

**American Rescue Plan Act  
Special Committee  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

**DATE & TIME:** June 1, 2022 – 5:00  
**LOCATION:** Powered by Zoom Meeting by Dialing: 1-646-558-8656,  
Meeting ID: 846 0554 2016  
**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Peter Criswell, Chairman  
**LEGISLATIVE STAFF:** Amber Feaster  
**PRESENT:** Legislators Thomas Corcoran, Jr, Aaron J. Levine, Craig V. Lopez, and Megan Sperry; and Legislative Chair Tracey A. Bartels (arrived at 5:20 PM)  
**ABSENT:** None  
**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes  
**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Legislators Phil Erner, Manna Jo Greene, Chris Hewitt, and Kathy Nolan; Deputy County Executives Chris Kelly and Johanna Contreras; Comptroller March Gallagher; Deputy Comptroller Alicia DeMarco; ARP Administration Nathan Litwin, and Molly Scott; Director of Planning Dennis Doyle; Director of Economic Development Tim Weidemann; Director of Mental Health Tara McDonald; Department of Mental Health Tomasine Oliphant; Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District Jake Wedemyer; Stockade Works Susie Sofranko

- **Chairman Criswell called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM**

---

**Motion No. 1: To approve the minutes and transcripts of the April 27, 2022 and May 11, 2022 Regular Meetings**

**Motion Made By:** Legislator Corcoran  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Lopez  
**Discussion:** None  
**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Criswell, Corcoran, Levine, Lopez, and Sperry  
**Voting Against:** None  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 5  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** Approved

---

See attached transcript.

---

**Resolution No. 289** -- Amending The 2022 - 2027 Capital Improvement Program –Establishing And Funding Capital Project No. 635 - ARPA Parks Program – Amending The 2022 Capital Fund Budget – Department Of Finance

**Resolution Summary:** This Resolution establishes Capital Project No. 635 in the amount of \$5,000,000.00 to create the ARPA Parks Program to partner with municipalities to match up to 50% of the total cost of each park project, with a maximum match of \$500,000.00 per project.

**Discussion:** See attached transcript.

**Disposition:** No Action Taken

---

**Resolution No. 290** – Amending The County Budget To Include Federal Aid Funding To Implement The Mental Health In Schools Program – Department Of Mental Health

**Resolution Summary:** This Resolution allocates \$750,000.00 of ARPA funding to support a Mental Health in Schools program and amends the operating budget accordingly.

**Discussion:** See attached transcript.

**Disposition:** No Action Taken

---

**New Business:**

Forthcoming ARPA Funding Requests:

**Food Securities Program** – Update by Director of Recovery & Resilience Litwin. See attached transcript.

**Main Streets Program** – Presentation by Director of Economic Development Weidemann. See attached transcript.

**Green Home Retrofit and Workforce Development** – Update by Director of Planning Doyle. See attached transcript.

**Potential Programs for Farmers** – Executive Director of Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District Wedemeyer. See attached transcript.

---

**Old Business:** None

---

Chairman Criswell asked the members if there was any other business, and hearing none;

**Adjournment**

**Motion Made By:** Legislator Sperry  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Levine  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 5  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**Time:** 6:53 PM

**Respectfully submitted:** Amber Feaster  
**Minutes Approved:** June 29, 2022

**American Rescue Plan Act  
Special Committee  
Regular Meeting Transcripts**

**DATE & TIME:** June 1, 2022 – 5:00  
**LOCATION:** Powered by Zoom Meeting by Dialing: 1-646-558-8656,  
Meeting ID: 846 0554 2016  
**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Peter Criswell, Chairman  
**LEGISLATIVE STAFF:** Amber Feaster  
**PRESENT:** Legislators Thomas Corcoran, Jr, Aaron J. Levine, Craig V. Lopez, and Megan Sperry; and Legislative Chair Tracey A. Bartels (arrived at 5:20 PM)  
**ABSENT:** None  
**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes  
**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Legislators Phil Erner, Manna Jo Greene, Chris Hewitt, and Kathy Nolan; Deputy County Executives Chris Kelly and Johanna Contreras; Comptroller March Gallagher; Deputy Comptroller Alicia DeMarco; ARP Administration Nathan Litwin, and Molly Scott; Director of Planning Dennis Doyle; Director of Economic Development Tim Weidemann; Director of Mental Health Tara McDonald; Department of Mental Health Tomasine Oliphant; Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District Jake Wedemyer; Stockade Works Susie Sofranko

- **Chairman Criswell called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM**

---

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you. All right. Welcome, everybody. This is the American Rescue Plan Act Special Committee meeting. It is June 1. It's 5:02pm. Welcome, everybody. If you could call the roll Clerk Feaster, that'd be great.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Criswell.

**Chairman Criswell:** Here.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Corcoran.

**Legislator Corcoran:** Here.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Levine.

**Legislator Levine:** Here.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Lopez.

**Legislator Lopez:** Here.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Sperry

**Legislator Sperry:** Here.

**Chairman Criswell:** Great. All here and accounted for. Thank you. We have a few Legislators who need to jump at some point tonight to go to another function. So, I'm going to keep us rolling along as quickly as possible. We want to keep space for full rich conversations, but we also want to keep the conversation moving. So, if I feel like we're dragging, I'm gonna, I'm gonna roll this along a little bit faster. Is that alright with everybody? Okay, great. So, I would like to have a motion to approve the minutes and transcripts of the April 27 Regular meeting, and the May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Regular meeting. If I could have that motion.

