



Special Townhall *Board* Meeting
ARPA Funding
Township Board Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2022
6:00 P.M.

- **Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 6:00pm by Supervisor Hutchings.
- **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- **Roll Call**
The following Board Members were present: Treasurer Genung, Clerk Louis, Supervisor Hutchings and Trustees Sulka, Langshaw & Bekes. Trustee Harmon was not present. 12 interested Residents were also present.
- **Approval of Agenda**
Trustee Langshaw moved to approve the Agenda. Clerk Louis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
Supervisor Hutchings introduced Trustee Bekes as the Townhall Meeting Leader. She then handed the meeting over to Trustee Bekes who then presented the American Rescue Plan Act which will be referred to as "ARPA" from this point on.
Trustee Bekes presented the following:
 - ARPA fund expenditures are controlled by the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Program.
 - Ross Township expects to receive \$428,304.00 and Treasurer Genung and Supervisor Hutchings confirmed that both payments were received and all of the money is on hand.
 - Funds must be used for:
 - * Costs incurred on or after March 3, 2021
 - * Obligated by December 31, 2024
 - * Expended by December 31, 2026

* Among other stipulations that can be found through the Michigan Department of Treasury's website by searching:

[American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\): Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund \(michigan.gov\)](https://www.michigan.gov/arpa)

He shared that notice of ARPA Funding was provided to the Residents in their Summer Tax Notices. Since receipt of the Funding, the Ross Township Board has discussed the best uses for the funding which includes:

1. Township Hall Security and technology improvements.
2. Updated equipment for the Fire Department.
3. Police Department equipment.
4. Park facility improvements.
5. A Master Plan rewrite which would ~~in~~ include surveys, Townhalls and Community input for future land use and visions for Ross Township.

To date Ross Township has used funds for:

1. Law enforcement equipment.
2. Computer licenses.
3. Website improvement.
4. Building Security.

A total of \$23,942.00 has been expended as of the end of August. This amount is approximately 5.6% of the total fund available.

Future decisions to be made by the Board with the Resident's input include:

- * Is all the money spent in one year or allocated across several years with an earmark for a specific project/use?
- * Will there be money spent on numerous projects/items or do we spend the majority of the money on one or two major projects?

Trustee Bekes explained that this is the main reason we are holding this Townhall meeting. The Board wants to gather community input and consider prior decisions. This will help guide the Board as decisions are made moving forward. With the input of those in attendance at the meeting he was sure the board will work diligently to take into considerations all potential uses for the money before any final decisions are made.

He further suggested that spending of ARPA funding is executed by:

1. During a public meeting a motion to spend the funding in specific way will be made.
2. The Board will discuss the proposed expenditure in detail and public input will be offered.
3. The Board will then vote on the allocation of funds via a Roll Call vote.

Trustee Bekes then opened the floor to Public Comment and proposed to use a less formal approach than usual Business Meetings, allowing residents to speak and allow the Board to reply and ask questions in a conversational manner. If interruptions occur, he would call off the conversational aspect and go back to the standard Citizen Comment rules. However, the conversational format worked very well with broad participation followed by citizen comments. The citizens appreciated the openness of the meeting and the Board's desire to listen to citizen comments.

- **Citizen Comment**

Rodney Wierr of Island Cove Acres conveyed that he had concerns regarding speeding in his neighborhood. He researched speeding signs and found a reasonably priced solar powered data driven sign for approximately \$3,000.00. He was very concerned for the safety of the children in the neighborhood.

Paul Hinsley of Ross Township said he was big on safety for the Fire Department. He wondered how to better facilitate coverage/responses between the 2 Departments within the Township.

Fire Chief Bogema answered that there are a few needs that would improve safety and response times. The department has one new truck on order and it should be ready my March. The second truck was canceled by the Ford Motor Company. He said that the top needs are a new Thermal Imaging Camera and an additional one for the command staff to monitor the entry crew among other uses. He estimated that a small monitor would run \$2935.00 and the entry crew's camera would be a bit more. AED upgrades are needed and the industry standard is the Stryker AED which would run approximately \$20,000.00 to \$25,000.00. A donation can be pursued for the AED upgrades. Clerk Louis suggested that a couple of the current units can be moved to the Park and Hall once the upgrade takes place. Chief Bogema stated that SCBA (breathing apparatus for Fire Fighters) should be updated as well. The current SCBA uses tanks that contain only 15 of oxygen and that the department has 18 units. He is looking to upgrade to units that have a 30-minute tank life and it is approximately \$160,000.00 to upgrade 18 units. It is possible that a Fema Grant could cover this upgrade. He further added the cost for one turn our set is \$4-\$5,000. He concluded Thermal Cameras, AED upgrades, SEBA and, a Ramm Extension are needed.

Kathy of Ross Township was visiting family when a home caught on fire and she recognized the difficulty the Fire Department had with no fire hydrants.

Chief Bogema stated that a well can be installed that would cost approximately \$50-\$60,000.00. The well needs to be capable of pumping 1,000 gallons per minute. This upgrade would require 3 phase power to the pump/well and there is no estimate on this cost yet.

Mike Moore of Ross Township asked what the plan was for the funds and maintenance. He suggested spending a little at a time and the said the Board decision on funds is a very hard decision to make.

Rodney Wierr suggested that Stryker should be approached for the AED upgrades.

Richard Waters of Ross Township suggested FEMA Training for the Police and Fire Department.

Mary Stage of Ross Township said that she though a well and or hydrants are needed.

Connie Lavender of Ross Township said she liked the idea of spreading the money around.

Todd White suggested that residents have the opportunity to apply for hardship funds due to Covid and the Township award funds to residents.

Kathy suggested a study on wells and said she would volunteer to be on a committee to research.

- **Adjournment**

Trustee Bekes motioned to Adjourn. Second by Trustee Sulka. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carin Louis
Township Clerk