



TOWN OF DEEP RIVER
Special Town Meeting

March 13, 2023

A Special Town Meeting was held on Monday, March 13, 2023 in the Richard H. Smith Town Hall Auditorium. The meeting was attended by the Board of Selectmen including First Selectman Angus McDonald, Selectman Duane Gates, and Selectman James Olson. Also in attendance were approximately 50 residents including representatives of the Board of Finance and various agencies requesting American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

First Selectman Angus McDonald called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. James Olson made a motion to appoint Rick Daniels as moderator which was seconded by Duane Gates. The motion was approved unanimously. Daniels appointed Amy Winchell to act as clerk of the meeting; Daniels then read the call.

Motion to approve item 1 was made by Richard Balducci and seconded by Mike Dinello:

1. To approve actions of the Board of Selectmen's regular meeting of January 24, 2023:

Appointment to the Community Health Committee:

Jacqueline G. Calamari

Term to expire: 12/01/2024

Appointments to the Planning & Zoning Commission:

Bryan Patrick Phillips (alternate)

Term to expire: 12/01/2023

Daniel Arthur Smith (alternate)

Term to expire: 12/01/2024

There being no discussion, a vote by show of hands was held. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

2. To approve actions of the Board of Selectmen's regular meeting and Board of Finance's special meeting of February 14, 2023:

DISCUSSION: McDonald opened discussion on all of item 2 with a slide presentation of the 3 categories of funds to be disbursed and the ARPA requests being considered at this meeting with a brief description of each item. He noted that the Town had previously approved a \$300,000 appropriation of these funds at a Special Town Meeting dated April 11, 2022. The purpose of this meeting was to approve or disapprove the next round of requests. He added that item 2c, “To appropriate \$15,525 from the ARPA funds for Middlesex Center for Behavioral Health”, had been removed from the list for the vote pending further discussion and that additional requests will be considered at coming meetings. Kathryn Russell asked if we would be using paper ballots for this vote and Daniels responded they intended to vote by show of hands. Balducci asked if any of the items being voted on would have to be absorbed into the Town budget once these funds were gone. McDonald answered that all of this funding is known to be temporary for now and terminates in 2 years. If a program is deemed necessary, it might be considered in future budgets. Dinello asked how spending of these funds would be documented and monitored. The Town will follow the usual procedure for expenses with documentation and an audit. These are Federal Government funds and certain reports and audits will be due to them as well. Non-municipal organizations will follow the same accounting procedures typically required for a grant.

ARPA Requests						
Organization	Request Approved	Request	Social Services	Capital Expenses	Economic Development	Reason
Town of Deep River, Emergency Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	\$ 300,000		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		New emergency radios for police, fire, ambulance, emergency services, public works, and Town Hall
Tri- Town Youth Services		\$ 48,100	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Expand clinical services, sustain critical youth support groups, mental health promotion efforts. Similar contributions from Chester & Essex are contingent upon approval of this request.
Shoreline Soup Kitchen		\$ 10,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Purchase of refrigerated food truck to provide food to needy residents. (\$10K from each town it serves)
Middlesex Center for Behavioral Health		\$ 15,525	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Provide continued community behavioral health services. (Has provided over 1000 sessions to Deep River residents registered for services this year.)
Deep River Historical Society		\$ 53,000		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Replace deteriorating and leaking roofs of the Stone House and Carriage House and upgrade the security systems.
Deep River Ambulance Association		\$ 137,500		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Purchase of new ambulance to accommodate advanced life support and psychiatric patients with greater compartment space. Supports hands-free stretcher to reduce injury to patients and crew.
Community Health Committee		\$ 50,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Supplement energy assistance program and Food Pantry.
Deep River Housing Authority		\$ 50,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Hire part-time home health aides to assist elderly population with day-to-day care

1st Round of Approvals 4/11/2022	
Town of Deep River, Emergency Services	\$ 300,000
2nd Round of Approvals 3/13/2023	
Tri- Town Youth Services	
Shoreline Soup Kitchen	
Middlesex Center for Behavioral Health	
Deep River Historical Society	
Deep River Ambulance Association	
Community Health Committee	
Deep River Housing Authority	
Total	\$ -
Total Amount of ARPA grants allocated from Federal Government to Deep River	
	\$ 1,314,908
less 1st Round of Approvals	\$ 300,000
less 2nd Round of Approvals	\$ -
Balance remaining to be allocated	\$ 1,014,908

2a- A motion was made by Bud Eckenroth and seconded by Paula Weglarz to approve the appropriation of **\$48,100 from the ARPA funds for Tri-Town Youth Services Bureau;**

DISCUSSION:

“Expand clinical services, sustain critical youth support groups, mental health promotion efforts. Similar contributions from Chester & Essex are contingent upon approval of this request.” Allison Abramson of Tri-Town Youth Services Bureau explained that COVID-19 increased the need for mental health services. They wish to hire a part-time clinician to work in the schools during the day and TTYS offices in the evening. The State will be funding the increase in the future but are currently suffering a provider/staffing crisis. TTYS will be seeking other funding once ARPA funds have been depleted.