**Legislator Corcoran:** Motion.

**Chairman Criswell:** And a second.

**Legislator Lopez:** Second.

**Chairman Criswell:** All right. All in favor.

**Group:** Aye.

**Chairman Criswell:** Anyone opposed? Great. Minutes are approved. All right, I want to draw your attention to the, the ARPA Projects and Expenditure document that Amber sent out earlier. It's a, an update. I've been asking her to update this every time after session. If anything, ARPA related has moved forward, which we did have one project move forward so, you can see now the percentages of allocations. And I really love this document. It's really, really helpful to see, you know, the pie chart of what we're spending and, and what we have left. And it looks like at this point, we have about 9.5 million left. Again, that is probably going to change a little bit as some of these projects articulate themselves and there's, there's a little bit of savings on one project. I don't think we're gonna go over on anything, but there might be a few dollars that shake out from some other projects. So that may bump up a bit, but it's only 9.5 million at this point. So again, you know, we have to really think really clearly about where our spending is going to go. Legislators, committee members, did you all have a chance to take, take a look at this? Did you have any questions or any comments on this document? Okay, great seeing none, I would like to go right into the resolution. So, I am going to, is Legislator Stewart here? I don't see Legislator Stewart. So, he is going to, Legislator Stewart is going to present resolution, Resolution 289. So, I think for the moment, if you don't mind, we'll skip that. And we'll see. Amber, do you know, is Legislator Stewart expected to join us tonight?

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** I'm not sure but I can confirm while we're moving on.

**Chairman Criswell:** That'd be great. So, let's move on to Resolution 290, which is the Mental Health in Schools program and I believe that the Commissioner of Mental Health Tara McDonald is going to be presenting on that. Commissioner. Are you used to it now? You're used to it now, right?

**Commissioner McDonald:** I'm used to it now, yes.

**Chairman Criswell:** That's great. Thank you, if you could just give us a little bit of a background on this Resolution and then dive into any details that you think are pertinent. And then I want to open up the floor to committee members to ask you questions. Then I'll open up the floor in general to anybody, other Legislators and then anybody else who's on the line who wants to ask a question if that's alright with you.

**Commissioner McDonald:** That is great with me. I think we actually have a PowerPoint presentation that will help me to run through the information in enough detail but not blather on too long.

**Chairman Criswell:** Perfect. Amber, if you could allow Tara to share screen that'd be great.

**Commissioner McDonald:** So Johanna, I think is gonna...

**Chairman Criswell:** Okay, great.

**Deputy Executive Contreras:** Yeah, can you give me access? I can just click for Tara.

**Chairman Criswell:** Perfect.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** You should have access.

**Deputy Executive Contreras:** Okay. So, I do share? Okay. Can you see it?

**Chairman Criswell:** Not yet. It's coming on though.

**Commissioner McDonald:** Oh, right. Awesome.

**Chairman Criswell:** We got it.

**Commissioner McDonald:** Okay. And before I begin, first of all, I want to thank you all for allowing for us to be able to speak to this resolution. We really do believe that this is a program that has the potential to help many, many Ulster County students, I just wanted to also let you know that I have joining me today, Tomasine Oliphant who was our children's Co-Op Coordinator, as far as standing for single point of access, and she can speak to some of the processes that we have, and in linking kids to services, and how we would be connecting this program to those processes. And also, what we've been seeing in terms of the needs for our, our young people in Ulster County. So, you can, thank you so much.

So, here on this slide, it just sort of gives you a really brief introduction to what it is that we're talking about. And it's the mental health supports for youth that are needed even more now than ever. And I know every generation sort of sort of says, Oh, I've never seen it this bad; I've never seen our kids in such distress. But certainly, after two and a half years of the pandemic, I think that we actually are at a place where the level of distress that every young person is experiencing because of, not just the pandemic itself, or loss of family members due to COVID, but also the ongoing effects and impacts that the pandemic has had on their lives for a number of reasons for students in particular, not to mention the fact that they've been doing school for, virtually for the last two years, and what it has meant to them in terms of their education. A few of the headlines here that speak to the crisis with regards to depression and self-harm and suicide. And if you look on the bottom left there, it also talks to the young people that may be struggling with suicidal thoughts and seeking supports, but the system is overwrought and it's hard for them to access services. And up on the right. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm almost done, Johanna. Sorry. I think that it's particular to point out that though, we have a system of behavioral health supports and services and have for many years, the regular physical health services and primary care providers are also reporting an increase in the needs of their patients that they're seeing that have behavioral health challenges. And that makes sense, right? So, you may not necessarily make an appointment to see your therapist. But if your child is having an issue, the first thing that comes to your mind is to bring them to their doctor, that pediatrician that has been, you know, helping them with runny noses and scraped knees for all of their life. Well these pediatricians are reporting that, that our kids are really struggling right now with behavioral health issues. And so, the majority of, you can see the majority of these headlines are really around national data. But unfortunately for us here in Ulster County, this hasn't escaped us. And so that's why I asked if Tomasine can speak to, just specifically what we're seeing in Ulster County with regards to applications and outreaches, for connections from providers, from families, from parents, from doctors, that are looking to be able to make not, not just clinical connections, but some sort of lifeline support for these kids that are struggling and Tomasine, if you can speak to this.

