



**American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Task Force Economic & Community Development  
Committee Orientation Meeting  
Meeting Minutes – Thursday, June 10, 2021  
2:00pm Virtual Zoom Webinar**

***APPROVED June 24, 2021***

**Attendance:**

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Rich Hall, Council Co-Chair Councilman Penrose Hollins, Council Co-Chair Councilman John Cartier, Jay Patel, Brett Sadler, James Ray Rhodes, Bill Lower, Jennifer Kmiec, Izuru Osegbu, Sarah Lester, Stewart Ramsey, Shelia Bravo, Bob Chadwick, and Denita Henderson

**Committee Members Absent:** None

**Others in Attendance:** Aundrea Almond - County Executive's Chief of Staff, Mengting Chen - Office of Law Assistant County Attorney, Charuni Patibanda - New Castle County Director of Economic Development, Susan Moore -County Executive Office Policy Advisor, Nique Traylor - Councilman Hollins Legislative Assistant, Rachel Zara - Councilman Carter Legislative Assistant, Rinku Banerji - New Castle County Auditor's Office, Karen Sullivan - New Castle County Solicitor, Stephanie Scola - Department of Finance, Andrea Trabelsi - Department of Land Use Assistant General Manager, George Haggarty - Department of Land Use Assistant General Manager, Philip McBride - Department of Land Use, and Sarah Rhine

**Proceedings:**

- Meeting called to order at 2:02 p.m. by Committee Chair Rich Hall
- Opening remarks by Committee Chair Rich Hall
- Committee member and support staff introductions
- Committee Chair Hall gave presentation which included an overview of the ARPA Act funding and timeline requirements for funding, eligible expenditures, priority census tracts (2021 Qualified Census Tracts and Difficult Development Areas), other ARPA Task Forces, and scope of the committee and approach (what should be prioritized). Recommendations of the Committee due by August 31, 2021.
- Assistant County Attorney Mengting Chen provided a presentation of Delaware's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and how it applies to the committee, committee members, and future meetings.

- Co-Chair Councilman Hollins, discussed the ARPA guideline provisions regarding disparities in public health outcomes in low-income communities, communities of color, were most impacted by the pandemic. These hardest hit communities were already disadvantaged prior to pandemic. Skills needed to apply for ARPA funding like grants writing could become an impediment to low-income communities and communities of color. Emphasized that it will be important to keep these groups in mind when making decisions about how to appropriate the ARPA funds. Also noted that, while the Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) and Difficult Development Areas (DDAs) can help pinpoint communities most in need when making decisions, there are areas outside of those designated census tracts that are still in need.
- Co-Chair Councilman Cartier, offered support to Co-Chair Councilman Hollins's statement regarding low-income communities and communities of color being most impacted by the pandemic. Added a concern about the potential an eviction crisis in the future among those who were most impacted by the pandemic, as we recover from the pandemic. Notes that this would be incredibly destructive to both individuals and communities and should be considered as the committee makes decisions.
- Committee Chair Hall asked the group about when and how often the Committee should meet
- Co-Chair Councilman Hollins suggested meeting every other week, keeping in mind that additional meetings may be necessary as possible. He suggested Thursday as a good day to meet. Co-Chair Councilman Cartier agreed with Co-Chair Councilman Hollins about meeting every other week on Thursday afternoon.
- Committee Chair Hall asked the rest of the committee if there were any objections to meeting every other Thursday afternoon. The committee agreed to this tentative meeting day and time.
- Committee Chair Hall opened the discussion up to the larger group to ask questions about items discussed today.
- Committee Member Sheila Bravo agreed that funding should be prioritized to people, businesses, and organizations that are underserved and most impacted by the pandemic. Also noting the committee should focus on people who have accumulated debt because of not being able to work (even those who are now able to work may still have residual debt). Committee Member Sheila Bravo also asked if the County still has remaining CARES Act Funds, and if so, could those funds be coordinated with the current ARPA Funding. Councilman Cartier indicated that there currently is additional CARES Act funding but further discussion is needed.
- Committee Member Brett Sadler asked for clarification about which types of expenses are eligible for the ARPA funding, suggesting it would be helpful for committee members to come to the next meeting with specific ideas for funding and so the committee can begin address these type of questions.
- Co-Chair Councilman Hollins agreed that more clarification will be needed about what types of expenses are eligible for ARPA funding, but encouraged the group to come forth with ideas so the appropriate parties can begin to make determinations about eligibility.

- Committee Member James Ray Rhodes suggested that the committee should consider building in resources so that further down the road recipients of funding are able to understand and have resources to complete required reporting to government agencies. Aundrea Almond indicated that the County maintains resources utilized for distribution of CARES Act funding that could likely also be used for ARPA Funding questions and support.
- Committee Member Steward Ramsey says said the committee should think proactively for how funding could be used to address potential future issues, not only current ones (ex. as we come out of the pandemic there may be new difficulties that arise associated with debt incurred during pandemic).
- Committee Member Sheila Bravo asked if it would be possible to use funding for investigations or studies that could help inform the committee's decisions, such as data analysis, future needs, market studies, etc.
- Co-Chair Councilman Cartier brought up concerns about the way small businesses have been impacted by the pandemic, particularly about potential for long term viability of small businesses in the future, post pandemic.
- Committee Chair Hall asked if there were any members of the public who wanted to speak. No members of the public were present.

**Public Comment:**

- No members of the public provided comments

**Adjournment:**

- Chair Hall adjourned the meeting at 3:12p.m.