



Town Administrator's Report
Select Board Meeting of October 25, 2021
Matthew Coogan

Lockwood Lane emergency culvert work

The emergency culvert work for the partially collapsed culvert was completed last week.

Boxford Common

Weekend traffic flow and the parking situation appear to have improved since the BAA changed the weekend field schedule to reduce the number of football games from six to three. The Police Department has a shift detail for Saturdays and Sundays at the fields and continues to monitor the situation.

Snow Removal Plow Rates

DPW Town Engineer/ Superintendent Chris Olbrot is preparing to send out contracts for snowplow operators this upcoming winter season. This typically occurs at the end of October, with contracting in mid-November. Chris has reviewed the Town's existing plow rates and compared them with 19 municipalities in the area. The comparison sheet is included in this report. Boxford (2nd to the last column in yellow) falls below nearly all the average rates for each type of plowing service (last column in yellow). Chris recommends the Select Board approve adjusting the rates as suggested in the document. Boxford last raised plow rates in 2019.

Center at 10 Elm

Foundation work continues. The form and place footings for the new foundation continue to progress, and work on the east (rear) wall of the Cummings House began this week.

My office has also launched the project information page, it's located on the town website homepage: <https://www.town.boxford.ma.us/home/pages/center-10-elm>. We will provide updates with photographs as we receive them from the project team.

For Monday's agenda, there's an easement grant proposal from National Grid. The easement provides National Grid access to install and maintain electrical equipment, including a transformer, for the Center at 10 Elm project. It has been reviewed by KP and is ready for the

Select Board to execute. The easement will allow National Grid to start work on the transformer and bring a new electrical service to the building.

ARPA Committee Recommendations

In your agenda packet is a memo on behalf of the ARPA Committee that summarizes the committee's work and includes a set of recommendations for the Board to take action on. I look forward to discussing this memo Monday night.

27 Main Street

I met with owner Gordon Russell and staff from Weston & Sampson onsite at 27 Main Street this morning for introductions and to allow Weston & Sampson to conduct a site visit. This was the kickoff meeting for the environmental assessment.

School Site Plan Update

Superintendent Scott Morrison arranged a meeting last week with school and town staff for Weston & Sampson to provide an update on both school site projects. The plans are now at 90% design completion. The Planning Board completed its review in September. The proposals are on the ZBA's agenda for next Thursday 10/28 (and again November 18) and at the Conservation Commission on November 4th. While there has been substantial review, there were a few details identified at the meeting, and Chris Olbrot will be confirming that items identified in previous memos have been addressed. Weston & Sampson's cost estimator has provided an estimate for both projects combined at \$5.4 million.

Tri-Town Schools Regionalization Study

This is something that will be discussed at a November meeting but I thought the Board would want to have some information in the meantime. Tri-Town Schools is in the beginning stages to establish a committee to consider a regional plan. A 9-member Regionalization Planning Committee would be established that would include representation from all three towns, including select board members. The three towns' school committees and select boards all need to vote to authorize this committee. It's the first step, and Tri-Town is bringing in MARS (Mass Association of Regional Schools) to assist the new committee. Tasks would include an analysis of the Union and recommendations on ways to improve efficiencies and operations, including regionalizing K-6. The school committees all voted to establish the committee last week. I anticipate the Select Board taking this up at the November 8th meeting. Scott Morrison and the Boxford School Committee will provide more detailed information.

Town Hall Staff

New Hires: Heather Thifault and Peter Delaney started this week. Heather is our new Assistant Assessor; she comes from the Water and Sewer Department with the City of Peabody. You all know Peter, who will be working under the tutelage of Bob Aldenberg. Peter formally resigned from the Conservation Commission, the Land Committee, and the Community Preservation Committee on Monday, October 18th.

Our office is providing support during the transition in the Building Department, including bringing on temporary staff to cover office hours and taking on ZBA administration for the near term. We will be posting the job opening for Building Department Administrative Assistant this week.

Meetings

- **Library Trustees** – I attended the 10/18 Trustee meeting. The Trustees discussed the process for commissioning a mural in the Children’s Reading Room. It will be located on the far wall so that it’s visible when entering the room. Library Director Kevin Bourque is working with a Masco High School student on a community service project. She will create a few conceptual designs for the Trustees to review at a November or December meeting.
- **Cultural Arts Committee** – As mentioned, the Committee met and voted to recommend Sydney Love to fill an opening on the Committee. Sydney and members of the Committee will attend Monday night’s meeting for the Board’s review of her application. Although Sydney is not a Boxford resident, she is active in the local arts community.
- **Cole School Staff** – I attended the Cole School Staff meeting on the afternoon of October 18 and met new Principal Tracey Mara. It was a great opportunity to meet teachers and was useful to participate in staff development exercises. I will be attending the Spofford School staff meeting in November.
- **Pastor Andrew James** – I met Pastor James last week. We discussed ways the town and the First Congregational Church can continue to work together.
- **Meredith Shaw, Tri-Town Council** – I met Meredith at the Tri-Town Council office on October 21 for introductions. I learned about existing partnerships between the Council, the Town, and the schools, and we discussed ways to continue working together on initiatives.