**Tomasine Oliphant:** Sure. Thank you so much, Tara. So, Tara is exactly right. We've seen an increase in the number of school applications. We're getting them from multiple school districts. Many schools are saying, you know, students are just struggling with getting to school. You know, as I have here, increasing number of youth struggling with anxiety to go to school. The truancy, you know, and the school doesn't have the capacity, they can't go out and get those students to come out of bed to get to school and work with a family at that point. So that's why they make those referrals to SPOA to see what services can we put in place to help work with the family and work with the youth to help them get to school? What is what is going on with them? How can we support their mental health needs, and because of the pandemic, we're also seeing an increase in the youth struggling with the school transitions. You know, all the youth had to transition from being in person to going remote and then coming back in person as well. This is also, you know, a heightened level of just transitioning, you know, from, you know, elementary to middle school or middle school to junior high. Like so, transitions has been, the transition for them even just going to the next school has also been a huge, huge issue that has been identified. So, we're just seeing an influx of, you know, different needs of students, you know, facing depression / anxiety, as Tara mentioned, you know, suicidal ideation, you know, and really doing what we can to connect them to services and in conversations with the social work teams at the schools, you know, they're doing the best they can. I was, last week I was at Ellenville High

School, doing the health fair, providing resources to the students. Social workers were coming up to me thanking me so much, just from being there to provide information / resources. One student came up to me and said, I was with my social worker for five periods. So, five periods, one kid, you know what, that social worker, they're tied up, they're not able to serve other students. So, we're just thinking about, you know, it just really gave me that perspective that these, you know, the school social work team, they're doing what we can. And even the students said, you know, I had the support here, you know, but when I go home, I don't have as much support, and how do we continue to bridge those services. So, it's just even just hearing from the youth themselves of identifying like, you know, what they're feeling the needs are that they that they needed, that continued additional support, because of the struggles that they're experiencing. That is what we're hearing.

**Commissioner McDonald:** I will say one last thing in terms of the SPOA. One of the reasons that we worked with the school to see if we can make that connection in expanding the level of supports is that SPOA traditionally is for youth that have some level of a previous diagnosis. In fact, in order for us to make linkages for them, they have to have a diagnosis from a licensed professional, licensed professional of the healing arts in order to make those connections. When we're talking about mental health in schools, kids don't necessarily need to know already that they're diagnosed with depression, or they're diagnosed with anxiety, they don't even have to have a diagnosis. They just need to be presenting with those challenges that say we need a little bit more support. So, I did want to make that distinction as to why we wouldn't just put more resources into our SPOA. Because these are kids that have been assessed, we know what you know, their struggles are, and we have the ability to reach them there. But for the school, that, we don't want them to have any hoops. Just get the support, no hoops.

**Tomasine Oliphant:** Right.

**Commissioner McDonald:** Thanks, Tomasine. So, just about the planning and design of the process, and I am sorry, I know that the slides are pretty dense, I'm going to try and hit the highlights on them. In spring of 2021, our County Exec began to engage the Department of Mental Health in conversations to develop planning to support our local school districts. Between the department and the County Exec office, we initiated conversations with Dr. Khoury at BOCES. BOCES has that oversight responsibility for all of the school districts. So, we thought that that would be a good place to target some of these conversations, and in consultation regarding the resources and what we could bring to bear, and Dr. Khoury said, Absolutely, this is what we're responsible for but you would do better speaking directly to the school districts, which is what we did. We had meetings with the pupil personnel staff from all of the districts to focus on exploring how the county can support their plans. Those, those conversations continue to this day, every, once a month, our Deputy Commissioner is speaking with the pupil personnel staff. At the larger meeting, and we decided that beyond the pupil personnel staff, we would engage the school districts in a larger form to sort of talk about what we can do and meeting with them district by district because every district comes with their own personality. Every part of our county may have different challenges and barriers. So, we thought it was really important for us to get those individual conversations going and so we had more in depth meetings that yielded the need to provide support, but not necessarily clinically in nature, which also speaks to the smaller piece. You know, because you, the kids that come through SPOA already have diagnosis,



and we tend, tend to focus on the support that we give them that has some sort of a clinical tinge to it. But the, the schools were saying we don't, I don't know if our kids need more therapy, they need more identification and hands on support of our social determinants of health. And DMH in coordination with the CE's office in the Human Rights Commission developed the behavioral health services have also. I'm sorry, you guys are in my head. Yes, behavioral health services have also, County Schools RFP based on the feedback received from those school districts. Next slide. Thank you. So, goals of the RFP, to buttress existing services available both in school and in the community, provide intensive time limited clinical intervention and care coordination to Ulster County students. I want to come back to that clinical piece, and I'll speak to it a little bit more when we talk to, about the staffing. So, the staff may have the ability to do the clinical intervention, they have the, the experience, but that's not necessarily where the focus is going to be and we'll talk about that a little later. The goal would be to be a part of the school community at each of our nine districts and act as a link between school, community, and family. Services will be targeted toward middle school aged youth, identified by the school as being able to benefit from targeted support, brief intervention, and linkage to community resources, and will aim to promote overall wellness at school and home and build protective factors to offset the effects of trauma and directly target social determinants of health.

