American Rescue Plan Act:  
Recommendations to the Town of Old Lyme  

July 5, 2022
The Boards of Selectmen and Finance voted to accept the recommendations of the Town’s American Rescue Plan Committee on June 21, 2022 and move forward to a Special Town Meeting
American Rescue Plan Act Committee Members

- Jennifer Datum - Town of Old Lyme Social Services Coordinator
- Thomas Gotowka - Chair & Old Lyme LLHD Representative
- Ross Higgins - Local Faith Communities Representative
- Nicole Leger - Town of Old Lyme Finance Director
- Mary Jo Nosal - Community Representative
- Phil Parcak - Town of Old Lyme Facilities Coordinator
- Cheryl Poirier - Old Lyme Economic Development Commission Chair
- Dennis Powers - Mentoring Corps for Community Development
- Dave Roberge - Town of Old Lyme Emergency Management Director
- Mary Seidner - LYSB, Executive Director
- Martha Shoemaker - Board of Selectmen Representative
- Richard Stout - Small Business Owner Community Representative
  - Suzanne McAuliffe - Non-member Clerk
ARPC Process Overview

- Appointed in Sept. 2021. The initial meeting of the ARPC was October 6, 2021
- Charged with recommending to the BOS how to best spend the Town’s $2,162,215 in American Rescue Plan Act federal funding (aka SLFRF funds) to respond to the negative impact of COVID-19
- Developed Mission Statement, Goals, and Timeline. Agreed to make final recommendations to BOS by June 30, 2022
- Reviewed federal guidance including the Treasury’s published ARPA “Interim Final Rule” dated May 17, 2021, and the “Final Rule”, effective April 1, 2022
- Reviewed the CT. Conf. of Municipalities ARP Advisory Committee Rescue Plan Toolkit (response to “Interim Final Rule”) and Rescue Plan Toolkit Version 2.0 (response to “Final Rule”)
- Examined other national and statewide ARPA responses, applications and processes to inform the OL APRC process
- Met with various consultants, stakeholders and outside parties
- Created and administered a survey of the community regarding the effects and economic impact of the pandemic, as well as input on how to best spend funds
- Established an application process for grant requests from the community
American Rescue Plan Act Committee (ARPC) Mission Statement

"The ARPC will develop and recommend a strategy to the Board of Selectmen for the allocation of ARP funds that benefits the Old Lyme community, which has been impacted by the COVID pandemic.

The Committee will strive to operate in a transparent and objective manner and consider input from the community at large. The group’s goal is that their recommendation for fund deployment will, when carried out, maximize benefits for those living and working in Old Lyme. The ARPC will provide regular updates to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance with a goal of submitting final recommendations prior to June 30, 2022."
Eligible Uses of ARPA Funds as defined by ARPA Final Rule

1. **Revenue replacement** for the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, relative to revenues collected in the most recent fiscal year prior to the emergency,

2. COVID-19 **expenditures or negative economic impacts** of COVID-19, including assistance to **small businesses, households, and hard-hit industries, and economic recovery (incurred after 03/03/2021)**,

3. **Premium pay** for essential workers,

4. Investments in **water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure**.

Per the U.S. Treasury Department Final Rule
All Funds Must be Obligated by 12/31/2024
Obligated Funds must be spent by 12/31/2026
Outside Parties Consulted

- Sam Gold, Executive Director, RiverCOG
- Stephen Mansfield, REHS, MPH, Director of Health, Ledge Light Health District
- Maryam Elahi, CEO, Community Foundation of Eastern CT
- Margaret O’Shea, Board Member Comm. Found. of Eastern CT
- Stephanie Gould, Director, The Lymes’ Senior Center
- Timothy Griswold, Old Lyme First Selectman
- George Krivda, Independent ARPA Consultant
- Ian Neviaser, Superintendent, Region 18 Schools
- Holly Mc Calla, Region 18 Business Manager
- Attorney Michael P. Carey, Suisman & Shapiro
- Connecticut Conference of Municipalities
The Community Survey used to inform ARPC of Community Concerns, Needs, and Interests

- December 5, 2021–January 7, 2022
- Online (Survey Monkey) or hard copy options
- Publicized through local media, flyers, town website, social media, and postcards to 06371 and 06376 mailboxes/P.O. Boxes

- Over 900 respondents
- 69% Primary Residence
- 7% Primary + Business Owner/Non-Profit Leader
- 3% Non-resident Business Leader
- 18% Other Property Owner (including seasonal)
Public Outreach to Notify the Public of the Survey & Grant Opportunities