Upcoming Select Board Agenda Items

November 8th

- Rt. 133 TIP project, Washington St and Main St roundabout - presentation by Town Engineer/DPW Superintendent Chris Olbrot
- School Regionalization Study – Joint session with Superintendent and School Committee
- Tri-Town Shared Health Initiative MOA vote
- Liquor license renewal
- National Grid Pole Petition Hearing, Glen Road

November 22nd

- Tax Classification Hearing
- Discussion on location for 2022 Parks Program

Office of the Town Administrator

DATE: Friday, October 22, 2018

TO: Boxford Select Board

FROM: Matt Coogan, Town Administrator

RE: ARPA Committee Recommendations

This memo summarizes the work of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee to date and outlines a plan for the Select Board to appropriate the Town's \$2,490,492 ARPA funds.

The ARPA Committee has held three public meetings: August 23, August 30, and September 27. The Committee reviewed the ARPA spending categories and timelines set by the U.S. Department of Treasury and the Town's capital improvement planning documents in order to outline policies of how the town should allocate funds, as well as a process to develop a funding plan. In addition, the committee reviewed planned or appropriated ARPA expenditures to date.

ARPA Funds – Spending Categories and Timeline

The U.S. Department of Treasury has issued [Compliance and Reporting Guidelines](#) for spending ARPA funds. The plan states that organizations that receive ARPA funds have “substantial discretion to use the award funds in the ways that best suit the needs of constituents – as long as such use fits into one of the following four statutory categories”:

1. To respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts;
2. To respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to such eligible workers of the recipient, or by providing grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who performed essential work;
3. For the provision of government services, to the extent of the reduction in revenue of such recipient due to the COVID–19 public health emergency, relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year of the recipient prior to the emergency; and
4. To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

The period for utilizing ARPA funds is between March 3, 2021 and December 31, 2024. Furthermore, funding appropriated by December 31, 2024 can be expended through December 31, 2026, as long as the award funds for the obligations incurred by December 31, 2024

Town Policy and Process for appropriating ARPA Funds

The Select Board created the ARPA Committee in August 2021 to consider the general framework for the planned use of the Town of Boxford's allocated federal Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CLRF) pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. **Boxford's CLRF is \$2,490,492.** In addition to the statutory spending categories, the Committee has developed the following policies for spending ARPA funds:

- Operational needs of the Town as required to respond to COVID
- Public health and safety initiatives to improve delivery of services
- One-time capital expenses on infrastructure needs already identified in the Town's capital plan

As far as one-time spending, the Committee recommends utilizing ARPA funds to reduce the amount of local funds necessary to fund a project. ARPA funding could be used to completely fund individual capital projects entirely, or could fund a portion of a capital project to reduce the need for local funding (operating budget, free cash, or debt issuance). Finally, the Committee has also discussed focusing on critical infrastructure projects.

The ARPA Committee recommends the town focus expenditures that fall within statutory categories 1 and 4 referenced on page 1.

Planned/ Appropriated Funding to Date

- **Health and Public Safety**

Medical Response Pilot - \$150,000: In August 2021, the Select Board voted to authorize the Public Safety Department Heads to institute improvements to the Town's medical response protocols on a pilot basis. The program includes creating a new shift for a firefighter dedicated to respond directly from their home to a medical call during hours not covered by career firefighters (evenings and weekends). Firefighters will be paid a stipend for the shift in addition to their entitled compensation for responding to medical calls during the assigned shift. As part of the pilot, a vehicle is provided that is equipped with emergency and medical equipment for use when responding from home. The program launched in September, and over the course of the four-month pilot, the Fire Department will deliver a monthly report on all medical responses to the Town Administrator for publication on the Town website. It will be evaluated by the Town Administrator and Public Safety Department Heads at the conclusion of the pilot, and further recommendations will be made to the Select Board at that time.

