

Town of Onancock
Town Council – ARPA Work Session
September 20, 2021
5:30 p.m.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Mayor Fosque called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and roll was called. Mayor Fletcher Fosque and Councilmembers Robert Bloxom, Joy Marino, Sarah Nock and Maphis Oswald were present. Councilmembers Ray Burger and Thelma Gillespie were absent. A majority of members were present, and a quorum was established.

Mayor Fosque shared the purpose of this work session which was to discuss how Onancock will spend its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) distribution over the course of the next few years. Mayor Fosque further explained that no votes will be taken at this meeting and, depending on time, no public comments may be heard.

Work Session:

- Use of ARPA funds:

Mr. Spuck shared the with Town Council the list of those organizations and residents that requested a portion of the Town’s ARPA distribution in the June 7th Town Hall Meeting.

- Onancock’s “Bayside” Revitalization \$36,000
- Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ESCADV) \$100,000
- Historic Onancock School (Shop Building Tear Down) \$15,000
- Onancock Main Street:
 - o Grant match \$12,000
 - o Local business grant for façade upgrades \$100,000
 - o Wayfinding & signage \$20,000
 - o Town wide power washing
 - o Renovate public restrooms
- Mrs. Priscilla Hart, Market Street, requested a community space \$50,000

Mr. Spuck shared that the funds need to be appropriated and the final Recovery Plan for State and Local Fiscal recovery Funds for 2021 document needs to be submitted to the Federal Government by October 31, 2021. Project discussions do not necessarily encumber the funds, the projects and estimated cost of those projects submitted to Town Council by Mr. Spuck are estimates. Once quotes are received then they become actual costs. The projects are not to exceed Mr. Spuck’s estimates. The Town must account for \$1.2 million dollars, even if a portion if “unappropriated”.

Councilmember Nock asked a framework question, it appears that only Town projects are listed on Mr. Spuck’s itemized list of projects, where are the other requests? Mr. Spuck explained that the Onancock Bayside Revitalization does not qualify for Town funds because they are outside of the Town limits; the grant match that Main Street asked for has already been budgeted in the Town’s current year operating budget; and ESCADV’s ask was specific for non-profits. Mr. Spuck elaborated by stating there are two criteria ESCADV falls into, one category is to support non-profits and the other one is for social

determinants of health and community violence. Mr. Spuck stated that he feels that ESCADV should be funded under the latter criteria.

Councilmember Oswald asked if there was room to fund ESCADV's request considering the list of projects presented by Mr. Spuck used the Town's entire ARPA distribution. Mr. Spuck shared that he could absolutely move things around to make that happen. We want to spend the amount of money that will preclude a single-audit requirement which is, currently, \$750,000 annually.

Mr. Spuck, at the request of Mayor Fosque, went through his list of proposed projects with Town Council. *Please see the attached report.

Council discussion followed each item discussed. At the end of Mr. Spuck's presentation additional discussion ensued.

Councilmember Bloxom asked what could be cut in the list of proposed projects to support ESCADV's request for funds. Mr. Spuck stated that he could shuffle things around to make it happen. Mr. Spuck asked how much Council wanted to appropriate for ESCADV. Mayor Fosque stated that he would like to see them get 100% of their request.

Mayor Fosque shared his support of the bathroom and Police Department renovation but expressed concern over installing an elevator. Councilmember Bloxom and Oswald stated that air quality for the second floor of Town Hall is a priority but that the elevator was not.

Councilmember Marino presented a new project to be discussed, a walking trail around the Little League field. Councilmember Marino stated that it would help get walkers off Town streets and encourages exercise during the pandemic. She estimates the cost to be between \$6,000 to \$13,000. Additional discussion ensued. It was decided that Mr. Spuck should discuss this project with Central Accomack Little League before approved to make sure they would like a walking trail installed around the ballpark.

Mrs. Janet Fosque, Market Street and Onancock Main Street Board Member, clarified for Council that they did actually hear from Onancock Main Street, who asked that the Town use \$100,000 for a business grant for façade improvements. Councilmember Bloxom stated that he would prefer a grant match for façade improvements over direct gifts. Councilmember Bloxom suggested that Mr. Spuck reappropriate the \$100,000 from the elevator installation to fund a 75/25 grant match program for businesses.

Mr. Jeff Vernimb, King Street, shared his thoughts on potential projects for the Town's ARPA funds. Mr. Vernimb suggested that the gazebo receive a facelift, that the sidewalks at Town Square be repaired, install a sidewalk on King Street down by the drainage issue and that the Town dredge the creek to help with boaters' passage through the creek. Mr. Spuck stated that a sidewalk on King Street is not feasible based on VDOT requirements. Councilmember Bloxom explained that the Town has not authority to do dredging in the Onancock Creek. It is maintained by the Army Corp of Engineers and that the Onancock Creek project is very low on their list of priority areas to dredge.

Mr. Vernimb asked if the ARPA funds could be used to help recruit and retain police officers. Mr. Spuck explained that the funds could be used as a one-time bonus for first responders but not for a retention or future salaries. Mr. Spuck further shared that the Onancock Town Council has committed to increase our Department's salaries to be competitive with our other neighbors on the Shore, within three years our Department salaries will be in the top three paid Department on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Councilmember Nock asked that Mr. Spuck look into funding a ramp for the Council platform, currently, both sides require people to take a step up which does not make it handicap accessible.

Mrs. Peaches Dodge, Meadville Drive and President of the ESCADV Board, thanked Town Council for their overwhelming support of ESCADV. Mrs. Dodge also suggested that the Town coordinate with them on the walking trail/landscaping of the Little League field so that the area could be revitalized in coordination with each other.

Mayor Fosque asked Mr. Spuck to work on updating the list for Council's review at the next Town Council meeting.


Adjourn:

Councilmember Bloxom made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Nock seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.



Fletcher Fosque, Mayor



Lisa Fiege, Deputy Clerk