- Postcards to all Old Lyme and South Lyme addresses
- Press Releases and Coverage by
  - The Day
  - The Lyme Times
  - CT Examiner
  - LymeLine
- First Selectman’s E-Newsletter
- Social Media Posts to Old Lyme Groups
- Posters/Flyers
- Personal Outreach to town departments, town businesses and nonprofits
Survey Respondents’ Priorities for Use of ARPA Funds

1. Investment in current and future infrastructure challenges such as clean water and sewer/waste treatment
2. Investment in Old Lyme post-pandemic small business recovery
3. Financial assistance to Nonprofit Organizations that provided relief and services to Old Lyme residents during the pandemic
4. Investment in Mental Health Services or other Public Health Services to assist Old Lyme residents
5. Reinvestment in Old Lyme government services that were deemed essential during the pandemic (such as Emergency Services) to ensure preparedness for future services
6. Investment in town-wide broadband (internet) improvements and/or cell services for potentially recurring needs such as remote work, remote schooling, and Telehealth services
7. Grant premium pay to Old Lyme front line essential workers who were at heightened risk due to the character of their work during the public health emergency
8. Financial assistance to Old Lyme families and households having difficulty recovering from pandemic losses (noting there are funds available now for Old Lyme families through a fund administered by LYSB)
9. Investment in early childhood care and education
10. Investment in bringing visitors to our Old Lyme attractions, restaurants, shops, and accommodations
11. Investment in affordable housing to meet the needs of those working and living in Old Lyme.
Old Lyme Residents Reported:

- Inflation, Job and Business Losses, Other Costs Made Household Financial Positions Concerning
  
  “We did not lose our jobs, thankfully, but we’ve had to sacrifice hours and pay to accommodate childcare and remote learning needs. We’ve experienced many increased costs and have juggled to keep it together and not sink into substantial debt.”

- Isolation from Family, Friends, and One’s Support System was a Key Stress Factor during the Pandemic

- Mental Health Services sometimes have been sought but difficult to find due to lack of available time or financial resources
  
  “… mental health is so important and needs to be addressed and more accessible to the adults and children in our community. My daughter had struggled tremendously, and I have spent 10 months trying to get her a psychiatrist to help her through this difficult time... her whole world has been turned upside down.”

  “…I work closely with our Old Lyme community ...some may not even express it directly, but the mental health of a lot of my [customer base] has drastically changed…”
Adaptability was Key During the Pandemic for Non-Profits and Small Businesses

- **78% of Non-Profits** needed to pivot to provide services or assistance to Old Lyme residents in a way they had not prior to the pandemic.
- **About half of business owners** changed how they offered products or services due to the pandemic.
- Roughly a quarter had to add remote work options, while **40%** found the nature of their work did not allow for remote work.
- At the time of the survey (December 2021):
  - **12%** found employees not willing to or able to return to the workplace.
  - **30%** were experiencing staff instability and other staffing issues.
About **25%** of businesses and nonprofits reported recovering from a rough patch and **20%** not yet financially secure

“I incurred expenses significant to my income; however, I did not apply for loans as I was concerned about my ability to repay them.”

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“Redoing my basement to prepare to move our location.”

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“Wish there were much more recognition of the stress of small business owners, many of which lost their life's work. Many employees came out ahead financially, so the sympathy for the minority represented by business owners affected by mandated shutdowns while large stores have not been shut has just not been there.”

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“As a self-owned small business, we stayed afloat with CT’s enhanced Unemployment Benefits in 2021. Those are gone in 2022, our business has not recovered fully.”

**About 25%** are currently seeking or planning to seek additional help.
Post-Survey: Old Lyme Organizations Invited to Seek Funding

- March 2022: ARPC finalizes grant application forms based on scholarship including best practices of other municipalities and the community survey.
  - Economic Recovery (ER) Grant Application to offset revenue loss/expenses for businesses and nonprofits
  - Community Initiative (CI) Grant Application to address the needs of our community following the pandemic and/or create a transformative response to the pandemic
  - Residents in need were directed to seek existing pandemic relief assistance already available through LYSB
- April 1-May 2, 2022: Grant application window
- April 5-May 2: ER applications sent to Independent Consultant for review and recommendations
- May 6: Each CI Application is assigned to three ARPC members for review and scoring. Assignments ensured no conflicts of interest.
- May 18: ARPC full-day committee meeting to review and discuss all applications. Members recusing themselves as appropriate due to conflicts of interest.
- June 2: Recommended funding package including individual grant applications finalized by ARPC
Economic Recovery Grants Summary

- 42 ER grant applications received
  - 33 qualified Businesses and Nonprofits applied for ER Grants of up to a maximum of $10,000 each
  - 9 applications were not qualified, as they were not located in Old Lyme
- The 33 qualified ER applicants reported $4,771,708.71 in combined losses or extra COVID-related expenses between March 3, 2021 (per Treasury Final Rule) and April 1, 2022 (start of Town of Old Lyme Grant Application period)

23 qualified Old Lyme Businesses and 10 Nonprofits are recommended to receive up to $10,000 each (some qualified for less than $10,000) in Economic Recovery Grants for a total of $318,649
Community Initiative Grants Summary

- A total of 37 Old Lyme businesses, nonprofits, and Town government entities applied for a CI Grant. Applicants certified that the initiative will be implemented as applied for and completed within the required statutory requirements.