One of the, the headlines that I didn't touch on, on that first slide was around gun violence. And, and though a youth may not be experiencing gun violence in their home, or they may not have access to guns, or what have you, living in a community where gun violence is prevalent in itself is a trauma. And so, you know, this program would be helping to be able to identify those traumas, and really develop a plan for someone to be able, for one of our youth to be able to manage with it at home.

Next slide. Staff support. So, operate teams of one licensed master clinical social worker, or licensed mental health counselor, and one care manager. And so just speaking to this a little bit, even though the school said that the kids don't necessarily need more therapy, as it were to say, we thought that it would be important for the team member to have the ability to do assessment and make assessment in working with kids on those social determinants of health or even around wellness interventions and the yoga and everything. They still need to have the ability to identify when they see someone that is struggling with a mental illness. And so, we thought that the staff should have that experience, but not necessarily have that be the limitation of the interventions that they can offer. So, they'll, there'll be a condition, but then there will also be a bachelor's level care manager to work in a diet and supporting youth families in schools. The teams will provide face to face sessions with the youth, family support sessions, and the sessions is really just those meetings. Family support with the youth and their parent / caregiver, at least monthly, ongoing communication and meetings with school staff as needed, linkage to community supports and resources for both the youth in the family, and coordination with other involved providers, including but not limited to mental health, juvenile justice, social services, and primary care. And I know that we had talked about, Tomasine had talked about the SPOA pieces, but we are looking and we were successful in getting a system of care grants and system of care is really a framework in which a county can choose to support youth and families knowing that youth and families cross over many systems. They cross between mental health, DSS, probation, the school definitely. And so, the system of care brings all of that together and if you see that last bullet about coordination of all of those involved providers, our system of care work is really going to

include this mental health and programs, Mental Health in Schools Program, and I don't know if Tomasine, if you can speak to that a little bit in more detail.

**Tomasine Oliphant:** Yes, and definitely, you know, it's one of our guiding principles for the system of care, of having a comprehensive array of services and support. And this is, as Tara said, it's not going to be the same as a SPOA with the clinical, needing that clinical piece, the diagnosis beforehand, this is going to add to what we are missing from our system of care. We're missing the way that youth can access, students can access the supports without having the already confirmed diagnosis. And, you know, like our mission for the system of care is welcoming all families with complex issues into caring relationships with a variety of providers across all systems of care. And this is really, you know, this additional holistic approach of making sure that we are bridging the family, to the community, to the schools and like really, really looping together all our services, holistically from county to community, to the families.

**Commissioner McDonald:** Thank you.

**Chairman Criswell:** Tomasine, can I ask a quick question? I'm sorry.

**Tomasine Oliphant:** Sure.

**Chairman Criswell:** What's the process of SPOA? Like, I'm trying to understand what the barriers, is this lowering barriers?

**Tomasine Oliphant:** Yes, it is reducing a barrier. Yes.

**Chairman Criswell:** Alright. That's, that's what I'm wondering. Could you talk to us a little bit about how this would do that?

**Tomasine Oliphant:** Yes. Yeah, so sometimes I'll get a SPOA application right from, from a school social worker. A lot of school social workers are sending me school, you know, applications, but sometimes the youth they don't have diagnoses. So, if I, if they don't have a confirmed diagnosis, I'm not able to serve them through SPOA because they would, they would have to have two identified mental health diagnoses in order to access services. So, you know, it's hard because these students are high in need and we try to figure out how we can get them assessed. And, you know, so we're trying to run around and trying to figure out how we can support the youth. So, this would reduce an immense barrier, to just be able to get the youth connected to services without having to worry about an already identified mental health diagnosis, but then get them connected to treatment, you know. So, this would really serve all those students that I'm not able to serve through SPOA. Yes.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you. Thank you.

**Commissioner McDonald:** Thank you. Our target population, as I said, are middle school students and youth will be identified by schools to be candidates for the program. And these are some of the concerns that a youth could be identified with: school refusal; as, as Tomasina had

mentioned, we're seeing a rise in that in the SPOA applications; family concerns; peer conflicts; and in adverse childhood experiences.

Next slide. Activities of Support. Again, definitely things that are a little bit more concrete. Teams will work with youth on goals related to the trauma, mental health, substance use prevention or intervention, vocational, maybe getting a job, housing instability, food insecurity, definitely broadening the supports outside of the clinical realm.

Next slide. And definitely we love this one, because as clinicians, we're not always able to engage in the yoga and the physical exercise and the creative expression and those also help with the anger management. Getting kids to be able to have a toolbox of self-care practices for when they're sitting down for finals. You know, these supports would be able to help them to develop that.

Next slide. So, we were, put out the proposals, put out the RFP. We received three proposals. We convened the RFP committee that reviewed all of the proposals. There has not yet been awarded, an awardee that has been notified however, we're enthusiastic about the opportunity to partner with one of the applicants on the program.

