



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION MINUTES

Tuesday, May 4, 2021, 3:30 P.M.

Virtual – BlueJeans

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I. CALL TO ORDER

The public work session of the Centre County Board of Commissioners was convened at 3:30 PM by Chair of the Board Michael Pipe.

In attendance were Commissioner Michael Pipe, Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Administrator Margaret Gray, Deputy Administrator John Franek, Jr., Executive Office Supervisor Natalie Smith and Staff Assistant Jillian Savage.

County personnel present included Travis Walker.

Guests present included Kim Stank and Corey Troutman.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments received from the public.

III. COVID-19 PLANNING AND RESPONSE

American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Kim Stank of Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC reported that Centre County has been allocated \$31.5 million in ARP funds, which will be paid in two installments, the first in 2021 and the second in 2022. This is more than double the allocation awarded through the CARES Act. The ARP establishes a segment of funding entitled The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund for the following uses:

1. To respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts; “including assistance to households, small businesses and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality.
2. For the “provision of government services” to the extent of the revenue reduction due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
3. For optional hazard pay for certain essential workers with a maximum of \$13.00 per hour or \$25,000 per individual.
4. To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

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Funding may also be used to cover eligible expenditures through December 31, 2024. The related Federal guidelines from the United States Treasury are expected to evolve and change rapidly throughout 2021.

Before the funds are received, Kim suggested setting up a special revenue fund to allow the funds to be easily tracked, compiling any CARES Act expenditures that exceeded the amount of the grant and may be eligible under the ARP, as well as generating a list of the programs and projects the County may be interested in funding.

Once the United States Treasury issues guidance and reporting guidelines Kim will be able to provide more detailed information.

The Board considered other COVID-19 impacted areas the funds may be used for, including tax revenue collection, loss of revenue for county operations and out-of-county inmate housing at the Centre County Correctional Facility, the COVID-19 AMI testing site for the period of January 2021 to March 2021 in the amount of \$763,549.82, and potential Center Crest renovations to meet spacing guidelines.

The Board discussed other available funding streams including the COVID Hospitality Industry Recovery Program (CHIRP), the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, SVOG, the Economic Injury Disaster Loan, the Paycheck Protection Program, and the Infrastructure Program.

The Board proposed ideas to utilize the funds including distribution to vaccine providers, hiring of additional staff to assist with the administration of the ARP; hazard, bonus or increased pay for County employees, the creation of a Mental Health Court, Drug Court expenses, a partnership with the Happy Valley Adventure Bureau for tourism marketing and internship programs, rural broadband and a small business grant program. Centre County municipalities and school districts will most likely not be considered as those entities will also be receiving an ARP allocation from the Treasury.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

V. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS

VI. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 PM.

ATTEST:

Margaret N. Gray
Administrator