- Of the 37, 31 met the criteria of the Community Initiative Grant, presenting initiatives that would help reduce the negative effects of the pandemic, and demonstrating a thought-out plan and budget, with a clear fiduciary agent and ability to meet goals within the deadline. Because qualified initiative requests outpaced the funds available, numerous initiatives are recommended for only partial funding.

- Of the 37, 5 grant applications did not meet ARPA parameters for reasons *including*: no clearly identifiable fiduciary agent, grant did not address community needs or benefit sufficient community stakeholders, or no clear, attainable way to track requested expenditures was demonstrated.

- Additionally, 1 grant for an ATV for the Police Department was not recommended for approval, as the town later purchased it under the *current fiscal year’s budget* after the grant application was submitted.

- Additionally to meet the needs of our residents, fund the Town of Old Lyme Social Services Fund in the amount of $20,000.
Two Grants Currently in the 2022-2023 Town Budget

- Two town projects were submitted as Community Initiative grant applications as well as approved at the recent Town Budget Meeting for the 2022-2023 fiscal year budget.
- Recognizing the Community Survey’s strong sentiment for town government support, and as allowed under the Standard Allowance option, the ARPC recommends full funding for these Community Imitative grants with the express direction that the funding be used to meet or further enhance said items.
  - Town of Old Lyme Animal Control flooring replacement
  - Town of Old Lyme Swan Brook outlet repair
Legal, Administrative and Tracking

ARPC further recommends to the BOS that it approve up to $20,000 for legal, administrative and grant tracking expenses
Any Approved Funds Not Expensed to be Added to Social Services Discretionary Fund

Any approved funds not spent by the 12/31/2026 ARPA deadline (e.g., consultant does not utilize full budget, grants not dispersed for any reason, etc.) should be directed into the Social Services Department Discretionary Fund to assist those most in need in the Town of Old Lyme by supporting fuel assistance, housing assistance, food, and other needs deemed necessary by said department.
American Rescue Plan
Recommendations (Ten Categories)

1) **Invest in Old Lyme small businesses’ pandemic recovery** by supporting 23 small businesses (< 500 employees per the US Treasury Department) that applied for and met the requirements to receive **Economic Recovery** grants up to $10,000.

2) **Provide financial assistance to nonprofit organizations that provided relief and services to Old Lyme residents during the pandemic**. Ten nonprofit organizations (501c3) applied for and met the requirements to receive **Economic Recovery** grants up to $10,000.
American Rescue Plan Recommendations (Ten Categories) continued

3. **Invest in and support mental health services or public health services to assist Old Lyme residents**

- Lymes’ Youth Service Bureau: $114,160 *four years mental health services*
- Community Health Center, Inc: $15,000 *for healthcare services for under & uninsured OL residents*
- Sustainable Old Lyme: $12,500 *teen summer arts program*
- Town of Old Lyme ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Committee: $9,079 *Mobi-mat pathways to create beach access for those residents with mobility issues*
- Lyme Academy of Fine Art: $25,000 *toward the improvement of walkways, stairs, ramps, and doors to provide unfettered access to individuals with mobility issues.*
- Lymes’ Senior Center Board of Directors: $1,700 *two year outreach to seniors through its birthday card program*
- Ledge Light Health District: $21,622 *(previously approved at the 3/21/22 Special Town Meeting)*
American Rescue Plan Recommendations (Ten Categories) continued

4. Reinvest in Old Lyme government services that were deemed essential during the pandemic (such as emergency services) to ensure future preparedness

- Old Lyme South End Volunteer Ambulance, Inc (dba Old Lyme Emergency Medical Services) $275,000 to fund a replacement ambulance with a power loader required for patient stretcher.

- Old Lyme Fire Department: $62,583 to fund an off-road UTV with patient transport module and fire attack pump/tank with 18ft enclosed transport trailer.

- Old Lyme Fire Department: $123,990 to fund 25 sets of firefighter personal protective equipment.

- Town of Old Lyme Office of Emergency Management: $24,122 to fund two mobile electronic message boards (which have been borrowed in the past).