Next slide. So just in terms of how this program would, would meet, ARPA committee, committee criteria, trying to see if I can run through some of this quickly, but I am going to read this first one because I think that it is pivotal. The US Treasuries Final Rule recognizes the ways in which the public health emergency has impacted mental health and substance use challenges for Americans. One of the primary categories for eligible use for this funds are in public health, which includes behavioral health care. So, we think that we're targeting how the ARPA committee can be identifying ways to spend these dollars. And also, just in terms of equity distribution, we're putting out a wide net in terms of all of the districts in our county, and then focusing on the middle school age youth. So, in doing that, and having the, the net be as wide, we will definitely capture underserved and vulnerable populations of kids.

The Community Impact. Developed with a wide outreach to all school districts in the county was really important not to hand them a program, but to really get a sense of what could really be helpful. It serves the entire county and strengthens the vital public services. And then, because we are in the midst of developing our system of care, it ties right into that work. Financial Management, we are simultaneously helping districts to seek other sources of funding that can do similar work. And we're also looking to see if we can make use of the opioid settlement funding. I will, just the last thing that I'll leave you, leave you with this, is the time sensitivity around this because we'd love to be able to plan it. So, then it could be implemented for a fall launch. And I again, I thank you guys so much for your time.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you so much for that detailed presentation. I appreciate that. If we could unshare the screen so we can see each other that'd be great. And I want to open this up. I think one more, if we could unshare this other screen. We're still seeing somebody's screen here. Perfect. The one question that I'm going to lead with because it's the one that I keep hearing over and over again, is, okay, So if we give this ARPA funding, then where's the funding come from afterwards for this program?

**Deputy Executive Contreras:** Yeah, I could speak to that. I think, I guess one, one thing to lead off with is we're always looking for grant opportunities. And right now at the state level, there's there are so many grant opportunities that could be used for this. So, we would look into that. Other thing I would say is that this is really such an important, such an important issue that we would be open to looking at this as a pilot and if it goes well, and if we all agree that it's a priority, we could consider it as part of sort of something that the county supports moving forward. So.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you. Thank you. Other, yes. Chairwoman Bartels.

**Legislative Chair Bartels:** Thank you. And I'm sorry, I missed the very beginning of the presentation. I'm trying to shuttle between two meetings that are scheduled at the exact same time. But thank you very much. I saw at least two thirds of it. I do have a couple of questions. One is to kind of follow on to Legislator Criswell's question. And, and that's to try to understand, you know, I know that New York State Mental Health announced \$50 million in funding for schools directly for mental health initiatives. My, I don't know a lot about it, but my understanding is \$500,000 of school per year over the course of years. And, and I'm wondering, and I know, our school districts also got significant ARPA funding themselves. And so, you know, I think, well, as we began this conversation with the Legislation that former Legislator Parete brought forward, you know, we all, we all agreed that this is a priority and of critical importance and then, on the Legislative end, we weren't as engaged in the process that got us to this this point in terms of this proposal that's come forward. I know that an RFP went out, but that was without Legislative input. And so, I'm just I'm sort of wondering where are the schools at and what have they spent their ARPA funds on? And are they investing in their own schools? And how is the interface with this proposal going to work at the school level? How engaged have we gotten with the stakeholders? Have we spoken to all the superintendents at all, at all the schools? Have we had those kinds of sit downs with, with all the stakeholders already?

**Commissioner McDonald:** Yes, that's where we started with, with conversations with the school districts. So, want to make sure, in terms of trying to investigate what are the best ways that the Department of Mental Health would be able to complement what they're doing within their own school districts, a lot of those conversations spoke to increase in behavioral health staff. But their plans were really to do what they focus on, which is to create an environment for students to learn. So, the resources would remain on the school district campus, if it was more social workers, it would be more social workers to see, you know, the kids while they're there. This program is really to help to bridge between the school district campus and the community. Kids spend the majority of their time in school. We get a lot of the information about what their challenges are, what their successes are, what they do well and what may be a barrier, but then all of that great information leaves at school, and then the community picks up in a different way. This program bridges the boat. So, the staff would have the ability to be in school conversations with the behavioral health staff. What we talked about in our earlier meetings with the districts were, Do you guys have regular staff meetings? Or do you have regular training days? Or do you have regular times in which this staff would be able to participate so that they can learn each school committee community and know how to better reinforce what you guys are using and support in the community? And that's really what it what it's about. It's great that the

schools will put their resources to making sure that kids can learn, but the learning also in in trying to increase that ability to learn. There needs to be some real recognition about challenges that are happening in the community, and that's what this program will have the ability to do. Even concretely we were talking about, gee, where will the office be? We don't need a really big footprint anywhere in terms of office space. These guys shouldn't be necessarily in a school specifically all day. They should be in the community, in homes, at Dunkin Donuts if that's where the kid is going after school, you know, wherever kids are is where they should be. But because we have the agreement with the schools, we're not locked out, which is where other programs will, will struggle in that the schools have a hard time allowing outsiders in for privacy reasons, for lots of reasons. So, we developed this program with the school so that we would be able to jump over those barriers right at the beginning.

**Legislative Chair Bartels:** May I ask a follow on?

**Chairman Criswell:** Absolutely.

**Legislative Chair Bartels:** So, have we have we analyzed both whether or not the schools are applying for that 500,000, a portion of that \$50 million funding and which schools are and also which, if any schools are spending their ARPA funds on improving their mental health services within the school? Because I imagine there's a wide range of how school districts are utilizing their ARP funds. Do we have answers to those questions?

