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CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN COMMITTEE
COURTHOUSE, 117 DICK STREET, 5TH FLOOR, ROOM 564
SEPTEMBER 7, 2021 – 9:45 AM
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Commissioner Jimmy Keefe, ARP Committee Chairman
Commissioner Glenn Adams
Commissioner Toni Stewart
Amy Cannon, County Manager
Tracy Jackson, Assistant County Manager
Sally Shutt, Assistant County Manager
Rick Moorefield, County Attorney
Vicki Evans, Finance Director
Ivonne Mendez, Accounting Supervisor
Dee Taylor, Community Development Director
Candice H. White, Clerk to the Board

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Keefe called the meeting to order. The purpose of the meeting is for discussion of proposed ARP local fiscal recovery funding projects.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Adams moved to approve the agenda.
SECOND: Commissioner Stewart
VOTE: UNANIMOUS (3-0)

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- July 21, 2021, Special Meeting
- August 2, 2021, Special Meeting

MOTION: Commissioner Adams moved to approve the minutes as recorded above.
SECOND: Commissioner Stewart
VOTE: UNANIMOUS (3-0)

4. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Amy Cannon, County Manager, and Sally Shutt, Assistant County Manager, led committee members through a review of the ARP webpage and community survey dashboard. Ms. Cannon assured committee members that the Cumberland County Recovery Plan 2021 Report to the U.S. Treasury due August 31, 2021, had been filed in a timely manner and indicated the county had not incurred any expenditures as of July 31, 2021, the end of the first reporting period. Ms. Cannon

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stated the full board approved using ARP funding not to exceed \$3M to renovate the courtroom of the Historic Courthouse on August 16, 2021, and it is listed as part of the plan.

A draft template for ARP local fiscal recovery funding project proposals was distributed and a brief discussion followed about template format and how the committee wanted to move forward. Ms. Cannon stated Ms. Shutt designed the draft template to include the U. S. Treasury's expenditure categories with codes for the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and timeframes can be indicated for short-term, mid-term and long-term.

Ms. Shutt led committee members through the draft template and stated Ms. Cannon asked Public Health Director Dr. Jennifer Green for requests under Public Health and she submitted her funding requests and project descriptions.

Questions followed about the timeframe for short-term. Commissioner Adams stated short term as it relates to "rescue" should be immediate to get this on the ground over the next 2 to 3 months. Commissioner Stewart stated short-term to her is for those situations that needed it yesterday. Commissioner Adams also stated the application should not be draconian in terms of what applicants need to provide and in the short-term, take ARP funds to hire a couple of case workers to facilitate getting this money on the street. Commissioner Keefe stated he did not have a problem with any of this and short-term could be the end of the year. In response to a question posed by Commissioner Adams as it relates to the launch, Ms. Cannon stated the launch or communication to the public can begin once the Board of Commissioners approves the goals recommended by the ARP Committee which could be at the next meeting on September 20, 2021.

Committee members discussed 1.7 Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that Respond to COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and Commissioner Keefe's request for generators for emergency shelters. There was consensus for a \$1.8M allocation, short-term.

Ms. Shutt stated \$3M has also been allocated under Code 1.7 for renovation of the Historic Courthouse courtroom that would meet pandemic protocols and the project timeframe is listed as mid-term.

Discussion continued about Code 1.7 Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that Respond to COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and the request from Public Health for six purifying water foundations. Commissioner Adams stated he felt all county facilities should be surveyed as it relates to this request.

Discussion followed about 1.11 Substance Abuse Services, Sheriff Wright's request for Narcan and other possible funding sources for Narcan, such as the opioid litigation settlement money. There was consensus for a \$140,000 allocation, short-term, for a one-year community program and first responders to include the Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Adams stated all essential workers need to be compensated. Ms. Cannon stated the definition of essential is narrowly defined and before the committee makes a decision, she would suggest asking County Attorney Rick Moorefield to look at the definitions. Ms. Cannon stated

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because COVID numbers are on the rise again, her recommendation would be to do something immediately from freed-up CARES funding for Public Health. Ms. Cannon stated at the same time staff were out in the rain with iPads, half of the staff at the Public Health Department were trying to keep the clinic going; those would not qualify as essential under the ARP. Ms. Cannon stated she can come back with the information for immediately using CARES funding for Public Health, and Mr. Moorefield needs to look at what essential means for county employees and Public Health employees. Commissioner Adams stated he does not want to use ARP money for essential employees if there is other money, so he would suggest using CARES money for all essential county employees identified by the manager and staff. Commissioner Adams suggested taking it to the Agenda Session so the full Board can decide on using CARES funding.

