

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
July 6, 2021
MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING**

American Rescue Plan; acceptance of allotted town funding

Call to Order

5:30 pm – Chairman Robertson called the meeting to order

Present: Andrew Robertson, Chairman; Richard Pitman, Vice Chairman, Fred McGarry, and Cynthia McHugh, Selectmen.

Absent: Alden Dill, Selectman

Chairman Robertson: I will note, that our first order of business this evening, is listed as public hearing at 5:30. I am going to state with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

I'm going to put my glasses on so I can read this correctly.

Our first order of business this evening is a public hearing regarding the American Rescue Plan funds and I will read the official meeting notice.

“Notice is hereby given of a Public Hearing to obtain input regarding the Town’s acceptance of federal funds earmarked for the Town of Deerfield, associated with the American Rescue Plan signed by Congress. Within the State of New Hampshire, the program is also called “Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Program”. The total estimated award is \$475,396.00.

This hearing shall be held for the purpose of providing an opportunity for the public to offer comment on acceptance of the funds. The Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, July 6, that being today, at 5:30 pm. The hearing shall be held here, at the George B White Building, 8 Raymond Road, Deerfield, NH.”

And, before we commence with public input, I'm going to mention that although we stand to receive a total award of \$475,000.00 and some change, there are some very strict guidelines as to how we can spend that. It's not basically, free money that we can use to build a community center or beautify the parking lot or that sort of thing. There are very specific guidelines as to how we're able to use it.

Most of it being involved, my understanding John and correct me if I'm wrong, with an eye towards public safety, management of facilities, that sort of thing that have been impacted by COVID.

Mr. Harrington: That's correct.

Chairman Robertson: So, at this point, I would look for input regarding acceptance of these funds. As far as I know, the Board fully intends to take any funds sent our way and see them if we're able in the applicable manner and if you do want to make public comment, please go to the microphone over there at the table and if you could also identify yourself for our minute taker.

Denise Greig: Sure, Denise Greig and I guess I would speak in favor of accepting the funds. I think they'll be a wonderful asset to address multiple issues with respect to infrastructure and will connect with controlling and mitigating the concerns from the pandemic so I think it's a wonderful opportunity for the town and highly encourage you to accept the funds.

Thank you.

Chairman Robertson: Great. Thank you.

Serita Frey, Saddleback Mountain Road: Just a question as to what your thoughts are in terms of how they would be spent. I mean, given the constraints that you just outlined.

Chairman Robertson: Yeah, a couple of things that the Board has discussed previously and they certainly don't total \$475,000.00 but a top priority that we've already voted to move on is to bring the air circulation system in this building up to code.

The building is equipped with an air circulation system from its days as an elementary school which has long been non-functional. We took a look at repairing it with an eye towards opening Parks and Rec and adult recreational opportunities, that sort of thing back to full status here in the building.

Determined that it would be much more cost effective to actually replace the system and as we further got into it, I probably shouldn't say this on the microphone but we learned that we probably should not be having children's programs and adult recreational programs in the building without the air flow system working properly, regardless of COVID.

So, that is one of the things that we have looked at. We've also discussed improving bathroom quality in public buildings. Things of that nature.

I don't know John, if you've got any more specifics you ...

Mr. Harrington: Along the ventilation subject, we, the Board, also approved installing a ventilation, air changing system over at the library as well because of the small, physical space and the number of public that use the facility.

As for the bathroom upgrades, we're looking at providing Yanni's Restaurant with a separate bathroom facility. Right now, they use the internal bathrooms down in the Parks and Rec area which they also have access all weekend long which provides public access to a public building over the course of the weekend when the building's closed and it would be better for Yanni's to have their own separate bathroom facilities that they could manage as well as upgrading and putting in ADA accessible bathrooms down at the Parks and Rec area since this building also represents a shelter during emergency management situations.

Chairman Robertson: Thank you, John.

Erroll Rhodes, Church Street: Any plans for the town hall and with those funds for the kinds of things you've just mentioned?

Chairman Robertson: At this point, we have no specific plans that I'm aware of for the town hall but would certainly be open to suggestion from the various boards and groups that use the town hall.

Mr. Rhodes: What's the timing on all that?

Mr. Harrington: The funds, we have a little bit more time than the CARES funds which were doled out last year. That was a matter of by the end of the year we had to use the funds.

This time, we have up until 2024 to expend the funds so there's a little bit more time to really think through possible expenditures.

Mr. Rhodes: Yeah, thank you.

Chairman Robertson: Other comment? Richard.