- Town of Old Lyme Facilities Department: $50,000 to install and maintain fiber optic cabling at the Boughton Road Emergency Operations Center to enhance rapid communication services for emergency services personnel and first responders.
American Rescue Plan Recommendations (Ten Categories) continued

4. Reinvest in Old Lyme government services (continued)

- Town of Old Lyme Selectman’s Office: $44,444 to improve the Town’s municipal website through an upgraded content management system.

- Town of Old Lyme Town Clerk: $38,500 to fund the historic preservation of land records by digitizing land record books and corresponding grantor/grantee books.

- Town of Old Lyme Assessor’s Office: $31,500 to digitize (thereby providing remote public access to) historical assessment cards.

- Town of Old Lyme Facilities Department: $12,000 to upgrade air filtration in Town-owned buildings.

- Town of Old Lyme Registrar’s Office: $7,290 to fund three State of CT CVRS laptops to improve the processing of absentee ballot applications.

- Town of Old Lyme Animal Control Department: $4,510 to fund replacement of deteriorating flooring in the building’s cat shelter space.
American Rescue Plan Recommendations (Ten Categories) *continued*

5. Invest in current and future infrastructure challenges such as clean water and sewer/waste treatment

- Town of Old Lyme WPCA: $158,347* toward the shared forced main exiting the Sound View neighborhood and traveling Route 156 in an effort to avoid repaving Route 156 twice.

- Town of Old Lyme Selectman’s Office: $55,000 to repair the Swan Brook outlet’s wood outfall

6. Invest in town-wide broadband (internet) improvements and/or cell services

- Town of Old Lyme Facilities Department: $36,000 toward funding improved remote access to Town meetings (priority), upgrading IT infrastructure, and providing wi-fi at various town locations (such as playgrounds)

* Indicates partial funding of full request
American Rescue Plan Recommendations (Ten Categories) continued

7. Invest in early childhood care, and education

- CT Audubon Society/Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center: $157,095* to help fund the creation of an accessible science discovery and environmental learning center for children.

- Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut: $14,600* funding toward PARJE educational and community events using the arts as a springboard to address diversity and inclusion.

- Old Lyme-Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library: $6,350 to fund a mobile/outdoor library service with the purchase of a Library e-assist Book Bike.

* Indicates partial funding of full request
American Rescue Plan Recommendations
(Ten Categories) continued

8. Invest in bringing visitors to our Old Lyme attractions, restaurants, shops, and accommodations

- Sound View Beach Association: $137,599* toward funding the SVBA Shoreline Community Center Renovations Project.

- Town of Old Lyme Halls Road Improvement Committee: $135,000* toward the bridge and walking trails development project on Halls Road.

- Black Hall Outfitters: $30,875* to fund targeted tourism marketing bringing paddling and boating enthusiasts to Old Lyme.

- Old Lyme Historical Society: $9,000 to support promotion of the history of Old Lyme through various publications and a self-guided audio tour of historic Lyme Street.

- Old Lyme Arts District: $8,000 to support the 2023 Midsummer Festival.

- Town of Old Lyme Economic Development Commission: $2,700 for economic promotion outreach efforts.

* Indicates partial funding of full request
American Rescue Plan Recommendations (Ten Categories) continued

9. Invest in affordable housing to meet the needs of those working and living in Old Lyme
   - Town of Old Lyme Affordable Housing Commission: $150,000* toward offsetting costs related to the McCulloch Family Open Space affordable housing opportunity.

10. Provide (direct and indirect) financial assistance to Old Lyme families and households having difficulty recovering from pandemic losses
    - Shoreline Soup Kitchen & Pantries: $10,000 to partially fund (along with ten other municipalities) the purchase of a refrigerated truck.
    - Town of Old Lyme Social Services Department Discretionary Fund: $20,000 to assist Old Lyme families and individual with fuel assistance, housing assistance, food and other needs deemed necessary.

* Indicates partial funding of full request
American Rescue Plan Recommendations (Ten Categories) continued

Further:

- Reserve up to $20,000 in legal, outreach, and administrative costs associated with the survey and application, and granting processes.

- Reserve up to $20,000 to cover fees by an independent consultant retained to administer the Economic Recovery Grant applications (this expenditure was approved by the Town in its 3/21/22 Town Meeting)

- Any unexpensed allocations to be redistributed to the Old Lyme Social Services Discretionary Fund
Final Recommendation

Allocate as recommended by the Boards of Selectmen & Finance on June 21, 2022 the remaining $2,120,593 in American Rescue Plan funds.

- Total ARPA funds to Town of Old Lyme: $2,162,215.
- Previously approved at 3/21/22 Town Meeting:
  - $21,622 to Ledge Light Health District
  - Up to $20,000 to Economic Recovery Grant Consultant
- Net funds to be allocated: $2,120,593