As it relates to the categories for household assistance, Commissioner Keefe spoke to the benefits of including some type of mortgage assistance program. Commissioner Adams stated for rental assistance, he is talking about assistance for residents who do not qualify for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program due to income level. Following discussion there was consensus for a \$2M allocation, short-term for 2.5 Household Assistance: Eviction Prevention, and a \$1.5M allocation, short-term for 2.2 Household Assistance: Rent, Mortgage and Utility Aid. Ms. Cannon stated the committee needs to determine the income level for both categories. Mr. Moorefield advised that giving direct money to individuals is limited under state law and has to be defined as something being done in a qualified census tract that is a low-income area or other populations or geographic areas disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Mr. Moorefield stated income level is still going to be a factor. Consensus was for the allocations to be countywide and for the application to contain a space for individuals to indicate “other assistance received” to avoid double assistance.

There was consensus for allocations to be “up to” the amounts indicated.

Discussion followed about 2.7 Job Training Assistance (e.g., Sectoral job-training, Subsidized Employment, Employment Supports or Incentives). Commissioner Keefe stated he would like to target this program for former felons, people who are homeless, people with low-skilled jobs that want to learn a trade and people who have had difficulty getting back into society. Commissioner Adams spoke to partnerships that could be developed. There was consensus to work with FTCC, Workforce Development and the school system as an education partnership, allocate up to \$2M for an “earn to learn” program, short-term.

Committee members discussed 2.9 Small Business Economic Assistance (General) for local small businesses; businesses that received PPE would still be eligible but not moved to the top. There was consensus to allocate up to \$3.5M, short-term, with staff to identify what the committee determines to be a local small business, whether there should be a maximum amount possibly being based on a formula and come back with that information.

Discussion followed about 2.10 Aid to Non-Profit Organizations for non-profits that are serving residents affected by the impact of COVID. Commissioner Adams stated he would include non-profits that have been history in the community like the food bank and the Disaster Recovery Coalition, but not the Botanical Gardens or Arts Council because they have already received some money; churches could be included depending on the application. There was consensus for an allocation of up to \$3.5M, short-term. Staff were asked to come back with maximums.

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Commissioner Keefe referenced category 2.11 Aid to Tourism, Travel and Hospitality and asked whether local occupancy rates for FY20 and FY21 could be used to determine whether there was a loss should the committee decide to allocate ARP funds in this category, or whether there was other information available. Consensus was for staff to bring that information back for the ARP Committee to review. Ms. Cannon stated it did not grow much and requested clarification of what information was being requested. Commissioner Keefe stated he would like an actuary of individual hotel losses by the size of the hotel. Mr. Moorefield asked the committee whether restaurants would be included. Commissioner Keefe stated restaurants would be covered under small businesses.

Commissioner Keefe referenced category 2.12 Aid to Other Impacted Industries and asked whether ARP funds could be used to help the economic situation or rebuild inventory. Commissioner Keefe stated the FCEDC requested \$90,000 for marketing. Discussion followed. Ms. Cannon stated about \$97,000 was given to economic development this year and part of that was for marketing; money is also set aside in the CIF to build inventory. Commissioner Keefe stated he would table this because he does not think it is in the short-term timeframe. Mr. Moorefield stated he does not think it would qualify unless built in a qualified census tract.

Committee members discussed 3.2 Education Assistance: Aid to High Poverty Districts and the request for the procurement of a combined mobile technology lab and bookmobile with the mobile lab providing internet and computer access as well as a collection of books to check out. There was consensus to allocate up to \$500,000, short-term.

Commissioner Adams referenced 3.5 Education Assistance: Other and stated he would look at Methodist University and Fayetteville State University because they are local and assist kids who may drop out after their first-year funds end and lack funds for the second, third and fourth years. Commissioner Adams asked the committee to keep this type of tuition subsidy in mind.

Commissioner Keefe referenced 3.6 Health Childhood Environments: Child Care and single parents who are unable to hold a job because they had to be a virtual teacher. Commissioner Keefe asked whether a voucher program to put their children in school or in daycare so the parent could go back to work would be an option. Commissioner Adams stated the issue is the lack of daycares where parents are comfortable leaving their children and a better use of funds may be to assist with the expansion of existing daycares or to start a new daycare. Commissioner Keefe asked the committee to keep this in the forefront. Commissioner Adams stated childcare is a major issue. Commissioner Keefe asked staff to come back with something.