Health Department Staffing - \$12,500 The Select Board voted to appropriate \$12,500 of ARPA funds to increase the hours of the Health Department Administrative Assistant position to full time (34 hours) for FY22. The increased hours will help the department continue to administer improved trash sticker service and processing, increase office hour coverage, and improve department workflow. The Health Department, the Board of Health, and the Select Board will reassess this arrangement in the spring to determine whether to continue with a full-time administrator, and if so, how to fund the additional hours. Additional ARPA funds could be utilized.

- **COVID Response**

The Town will continue to incur costs associated with the ongoing pandemic. The Town’s \$872,000 CARES Act funding was fully spent by end of FY2021, but there continues to be COVID-related expenses that could be funded through ARPA. The tent rented for Annual Town Meeting in June and the tent at the COA would be covered with ARPA funds. The Town may use ARPA funds for a tent at Annual Town Meeting next May. Additional purchase of PPE and other unforeseen expense could also be covered with ARPA funds.

- **Infrastructure**

Center at 10 Elm Generator: The new generator for the Center at 10 Elm costs \$204,000 and the plan is to use ARPA funding to pay for the new generator.

Additional Appropriations Recommended by the ARPA Committee

- **Infrastructure - Drainage**

The Committee invited Town Engineer/ DPW Superintendent Chris Olbrot to their August 30th meeting to discuss projects that could be funded through ARPA. Chris recently had a Culvert and Bridge Asset Management Report completed by a consultant that includes a full analysis of the Town’s 231 culverts. Seven of these culverts are in critical condition and need more immediate attention. One of the seven, Lockwood Lane, was recently repaired through an emergency certificate from the Conservation Commission. Another critical culvert on Glendale Rd had also received funding for design at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. At the August 30th meeting, the Committee agreed to prioritize culverts for ARPA funding. The goal would be to accelerate the replacement and repair of the culverts in critical condition to avoid emergency repairs and allow DPW to implement a maintenance program to systematically address culverts on an annual basis.

Critical culverts to be addressed using ARPA funds:

Culvert	Report ID	Type of Work	Est. Design	Est. Construction	Total	Notes
105 Georgetown Rd	B-129	Design and Construct	\$40,000	\$125,000	\$165,000	
316 Ipswich Rd	B-82	Design	\$100,000	-	\$100,000	Fund Construction with FEMA HMGP
166 Middleton Rd	B-203	Design and Construct	\$100,000	\$600,000	\$700,000	
Glendale Road	B-222	Design and Construct	Allocated	\$500,000	\$500,000	Design funds allocated ATM 2021
TOTAL			\$240,000	\$1,225,000	\$1,465,000	

The ARPA Committee recommends the Select Board earmark ARPA funds to address the critical culverts above. Releasing a portion of these funds as soon as possible would allow DPW to contract for design and permitting to be ready for the 2022 construction season. Once design and permitting is complete, the town could proceed with funding construction with remaining earmarked ARPA funds, or pursue other funding sources. For example, Chris Olbrot has identified the 315 Ipswich Rd culvert as a candidate for construction funding through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Having this project designed and permitted would put it on a timeline to receive FEMA funding in the summer/ fall of 2022. Other culverts may also qualify for FEMA funds based on the design. Furthermore, as we wait on decisions from the state legislature on the state ARPA funds, as well as from congress on American Jobs Plan infrastructure bill, we anticipate there will be more infrastructure funding available. Having designed, permitted projects that are “shovel ready” would be advantageous for the Town, as we anticipate federal and state funds would be made available to municipalities through competitive grants. It should be noted design and permitting for culverts is good for a three-year period. The ARPA funds would help address the Town’s critical culverts on an accelerated timeline, and the Town would continue to fund the maintenance and upkeep of culverts based on the culvert plan, utilizing outside funds when possible.

- **COVID Expenses and Compliance Reporting**

The Committee recommends that a portion of the Town’s ARPA funds be earmarked for items related to addressing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Town continues to purchase PPE for staff and a small portion of ARPA funding could be used. It is possible that the Town would rent tents to hold outdoor programming and events next spring, including for Annual Town Meeting 2022 and for programming at the COA. Finally, the Town ensure ARPA funds are spent within compliance of the U.S. Treasury guidance documents. The Town is participating in a group procurement through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for contracted services. The Town could then hire a consultant procured through the MAPC to oversee grant reporting and compliance for the Town’s ARPA funds, and a portion of ARPA funds should be set aside to pay for consulting fees.

Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSFRF)

The federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provided approximately \$8.7 billion to Massachusetts through the new Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Of that \$8.7 billion, municipalities and functional counties in the Commonwealth received \$3.4 billion from the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CLFRF). As mentioned, the Town of Boxford received \$2,490,492 of ARPA funds, which is the town’s share of CLFRF. The remaining \$5.3 billion was allocated to the Commonwealth from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSFRF).