**Commissioner McDonald:** I will say that I have anecdotal, I can't say that necessarily we have an analyze, report that says Onteora spent 50,000 on what x, x, y, and z. I don't have that.

**Deputy Executive Contreras:** But, Tara, to the other question about the mental health in schools grant, we've been working with those school districts to apply to the grant, right? Could you speak to which ones are eligible? And

**Commissioner McDonald:** I can, there are two districts in particular that have been identified for meeting criteria for dollars that would mimic a program like this within the school district. That's Kingston and that's Ellenville. We have had two conference calls with both of the, the behavioral health superintendent staff for the school districts and consultation of applying for these grants. So, we are sort of putting our resources to bear in any way in helping to get this done. And we continue to scan for grants that may be available, there seems to be a lot that's coming out. And because we will have the ability, because of the staffing that our County Exec and the budget and all of our Legislators had agreed to as well, have the staffing resources to provide the time and consultation for our districts. And we've started that already.

**Chairman Criswell:** So just to be clear, you're seeing this initial \$750,000 as this pilot, this seed funding, whatever we want to call it, and then you're going to be trying to seek it from additional sources outside. I guess my nervousness is, with any program like this, you know, you put the money in, we don't want to see a die on the vine. You know, it's, it's a substantial investment. It's a great program, I, in my opinion. I don't want to see us put this money into it and then all of a sudden, we don't have real funds lined up to make it a long-term, term project. So, can you speak to my fears a little bit?

**Commissioner McDonald:** When it comes to dollars, I usually defer to Johanna somewhat, I'm not sure outside of knowing that we are we are always scanning for additional grant funding. I do know that the County Exec has spoken to some commitment to continuing.

**Deputy Executive Contreras:** Sure. I mean, I just, the only thing I would say is just to sort of reiterate what I said earlier, which is that we think it is a big priority. And so, if it is if it goes well, and everybody's in agreement, we would be supportive of looking at it as an ongoing investment.

**Chairman Criswell:** Okay, thank you. Legislator Sperry, and then Legislator Nolan I see your hand.

**Legislator Sperry:** I don't, not sure if you mentioned it, but I was just wondering, you were talking about the teams that are going to be facilitating this work and I was just wondering how many teams you imagine are going to be facilitating the work just so I have a better idea of how many people are going to need to be employed under this program.

**Commissioner McDonald:** Five teams.

**Legislator Sperry:** Five teams that are going to be serving all of the school districts in Ulster County?

**Commissioner McDonald:** That's correct.

**Legislator Sperry:** Okay. Thank you.

**Commissioner McDonald:** Sure.

**Chairman Criswell:** Legislator Nolan.

**Legislator Nolan:** Thank you. Um, I think the questions about the sustainability of the program are valid. What I'm excited about in hearing this is that, that getting this program started, it is already going over a hurdle. When I was in the legislature previously, Jonathan Heppner and I met, Legislator Heppner and I met with the school board at Onteora and they wanted something like this, but there were the, kind of administrative and logistic hurdles to it were real, real barriers. I think more than a, funding in some ways. And so, Oh, this seems to have jumped started, and maybe leaping over that barrier for this broad population of students. You know, the students who have a diagnosis are getting services, but the, the teachers and the school board are very concerned about the broader population, and how to get them this kind of informal access to settings in which they might find out about resources or receive a diagnosis even potentially. So, in thinking of this, as a pilot, I think that it, it gets past one of the biggest parts of the, of the difficulty in connecting county mental health resources with school populations, and then the money I think can be, then you have the pilot to go after pots of money. Saying we're doing this, we need to fund it. And if you don't have anything going, then it's harder to go after funding. You know, it's sometimes hard to get money for a program that doesn't yet exist.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you for that insight. Appreciate it. Legislator, Chairwoman Bartels.

**Legislative Chair Bartels:** Thank you. So, the other question that I have is a little bit more of a, kind of a functional question. Like in the backups, in the information, you include the RFP, which, but you don't include the responses to the RFP. So, I don't know if you've chosen someone, but I guess I'm just a little confused, because you're, you're asking for ARP, 750,000 in ARP funds but at the same time, you're asking, you sent a proposal out, you know, for proposals for behavioral health programming. So, I mean, have the proposals come back? Do you have, do you have? Have you? Have you selected someone? Where are you at with the RFP process? Like this, this is something you're basically, you're resourcing out for, it's not something we're doing within the county. So, you're asking for funding for a program that you've gone out to RFP for, but we don't we don't have the details on what the responses are, that you're actually being requested to fund.

**Commissioner McDonald:** Right, I can answer to the process and that we did receive the three proposals. We have not notified the awardee. We did have an interview with one of the proposers or the, the provider that submitted the proposal. We have narrowed down that there is a provider that we would like to be able to partner with, but we have not gone into any final stages of making that identification.

**Chairman Criswell:** So, is that RFP something that you would share with this committee?

**Deputy Executive Contreras:** I think in terms of the purchasing process, the review is restricted to like the RFP review committee.

