**First Selectman Moll** reminded the group of the motion made by **B. Kost**.

**M. Stevens** seconded the motion by **B. Kost**. **Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### Public Comment

None

#### General Discussion of ARPA Funds

**Chairman Moll** opened the discussion and described his initial thoughts on how this commission should tackle the task before them. His vision is to have the five members come up with their own ideas as to how the funds might be spent and bring those ideas back to discuss them further. These ideas should include big projects as well as smaller projects that could be passed through quickly. **M. Stevens**, who is also the Chairman for ACCE, provided feedback on some of the items built into the FY 2022-23 capital projects priority list that are COVID related, including Police Cruisers which are a large ticket item, but one that is truly a necessity. He also suggested broadband through the town center and explained his reasoning behind it. **First Selectman Moll** thanked him for his initial suggestions.

**B. Kost** thinks it would be wise to start the process by figuring out what has already been spent on COVID qualifying expenses such as costs associated between the schools and the town. As an example he suggested our self-funded health insurance costs which involve test kits, vaccine distribution fees and hospital charges. Once these are quantified perhaps some of the ARPA funds can be transferred to cover the charges, essentially reimbursing the town for expenses incurred. He feels there are additional monies that have already been spent or will be spent that would qualify and we simply need to gather this information and reimburse ourselves. He also questioned how much work the group wants to do, suggesting that a simple solution might be to say that had it not been for COVID, taxes would have been raised and as such this money should be taken and deposited into the General Fund. His hope is to spend this money in such a way that it benefits as many people as possible and he feels tax relief would be a great way to accomplish this.

**T. Frenaye** mentioned that some towns are asking their auditors to provide a document that outlines an estimate of revenues lost due to COVID and he feels this would be beneficial to the group. **B. Kost** noted that this is currently being done.

Discussion continued amongst the group regarding taxes and the possibility of providing tax relief to the residents. **T. Frenaye** argued that if taxes are reduced, it is a fair way to give back, however, there is still a group of people who do not own property and will not see any relief. He would like to also see general projects that will help Suffield as a whole such as sidewalks, upgrades to trails and facilities within our parks to name a few.

**M. Chafetz** views COVID in a broader sense and sees the intent of these funds as a way to provide the town with the opportunity to do some things that we may have been restricted from doing. He suggested land preservation as a potential idea and mentioned a fairly sizable tract of land on the east side of town that may be of interest as it has some very unique natural features which would be wonderful for creating walkways and would be an excellent parcel to preserve. His other ideas included a solar farm at the landfill and a program that involved recycling of food waste.

**First Selectman Moll** stated that he is in agreement with most of what the group had to say thus far. He suggested breaking the money into categories to make it easier to determine how much should be allocated and the differing ways in which to use the funds. Discussion ensued about the possible categories to establish and how much money each category should be allotted. He plans to ask the department heads who have been most impacted by COVID; Police, Fire, Human Resources and Town Engineer for input on what has been spent on COVID related expenses thus far and report back.

Discussion continued, with numerous ideas being tossed around and analyzed. **T. Frenaye** and **M. Chafetz** suggested holding at least one public forum to get opinions from the residents. They feel the public should be involved in making the decisions and should have a vote. T. Frenaye also expressed his fear of negative feedback without vote involvement. Not all were in agreement about a vote, however, all felt that a public forum to get input on suggested ideas for spending would be appropriate. This will most likely occur at the third meeting of the group with a date still to be determined. The next steps for the group include:

- Narrowing ideas to top five for each committee member
- Determining the dollar amount of COVID related expenses already paid by the Town of Suffield
  - Data collection from various department heads to be requested by First Selectman Moll
- Determining the rules on spending
- Determining what Capital projects would NOT qualify
- Obtaining legal clarification by Town Attorney Donnelly at next meeting
- Public Forum – Allowing for public to weigh in on their thoughts and desires for the funds to be spent

**First Selectman Moll** will email impacted department heads and gather numbers on funds already spent by the town on COVID related items, **B. Kost** plans to review the rules for spending and **M. Stevens** plans to review the capital projects list between now and the next meeting of the commission. The date will be determined once the information has been gathered.

**T. Frenaye** motioned and **B. Kost** seconded to adjourn at 6:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristen O. Lambert  
Recording Secretary