Committee members discussed 3.10 Housing Support: Affordable Housing and the request from Community Development for new construction of a multi-family housing development of up to 48 units in the Shaw Heights, Qualified Census Tract 24.01. Dee Taylor, Community Development Director, stated the issue continues to be the lack of affordable, high-quality living units and the issue has worsened since the pandemic. Ms. Taylor explained the concept behind the request. Commissioner Adams suggested the possibility of a public/private partnership. In response to a question from Mr. Moorefield, Ms. Taylor stated the request is for rental units not owned by the county. There was consensus for an allocation up to \$10M.

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Commissioner Keefe referenced 3.11 Housing Support: Services for Unhoused Persons for projects that tie back to the gap analysis and strategic plan conducted by OrgCode and stated 3.11 rolls into 3.12 Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance. Commissioner Stewart stated the gap has been identified, Raleigh has a great program, and she would suggest building a shelter with beds and services to address mental health issues and those types of things. Commissioner Adams suggested handling the category in segments and in the short-term, identify the size of the shelter, the location/land and the cost. Discussion followed. There was consensus for an allocation up to \$250,000, short-term, to begin the planning that may include minor A&E. Ms. Cannon stated it would be to hire someone to help with the planning process, the number of beds, what it should encompass, where it would be located, site testing and that type of thing. Commissioner Adams stated if it turns out to be too large and costly, CIP dollars may need to be leveraged because he does not want it to come up short.

Committee members reviewed 5.5 Clean Water: Other Sewer Infrastructure with the request for the construction of a Sanitary Sewer System located in the Shaw Heights neighborhood, Qualified Census Tract 24.01. Ms. Cannon stated through Community Development and with cooperation from Engineering, an engineer is looking at the cost to extend sewer to the Shaw Heights area. Ms. Cannon stated up to \$5M was put in as an earmark for sewer construction and as a mid-term goal with the hope that PWC will participate. Following discussion, there was consensus for up to \$5M, short-term.

Commissioner Keefe referenced 5.11 Drinking Water: Transmission & Distribution and asked whether this pertained to Gray's Creek. Ms. Cannon stated there are other areas in the county without clean drinking water and one of the Board's goals is to look at those areas. Ms. Cannon stated management staff felt this was the time to conduct a comprehensive water feasibility study for water and sewer, from the construction point of view as well as from a financial feasibility point of view, to determine whether it is affordable for citizens. A brief discussion followed. There was consensus to allocate up to \$2M, short-term.

Discussion followed about broadband. Mr. Moorefield stated the opinion from the School of Government is that counties cannot use ARP money for any sort of infrastructure because the statutes only allow the use of unrestricted General Fund money. Mr. Moorefield stated counties have limited authority as it relates to broadband. Mr. Moorefield stated vouchers can be used in qualified census tracts.

Commissioner Adams referenced Pathways for Prosperity's Housing Trust Fund and stated a lot of people are unable to afford a down payment and there needs to be some type of purchase assistance for first time homebuyers. Following discussion, there was consensus for up to \$2.5M, short-term.

Commissioner Keefe referenced requests received by the committee. Commissioner Adams asked whether freed up CARES funding could be used for some of the requests. Ms. Cannon stated she would find out from the Finance Department how much was available. Commissioner Adams stated he felt the full Board should look at volunteer fire departments long-term because until the

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tax base changes, there is going to be a problem every year, and to even allocate anything short-term would not solve the problem.

Wrap-up comments followed. There was consensus for the ARP Committee to call meet Monday, October 4, 2021, following adjournment of the regular Board of Commissioners' meeting.

Commissioner Adams asked staff to email the zip codes/census tract in which evictions are happening. Ms. Cannon inquired about the time frame. Commissioner Adams responded October 2020 through March 2021.

MOTION: Commissioner Adams moved to allocate the following amounts for short-term projects:

- up to \$1.8M purchase generators for emergency shelters
- up to \$140,000 purchase of NARCAN
- up to \$2M mortgage assistance
- up to \$1.5M rental assistance
- up to \$2M education partnership
- up to \$3.5M local small businesses
- up to \$3.5M aid to non-profits
- up to \$500,000 procurement of library mobile technology lab/bookmobile
- up to \$10M affordable housing
- up to \$250,000 planning for homeless shelter
- up to \$2.5M first-time homebuyers' program
- up to \$5M Shaw Heights
- up to \$2M water feasibility study

SECOND: Commissioner Stewart

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (3-0)

5. OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no other items of business.

6. ADJOURN

MOTION: Commissioner Stewart moved to adjourn.

SECOND: Commissioner Adams

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (3-0)

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Approved with/without revision:

Respectfully submitted,

Candice H. White
Clerk to the Board