The State is in the process of developing a plan to spend the \$5.3 billion CSFRF allocation:

Phased Recovery Projects

The following table lists 21 projects currently included in Massachusetts' Recovery Plan and their proposed allocations of CSFRF aid. Only Phase I projects are fully obligated and underway as of July 31, 2021. Projects and allocation amounts included in the Recovery Plan may be modified or expanded in the coming months as projects are evaluated and refined. Details of the projects are presented in separate sections of this report describing each Recovery Plan implementation phase.

Currently Planned Massachusetts' Recovery Projects and CSFRF Allocations

Implementation Phase	Project	CSFRF Amount
Phase I – Recovery Projects to Meet Urgent Needs	Aid to Disproportionately Impacted Communities	\$109,080,277
	COVID-19 Temporary Emergency Paid Sick Leave Program	\$75,000,000
	VaxMillions Giveaway	\$10,000,000
Phase II – Additional Recovery Projects to Be Launched by January 2022	Workforce Development I	\$50,000,000
	Health and Human Services Workforce Stabilization Payments	\$55,000,000
	Funding for Fiscally Distressed Hospitals	\$50,000,000
	In-Patient Psychiatric Direct Care Workforce Support Payments	\$31,000,000
Phase III – Proposed Multi-Year Recovery Projects	First-time Homebuyer Assistance Program	\$300,000,000
	CommonWealth Builder Program	\$200,000,000
	Rental Housing Production	\$200,000,000
	Senior and Veteran Housing	\$300,000,000
	Downtown Development	\$100,000,000
	Statewide Downtowns	\$250,000,000
	Tourism and Cultural Assets	\$100,000,000
	Workforce Development II	\$190,000,000
	Behavioral Health and Addiction Services	\$175,000,000
	Water and Sewer	\$400,000,000
	Environmental Infrastructure	\$300,000,000
	State Parks and Trails	\$100,000,000
	Broadband Internet Access	\$100,000,000
	Marine Port Infrastructure	\$100,000,000
Total	\$3,195,080,277	

Phase III projects, estimated at \$2.9B, are being developed, and implementation is pending approval by the State Legislature. The Legislature is also considering additional recovery priorities for the remaining \$2B CSFRF not included in the Governor's proposal. In total, the legislation will vote to appropriate \$4.9B of CSFRF. At the time of this memo, it is expected that the Legislature should be concluding their evaluation this fall.

The information provided is part of the [Massachusetts State Recovery Plan Performance Report](#).

ARPA Committee Recommendations

1. Select Board vote to earmark \$1,465,000 of ARPA funds for the design, permitting, and construction of four critical culverts.
2. Select Board vote to appropriate \$240,000 of the earmarked ARPA funds above to pay for design and permitting for three culverts.
3. ARPA Committee would continue to meet periodically and work with DPW to track progress of design and permitting and return to the Select Board by April 2022 with an update, including final construction costs. At that point, the Committee would recommend the Select Board

release all or a portion of remaining \$1,225,000 earmarked funds, depending on final construction costs or whether other potential funding sources can be utilized.

4. Select Board vote to earmark \$72,500 for COVID-related costs.

Total Boxford ARPA Funds	\$	2,490,492
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Funds Expended or Encumbered to date		
<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
ATM Tent 6/26/21	\$	40,010
COA Tent Rental July - Oct	\$	12,000
BOH Admin. increased hours FY22	\$	12,500
Center at 10 Elm St Generator	\$	205,000
Medical Response Pilot Program	\$	150,000
Total	\$	419,510

Recommended Appropriation by ARPA Committee Oct 2021		
<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
Culverts - Design	\$	240,000
Culverts - Construction	\$	1,225,000
Total	\$	1,465,000

Recommended earmarks for other potential expenditures		
<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
Compliance Support	\$	10,000.00
Tents	\$	55,000.00
PPE	\$	7,500.00
Total	\$	72,500.00

Unprogrammed Funds	\$	533,482.10
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Conclusion

Boxford's ARPA funds are an important and useful resource for the Town to continue to respond and address the impacts of COVID-19, as well as an opportunity to fund infrastructure needs. The Committee's recommendation acknowledges potential additional funding from the state and federal government, although it remains unclear how Boxford can take advantage of this funding. The Committee's recommendation earmarks a majority of ARPA funds towards addressing critical culvert infrastructure, but leaves flexibility if other outside funding sources become available. In addition, the recommendation leaves unprogrammed ARPA funds available for future consideration. The Town has recently begun the annual 5-year capital improvement planning process, and other needs may arise that could be funded by ARPA funds. In addition, the Town has three years to encumber its ARPA funds, and there may be other needs in the future that could be funded through ARPA. Going forward, with approval of the Select Board, the Committee will continue to meet on an as needed basis to track federal and state funding opportunities, as well as explore and recommend other ARPA expenditures.