**Chairman Criswell:** Okay.

**Deputy Executive Contreras:** Yeah.

**Chairman Criswell:** I understand Chairwoman Bartels' question though. You know, we're, we're being asked to fund this, but we don't actually know who we're funding. I mean, it's being funneled through your office, but, you know, who is it that is actually going to get the contract? I think that's a, Is that what you're asking Chairwoman Bartels?

**Legislative Chair Bartels:** It is. It is what I'm asking. But I'm also, I'm asking that, and, you know, and more because there's a scope, the RFP as presented has a scope of work but, you know, I assume that the responses, the responses are going to vary and how they handle that scope of work and what they're exactly proposing to do and how and how much it costs. It's like this, this right, what's now before us is a resolution asking for, which I, which in general, I don't love when we, you know, when we transmit but the RFP went out before transmitting what you want to spend. So, I'm guessing you have you have a sense of what the numbers have come back as. But you know, you're, you're asking for funding, but the, actually the detail, the details, are the, you know, are going to be, vary from one organization to the next. I'm not I'm not asking to be a part of the RFP selection commission, but again, you know, we're outsourcing this, there's going to be details in those responses that, that that, you know, would be important to really

understanding the full implications of the of the program. So, you know, I, I guess I'm saying that I feel like at this moment, it's a little premature. I feel it's a little premature to move forward to funding this before I had a fuller sense of what, both what exactly it is we're going to do with the proposed vendor and also, Oh, an understanding of the interface with, with the schools. Like I appreciate that you've reached out to the schools, but I don't. You know, I, have they all, again, I would want to know what they're all currently doing and how it's going to interface and, and also, if they're all receptive to allowing this program to be brought into their districts.

**Deputy Executive Contreras:** Could I respond?

**Chairman Criswell:** Yes, absolutely.

**Deputy Executive Contreras:** Yeah. I think that we wanted to kind of do the order of operations in the right order. So, we were hoping to get the funding approval first. And then we would come back next month on the actual contract award. Because we didn't want to make it, we were advised by purchasing obviously, you don't want to make a contract award without the funding approval. So, that's why that order is in the way that it is. And in terms of, I guess, I've tried to be as vague as possible. But in terms of the, the, the provider that we want to contract with, what they propose was very much in line, their response is very much in line with everything that we just described and the budget submission was also very much in line with what we had put out there, which was around a million dollars, which is why we're asking for a 750 in ARPA and the remainder in opioid settlement funds.

**Commissioner McDonald:** If I can also just answer to the one piece, which I think is important, is that in our conversations with the school districts, they were eager to have this program in their districts and all of, all nine of them did agree to, to allow for the program to be implemented in their district.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you. Legislator Nolan, I saw you had your hand up, you to still want to...

**Legislator Nolan:** Thank you. Those two responses address points that I was going to make.

**Chairman Criswell:** Great. Thank you very much. Other committee members have questions?  
Legislator Levine.

**Legislator Levine:** Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman Criswell:** By the way, we all want to say happy birthday to you.

**Legislator Levine:** Thank you very much. I'm very appreciative of that. Thank you. But as I'm driving, I didn't have a chance to really get into the details on the PowerPoint presentation. So, forgive me if this was addressed before, but in response to, in regards to the question from Legislator Sperry from before, I know that the answer was given in terms of that there were five proposed teams to be covering all the school districts in the county, but I wasn't sure if the information was provided as to how many employees per team were, were proposed and if those



five teams are going to each have like a geographic region that they're going to cover, or are they all going to be, you know, going out throughout the county as needed? Or are they going to be assigned to different regions of the county? So, thank you for the answers to that question, to those questions.

**Commissioner McDonald:** Yes, it's two, it's a two-person team. We're expecting to have 10. Is that right? 10 employees in total that will be hired. Kingston will have a team of their own and then the remaining teams will be split up between the other districts.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you. Other questions from, yes. Legislator, Chairwoman Bartels.

**Legislative Chair Bartels:** Are the employees going to be County employees?

**Commissioner McDonald:** No, they'll they will be employees of the awardee for the RFP.

**Legislative Chair Bartels:** Okay.

**Chairman Criswell:** If I see no other questions, I'd like to move this along. What I'd like to do with the process of this is take no action on this tonight. We're going to send out our scoring sheets to all committee members. If you have questions between now and the deadline for scoring for this, which would be no later than Monday, June 6, at noon, if you could please send those questions to Amber. Is that correct Amber, and then you'll funnel them to whoever needs to get them? So, if you have questions on that, please send them to Amber. We will send out a scoring sheet on this resolution, get the scores back by Monday the sixth, and then we will be voting on this at the June 15 ARPA meeting. Thank you very much for the presentation on this. I think it's really important work and we appreciate your time on this. We're going to move on now. So, we still don't have Legislator Stewart. So, I'm going to assume that we're not. Legislator Corcoran.

**Legislator Corcoran:** I just have to go because I got that other meeting. I'm going to take, take off. So, thank you.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you for your time. All right. So, since Legislator Stewart is not here, I think we're going to just continue moving on. So, the next thing that I have on our list is the food security program. And I believe that Deputy Executive Kelly is going to speak to that. And you're gonna give us an update on the program itself, and also the conversation that's going on with the community kitchen.