Vice Chairman Pitman: Erroll, could you maybe put that in writing to the town manager so, because I think that's a great idea.

Mr. Rhodes: Long or short?

Vice Chairman Pitman: I'll leave that up to you.

Mr. Berglund: Good evening, Eric Berglund, Nottingham Road.

I'd like to propose an idea that would encourage and expand citizen participation in our town government.

In the last year and a half, from talking with others and from my own experience, I've seen more people at more meetings, you know, involved via the ZOOM system and this is great. People can stay at home. It's easy for clients, customers, which we all are, to contribute, be present and, by way of ZOOM.

Now ZOOM is a technology. Technology is moving along. This is a chance to grab that and I'm suggesting an investment in the ZOOM tool, would encourage, with encouragement by public officials and volunteers to achieve a higher level of participation and contribution by citizens would be very, very good and I think it could be woven into what you described as the, some of the, some of the attributes of what this has to contain but for the long haul, I think we need to get there and this would do a lot. I think we have a lot of talent in this town and this is a way, I think, to encourage that to come forward and help everybody. All the committees and commissions and so on.

That's my pitch.

Chairman Robertson: Okay. Thank you for your input.

Other public comment.

Mrs. Cady.

Ms. Cady: Harriet Cady, 32 Old Centre Road.

I believe as you did some of the projects, money that we had put aside in building maintenance and so forth, had to be used, such as the doors and the windows for the town clerk's office, the building inspector, the assessing clerk and I'm wondering if it wouldn't be prudent to put that money back in those accounts since it was spent from those accounts on things that had to be done to the building. That way, it won't be up to the taxpayers to again replace that money with money already coming in.

Chairman Robertson: John?

Mr. Harrington: No budget monies were used for those upgrades. That was all out of the CARE funds that was from the first grant that was offered by the federal government. We didn't use budget funds for those.

Ms. Cady: I thought that it was voted to use, I vaguely remember the question, "where would the money come from" to do the work. Now, I realize, we did get money from the CARES fund but previous to it being completed.

Chairman Robertson: We were not certain that we were going to get the funding that we got from the first round of the federal CARES Act. We were prepared to go forward with those projects and spend our own money if we had to but in the long run, we did not have to.

Ms. Cady: Good.

The second thing is, the toilets that were put in when we renovated the bathroom here and upstairs were not handicapped toilets.

Would you consider replacing those? I mean, they're fairly new but ...

Mr. Harrington: That's what I said earlier. I don't know if you were here at that time. The retrofitting of the Parks and Rec area would probably take out several stalls to put an ADA stall in each of the sides over there.

Ms. Cady: Now, I heard you say that but I'm wondering about the one next to the town clerk's and the one upstairs.

Mr. Harrington: We have an ADA stall right here in the hallway that is

Ms. Cady: So, we go to that instead?

Mr. Harrington: Correct.

Ms. Cady: The one upstairs isn't.

Mr. Harrington: That whole floor is not ADA accessible at this point.

Chairman Robertson: Maybe something we could look into as the possibility of using funding.

Ms. Cady: It's just that when I had the surgery on my knee, that was one of the things, boy.

Chairman Robertson: Nope, I would agree with you. If it's possible to use the money for that, I think it would be wonderful.

Other public comment?

Maureen Quinn, Nottingham Road:

Just curious, if we were to do the ventilation system for this building, would it use up all of the \$470,000.00?

Chairman Robertson: No and the exact amount of the contract, we've already entered into a contract to replace the ventilation system in this building and do you have a rough idea of that John?

Mr. Harrington: Yes, that, that's approximately \$32,400.00 and it's just the back third of the building. The first and second third of the building does not have forced hot air duct work to do that. It's a different heating system.

So, we are utilizing the heating system and duct work that's already present in the section of the building to refurbish so ...

Ms. Quinn: So, there's still quite a bit left over to do other things.

Mr. Harrington: Yes.

Ms. Quinn: Well, I would agree with that gentleman over there whose name I don't know about looking at the town hall but also, I don't know what the statute requires or allows but I think if the Board were to look at any ways that that money could be used to make the town more energy sustainable, I think that would be a really wise way to go about attacking many of these projects.

Chairman Robertson: Thank you.

Other public input?

Input from the Board?

Vice Chairman Pitman: All set. We had some nice comments we can work with.

Chairman Robertson: Okay, with that I'm going to close the public hearing so, so noted and move to our regular business meeting.

*The Minutes were transcribed and respectfully submitted by Dianne L. Kimball, Recording Secretary
Pending approval by the Board of Selectmen*