

Special Meeting of the American Rescue Plan Task Force
June 9, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers, 111 North Main Street Bristol CT 06010

Members Present: Cindy Bombard, Orlando Calfe, Eric Clemons, Michael Dumas, Mickey Goldwasser, Malcom Huckaby, David Maikowski, Thomas O'Brien, Donna Osuch, David Preleski, Susan Sadecki, Howard Schmelder, John Smith and Mayor Ellen Zoppo Sassu.

Also present: Ray Rogozinski, Josh Medeiros, Diane Waldron, Scott Smith, Justin Malley, Catherine Carbone, Councilman Kelley, and Rob Longo.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Zoppo Sassu called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Approval of minutes from the May 26, 2021 Special Meeting and to take any action as necessary

Commissioner Bombard made a motion seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser

“To approve the minutes from the May 26, 2021 meeting and place on file” Motion approved.

One correction was noted to a statement made by Commissioner Goldwasser.

3. Discussion of background materials, priority areas, and timelines for the Task Force and to take any action as necessary

Mayor Zoppo Sassu reviewed requests which have come into her office since the last meeting, and has compiled a spreadsheet of all of projects submitted by various City Departments of organizations. The projects are currently under review or deemed eligible as meeting the qualifications for funding. Another list has been compiled of projects funded by existing Coronavirus Relief Funds from the state, as well ARPA funding approved through the budget process.

Mayor Zoppo reviewed the following correspondence received since the last meeting:

- A letter from Scott Heth was received from the Environmental Learning Center
- Congressman Larson sent a letter regarding the county allocation, which Comptroller Diane Waldron has applied for.
- Shepard Meadows has asked for consideration regarding their barn project.
- An article was published by CCM on how they are assisting Cities and Towns with their allocations
- Bristol Health has submitted two requests; the perioperative center rooftop unit replacement, which failed last year and a chiller replacement.
- The Bristol Shelter/St. Vincent DePaul would like to create a triage center to manage crises.

Mayor Zoppo Sassu stated she and Scott Smith have attended meetings on the broadband project, and most recently legislative action in Hartford has affected the broadband project, which will be discussed at a future meeting for clarification on the City's thought process.

Justin Malley distributed a map of the census tracts discussed at the last meeting based on the 2020 census, focusing on 4061 and 4057. Mayor Zoppo Sassu explained the American Rescue Plan is modeled after these Census tracts.

Commissioner O'Brien questioned if funds can be allocated to expand parks such as Rockwell Park or the Boulevard as these are outdoor components and quality of life, appears to be eligible for funds. Discussion was held as there may be opportunities to work with the state project to improve the West End area.

Parks Superintendent Josh Medieros mentioned the Parks Master Plan study top priorities were walking trails and bike paths. Some ideas Parks has are infrastructure improvements to pavilions, Ski Lodge, Splash Parks, Showmobile replacement, Trail Improvements, and a Biking/Trail Improvements study.

Discussion was held on hiring a Project Manager. Comptroller Diane Waldron stated the auditors are here this week, and at this point there are no specific guidelines besides a compliance checklist right now, but it will be very extensive. She highly encourage we move on this, discussion was held on whether to hire a consultant or make it a full time position. ECD has hired consultants in the past for a similar purpose with the CDBG grant. In the Mayor's conversations with Congressman Larson, he thinks some of the guidelines may be revised after July 2.

Discussion was held on how the program will be marketed, Commissioner Bombard would like to see the message kept the same with the various social media outlets, including the Bristol All Heart site, Bristol Press with everyone working together to get the word out. There also should be two messages, one geared toward businesses and one for the public.

Mayor Zoppo Sassu stated another community is doing Public Hearings, which may be required in the future. Every project has to have a project sign.

Commissioner Ousch suggested an online survey for residents to give input on what they care about and their high priorities similar to what parks did with the Master Plan.

Commissioner Smith made a motion seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser

"To refer to the Board of Finance authorization to engage in an RFP for a contracted position or with a firm to handle facilitating community engagement, including the application process, reporting, auditing responsibilities and validating criteria based on the Department of Treasury requirements, and scope as determined by the American Rescue Plan funds." Motion approved.

The Mayor explained any requests for funding, will follow the process all City Departments and Boards follow, with approval from the Board of Finance, City Council and Joint Meeting. The next meeting of the Board of Finance is June 22. In the future, this Task Force may want to time their meetings with the BOF Agenda deadline.

4. Discuss the potential of sub-committees to focus on the priority areas and to take any action as necessary

The following sub-committees were formed:

Non-Profit

Donna Osuch, Eric Clemons, Malcon Huckaby, Susan Sadecki and Howard Schmelder

Business Recovery

Dave Preleski, Cindy Bombard, Orlando Calfe, Mickey Goldwasser and Glenn Heiser

City Use

John Smith, Michael Dumas, Dave Maikowski, Tom O'Brien and Ellen Zoppo-Sassu

The next meeting will have break out meetings of the subcommittees.

Commissioner Schmelder questioned how is the BOE operating? Dr. Carbone discussed the five priorities the BOE will be spending their funding on over three academic years. There have been a number of surveys, focus groups and think tanks. There will be some building projects, facility upgrades, along with mitigation strategies for full in person learning. Mayor Zoppo Sassu stated they have a different internal model, Dr. Carbone stated they must ensure they address any academic concerns created over the past 16 months.

The Mayor stated the only funds that can be spent now are the year one \$13 million allocation, additional funding will come in Spring 2022, which the Task Force can start planning for how that will be spent. In addition, 50% of the county allocation in the amount of \$5,822,000 will about be available to allocate in year one.

5. Adjournment

Commissioner Sadecki made a motion seconded by Commissioner Smith "to adjourn at 5:04 p.m." Motion approved.