There being no further discussion, a vote by show of hands was held. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

2b- A motion was made by Balducci and seconded by Eckenroth to approve the appropriation of **\$10,000 from the ARPA funds for Shoreline Soup Kitchen;**

DISCUSSION:

“Purchase of refrigerated food truck to provide food to needy residents. (\$10K from each town it serves)”. It was noted that 11 towns participate in this program, and each are expected to contribute this amount of their ARPA funds.

There being no further discussion, a vote by show of hands was held. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

2c- This item was removed pending further discussion.

2d- A motion was made by Olson and seconded by Jacqueline Calamari to approve the appropriation of **\$53,000 from the ARPA funds for the Deep River Historical Society;**

DISCUSSION:

“Replace deteriorating and leaking roofs of the Stone House and Carriage House and upgrade the security systems.” Bruce Edgerton, president of the Deep River Historical Society, explained the bidding process done in June 2021 and updated in November 2022 for this request. He noted that while grants for preservation of artifacts were available to museums and historical societies, grants for capital expenses were largely unavailable. Doug Whitaker asked why local tradesmen were not being considered. Bruce replied they were considered but had proven to be too costly. Ben Whelan wanted more specifics on the bidding process, but Daniels reminded the purpose of this meeting was not to discuss the bidding process of an independent agency but, rather, to approve the funding request.

After some discussion, Balducci **motioned to move the question**, which was seconded by Weglarz. By show of hands, the required 2/3 approval was secured with 5 No votes and discussion on **2d** was ended. **The vote by show of hands on the motion to approve the Historical Society request was approved with 3 No votes.**

2e- A motion was made by Tracy Woodcock and seconded by Eckenroth to approve the appropriation of **\$137,500 from the ARPA funds for the Deep River Ambulance Association;**

DISCUSSION:

“Purchase of new ambulance to accommodate advanced life support and psychiatric patients with greater compartment space. Supports hands-free stretcher to reduce injury to patients and crew.” Jen Kollmer, Chief of the Deep River Ambulance Association explained how they had rebuilt their oldest ambulance but that it had outlived its use. The Association agreed to request approximately half of what the new ambulance with upgraded stretcher would cost and is committed to fundraising the difference. She noted that the number of psychiatric and infectious disease patients to be transported had increased due

to COVID-19. Russell asked how the Town had determined to pay 100% of the Historical Society's request but only 50% of the cost of the vehicle the Ambulance Association needs. McDonald replied that they had approved funds in the amounts requested by both entities and that no applicant is guaranteed 100% of their request.

There being no further discussion, a vote by show of hands was held. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

2f- A motion was made by Balducci and seconded by Eckenroth to approve the appropriation of **\$50,000 from the ARPA funds to supplement the Community Health Committee energy assistance program and the Food Pantry;**

DISCUSSION:

"Supplement energy assistance program and Food Pantry." The Community Health Committee always has funds available for these community programs but the increased demand on these programs due to COVID-19 has seriously depleted their funding. This ARPA funding will help keep these programs going especially while need is greatest. 100% of these funds will go directly to community member assistance.

There being no further discussion, a vote by show of hands was held. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

2g- A motion was made by Balducci and seconded by Woodcock to approve the appropriation of **\$50,000 from the ARPA funds to the Deep River Housing Authority;**

DISCUSSION:

"Hire part-time home health aides to assist elderly population with day-to-day care." Joann Hourigan, Director of the Housing Authority, spoke about a "Bridge the Gap" pilot program she had developed to benefit residents of Kirtland Commons who qualify for aid from the CT Department of Social Services (DSS). She explained that a staffing crisis due to COVID-19 has caused a years-long disruption in services. These services include helping with grocery shopping, meal preparation, light housekeeping, and laundry. Resident Fran Phinney described her difficulties with these tasks since injuring her arm in June 2021. This funding would allow the Housing Authority to hire a part-time caregiver to provide these services for all qualified residents for 2 years. The program has the support of our local State legislators, and the hope is that DSS might divert funding to this type of program for Housing Authorities in the future. She added that Kirtland Commons

is completely self-sustaining, and this position will never become a line-item in our town budget.

There being no further discussion, a vote by show of hands was held. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

Motion was made by Olson and seconded by Woodcock to adjourn. The motion was approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

ATTEST: Amy M. Winchell, MCTC
Town Clerk