	Rowley	Andover	Georgetown	Topsfield	Gloucester	Groveland	Essex	Saugus	Merrimac	North Reading	Hamilton	Haverhill	Newbury	Danvers	Brockton	Burlington	Mansfield	Wilmington	Salisbury	Boxford				
Insurance Requirements	\$1,000,000 (Combined Per Occurrence)		\$250,000/\$500,000		Combined \$1,000,000	\$100,000/\$300,000 (Property Damage)		\$100,000/\$300,000	Combined \$1,000,000	\$250,000/\$500,000 (Bodily Injury) \$100,000 (Property Damager/ Per Accident)	\$100,000/\$100,000 (Bodily Injury) \$50,000 (Property Damager/ Per Accident)	\$250,000 pp/\$500,000 (Property Damage per accident)	Combined \$1,000,000	Combined \$1,000,000	Combined \$1,000,000			\$250,000/\$500,000 \$150,000 (Property Damage)	Combined \$1,000,000	Combined \$1,000,000	Average of Surrounding Towns	PROPOSED RATES	Rate Delta	
3/4 Ton Pickup AWD with 8' Plow	\$80.00	\$84.00	\$75.00	\$84.00	\$70.00	\$68.00	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$77.00	\$80.00	\$85.00	\$70.00	\$75.00	\$75.00		\$80.00	\$100.00	\$80.00	\$70.00	\$73.00	\$79.06	\$80	\$7.00	3/4 Ton Pickup AWD with 8' Plow
1-Ton Truck with 9' Plow	\$80.00	\$95.00	\$90.00	\$84.00	\$77.50	\$77.00	\$95.00	\$110.00	\$85.00	\$100.00	\$95.00	\$80.00	\$80.00	\$95.00	\$105.00	\$90.00	\$115.00	\$88.00	\$77.00	\$78.00	\$90.45	\$90	\$12.00	1-Ton Truck with 9' Plow
6-Wheel Truck with 10' Plow	\$90.00	\$105.00	\$110.00	\$95.00	\$87.80	\$88.00	\$105.00	\$130.00	\$110.00	\$115.00		\$90.00	\$85.00	\$108.00	\$107.50	\$105.00	\$130.00	\$97.00	\$110.00	\$91.00	\$103.79	\$100	\$9.00	6-Wheel Truck with 10' Plow
6-Wheel Truck with Plow & Sander								\$120.00												\$102.00	\$120.00	\$110	\$8.00	6-Wheel Truck with Plow & Sander
6-Wheel Truck with Plow, Sander & Wing			\$130.00																	\$138.00	No comparison	\$138	\$0.00	6-Wheel Truck with Plow, Sander & Wing
10-Wheel Truck with 10' Plow		\$125.00	\$140.00		\$112.50	\$97.00	\$115.00	\$148.00		\$125.00	\$100.00	\$100.00		\$135.00	\$129.00	\$125.00	\$140.00	\$119.00		\$99.00	\$122.18	\$120	\$21.00	10-Wheel Truck with 10' Plow
Backhoe Loader with Plow	\$95.00		\$100.00	\$100.00	\$91.00		\$135.00			\$110.00				\$115.00	\$182.75	\$125.00	\$170.00		\$100.00	\$110.00	\$120.34	\$115	\$5.00	Backhoe Loader with Plow
Front End Loader without Plow	\$100.00		\$150.00	\$100.00				\$110.00			\$110.00	\$125.00				\$140.00		\$127.00		\$120.00	\$120.25	\$120	\$0.00	Front End Loader without Plow
Front End Loader with Plow			\$150.00	\$120.00		\$98.00		\$140.00		\$160.00					\$182.75		\$170.00	\$129.00	\$125.00	\$83.00	\$141.64	\$125	\$42.00	Front End Loader with Plow
Skid Steer	\$90.00	\$94.50		\$95.00	\$79.30			\$90.00		\$110.00	\$100.00			\$85.00					\$75.00	\$83.00	\$90.98	\$90	\$7.00	Skid Steer
Tractor with 10' Plow			\$150.00									\$125.00					\$180.00			\$95.00	\$151.67	\$125	\$30.00	Tractor with 10' Plow
Tractor with 10' Plow & Wing							\$120.00					\$135.00			\$150.50				\$125.00	\$125.00	\$132.63	\$125	\$0.00	Tractor with 10' Plow & Wing