

OFFICE OF THE TREASURER
BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT



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Date: November 19, 2024

To: Joseph Mooney
Chairman, Board of Finance

From: James Finch
Finance Director

Re: ARPA Actions, Appropriations, and Allocations

As the Board is aware, ARPA funds must be spent or obligated (Contract or Purchase Order) by December 31, 2024, and fully spent by December 2026.

Therefore, as we approach the end of the eligibility period, I write to seek your approval and feedback on various requests which fall into the following categories:

- New projects funded with unappropriated ARPA funds.
- Transfers from existing ARPA balances to create new projects.
- Consideration of a process to allocate residual ARPA balances to expenses in the general fund that were incurred prior to December 31, 2024.

New Projects from Unappropriated ARPA Funds:

Technology Acquisitions Willoughby Wallace Library \$4,370

As the board may be aware, the library's technology needs and services are funded on a hybrid model with certain technologies funded and supported by Libraries Online (LION) as part of the LION membership fee, and others via Branford's information technology department. Many of these upgrades are necessary to replace aging equipment and to make the library a more efficient workplace. In discussions with the First Selectman we believe that transitioning to an exclusive LION-based environment provides staff and patrons with a better user experience as the building will be supported by a common network for phone and data needs and thus avoiding any challenges regarding network and hardware coordination.

Therefore, the library is requesting \$2,485 for hardware, \$250 for licensing and \$1,635 to replace our phone system: \$4,370 in total. I am also recommending that the library initially funds this project from their special revenue fund to cover these costs while we await consideration by the appropriate bodies.

Branford Arts and Cultural Alliance (BACA) \$35,000

One of Branford's earliest ARPA appropriations was to provide an operating subsidy to support the gallery which operates at 1004 Main Street. The appropriation was viewed as an economic development effort to bring citizens and visitors into the center of town where they could eat and shop in the various establishments in the downtown area and this request continues to support this endeavor.

Information Technology \$7,500

This request is to purchase laptops and related equipment.

General Government Buildings \$15,000

This request will supplement the repair and maintenance account to cover the costs of painting (inside and outside) of town hall.

Executive \$7,651

This request will be used to replace furniture in the town hall.

Increase		
260-90000-480296	Fund Balance Transfer	71,521
Increase		
260-46020-579150-xxxx	Technology Acquisitions (WWL)	4,370
260-41020-588301-23810	BACA	35,000
260-41190-579150-24800	Technology Acquisitions	7,500
260-41170-544300-25xxx	Purchased Services R&M (Painting)	15,000
260-41120-579300-25xxx	Furniture	7,651
	Total	71,521

ARPA Fund Resolution:

Resolved: The Board of Finance recommends to the RTM an increase in the cumulative ARPA fund appropriations from \$ 8,185,500 to \$ 8,257,021. This appropriation will fund a variety of projects to close out the fund.

Transfers Between Existing ARPA Projects to Create New Projects

Branford Interfaith Housing

Previously the Branford Interfaith Housing Organization sent a letter to the Board of Finance to identify their need for assistance through the town's ARPA allocation. A request for a specific dollar amount was delayed pending discussions with the Branford Counseling Center. Following these discussions the Counseling Center is requesting the board reallocate \$40,000 from the Basic Needs account.

From		
260-44010-588905-24807	Basic Needs	40,000
To:		
260-44010-588301-25xx	Branford Interfaith Housing	40,000

Public Works

Public Works is looking to reallocate balances in the street lining allocation and unexpended funds following the purchase of a roll-off trailer. The request will fund a mobile diesel generator and lawn equipment.

From		
260-43010-579350-25804	Vehicles	16,100
260-43010-544300-24802	Street Lining	109,043
To:		
260-43010-579250-25804	Equipment	\$125,143

Recreation

As the board may recall, the capital plan included an appropriation of \$25,000 as the local match to an anticipated state grant for \$175,000. Unfortunately, the recreation department was recently informed that the state grant will not be forthcoming. Fortunately, the project came in under budget and the Engineering Department received a grant for the Branford Point Pier which resulted in a surplus balance in the ARPA account. As a result, there is an available balance to transfer.

From		
260-43050-579480-24804	Branford Point Wharf Replacement	175,000
To:		
260-45010-579400-25xxx	Vets' Park Playground	175,000

Finance Department

The request is to purchase a pension administration system to assist in administering the police and volunteer fire plans. The product provides a comprehensive tool for viewing and managing and storing all related information. The service also provides employees and pensioners access to their benefit information and includes a service center option for participants who need assistance with forms, website navigation, and other related inquiries.

From		
260-43050-579480-24804	Branford Point Wharf Replacement	38,602
To:		
260-41040- 579200-25xxx	Software (Pension Administration)	38,602

Police Department

This request supplements the police department's upcoming transfer request to purchase additional license plate readers.

From		
260-43050-579480-24807	Meadow Street Boardwalk	45,000
To:		
260-42010- 579250-25xxx	Equipment (License Plate Readers)	45,000

Executive

This request covers a shortfall in the administrative costs incurred in the allocation of grants to non-profit organizations. As the board may recall by the town engaged the services of the Branford Community Foundation to administer this allocation process.

From		
260-43050-579480-24807	Meadow Street Boardwalk	1,690
To:		
260-42010- 533970-23814	Administrative Costs	1,690

Future Reallocations

As the board is aware the process the town implemented to allocate ARPA funds was not governed by the town’s code. Instead, it was grounded in the belief that following the town’s budget process would be a good framework. Up until this point this process has served the community well. However, given the tight expenditure guidelines I, along with the First Selectman, are looking to implement an alternative approach going forward. Essentially, the Finance Director and First Selectman would allocate residual balances to cover previously expended dollars from other funds. It is important to note that since the town elected the standard allowance there is broad latitude in how the funds are used.

To illustrate how this approach would be implemented I will give an example:

Let’s assume we have costs associated with the election that exceed the registrar’s budget. These expenses would be moved to the ARPA fund and thus reduce the amount required to be covered through contingency.

In this case the following statements are true:

- Funds were used for governmental services (ARPA Guidelines)
- The budget for the Registrars department was previously approved by the BOF and RTM.
- The expenditure was incurred prior to December 31, 2024.

Cc James Cosgrove, First Selectman
Lisa Arpin, Town Clerk