**Deputy Executive Kelly:** That's actually going to be Nate Litwin.

**Chairman Criswell:** Okay, great. Thank you.

**Director of Resilience Litwin:** Yep, glad to present on that. So, the last time we discussed this, there was a presentation from Amanda LaValle in the planning office, Deputy Director for Planning, who presented in depth on food security and access and then there is another initiative discussed regarding community kitchens. And the goal is to try to see if we can combine that into

one resolution and bring it forward to this committee. I can say that I have reached out to Community Action again. First, we, we did some community outreach. We met with NoVo because we wanted to see what, we didn't want there to be multiple things being funded for kitchens in the Kingston area. That wouldn't be efficient. And we did find that that NoVo is providing funding to Annie Murphy Neighborhood Center. It will not have a walk-in cooler, but that is something that will go forward and will have a kitchen. But no, it will serve. they also were, stated that their service areas mid, what is the Broadway area, Midtown for Kingston. So, when it came to Community Action, that kitchen is not in their service area. And they kind of provided you know, just, just background information on, on other things they had looked at, but the one that was kind of more of a yes regarding going forward with the kitchen is, is that Neighborhood Center. The ARP division, we went and we visited with Community Action, we saw the kitchen, we got a sense, we talked to the Cook, who is there, we got a sense of the needs of the kitchen. It is in rough shape. It is something that's been part of the community for a long time. It is providing a lot of the different things that they say. So, I, this is kind of a personal thought, but it looked to me like there was a lot of services going out of that kitchen, including providing food and providing a resource center for one thing I learned was that, and I didn't know it, is that food trucks, for example, due to the due to health laws need to be associated with a, an actual physical kitchen location. So, there's a lot of small businesses, that that simply needs to be associated that way. I did make clear that the primary purposes of the funding would be for emergency use of the kitchen, and also providing food to community members. And so generally it was a good visit. And so, I'm just here to report that I feel comfortable about you know, and I know that's not exactly my role, I definitely feel like my role is more administrative, but at least I've had some information gathering and can report it to the committee and that I think for purposes of resolution, I think the money would be wisely used and it should go into the food security and access resolution. The piece that I think still needs work to put it all together, because there's a number of ideas and good ideas and uses, but I think we need more work to, to understand Ellenville and how a kitchen might be created there. And so that's just the piece that's left and I hope to have that resolved in the resolution in front of this committee for next month.

**Chairman Criswell:** Nate, can I ask, what was the thinking behind combining these two? Because we had them separated out. In my thinking they were separated out? What was what was the thinking in bringing this together?

**Director of Resilience Litwin:** I think that was something that was created through the discussion process. They could be separate and they, and certainly the food security and access could, could move right away and in my opinion from what's been presented and what's been put together.

**Chairman Criswell:** That's, that's why I was asking because to me it felt like that was solidly thought through, it seemed like it was it was almost ready to go, and that the community kitchen had, had more work to do. And so, I was just curious why all of a sudden it seemed to be pulled together. Deputy Executive Kelly, do you have an answer to that?

**Deputy Executive Kelly:** Yeah, I think it came out of the last meeting that we all had where the discussion kind of dovetail together between the community kitchens and food security and

access. So, they're, as easily pulled apart as they are put back together. So, we wouldn't have an issue either way.

**Chairman Criswell:** Any other committee members have any thoughts on that pulling, pulling these two apart? Or do we feel like they should be put together? Chairwoman Bartels.

**Legislative Chair Bartels:** Well, not necessarily on pulling them apart. But I do. Just and again, I apologize, because I'm trying to toggle between two meetings. But the, in terms of the community kitchens, and I appreciate the work, Nate that you did, just in terms of assessing what else is out there, because we definitely don't want to duplicate. But, but I also wanted to remind, if it hadn't been said yet, that I think there's value to having a discussion also about a community kitchen in the southern end of the county, whether that's on, on either side of the, the, on either side of the mountain, basically. Like it could be the Ellenville region, it could be the Shawangunk, Marlboro, Highland region. You know? And I'm actually interest, I would like to see Community Action's community kitchen as well. I mean, I really see the possibility of these community kitchens, as having, as serving so many roles, as, as Nate alluded to, from, from what he learned, but also, you know, they're, they're, they're equal parts business incubators, as, you know, food security and education hubs. So, the idea that we put all of our energy in Kingston, I think, is something we need to think about. And I think a Southern, I think southern presence for these would be, would be very, very welcome and would be utilized. I even actually, although I haven't reached out, thought that it might make sense, somehow in association with the fairgrounds. I don't know, you know, something that potentially a conversation with Cornell Cooperative and the Ag Society. So as far as separating the ideas out, I would defer to the committee on that. I'm, I'm fine with that. But I do, I personally am very interested in making sure that that, that we're certain that we're covered in terms of the community kitchens, and I do want to think of them as plural.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you for that. I'm just, I'm really thinking that this community kitchens conversation is going to take a bit of time. And I feel like it would be actually smart for us to separate this back out again, and bring the Cornell Cooperative to the front again, as, as it was proposed. How do other committee members feel about that? Is there any opposition to that? I'm seeing thumbs up. Deputy Executive Kelly, does that work for you?

**Deputy Executive Kelly:** Yes, chair, that works fine. And just to follow on to Chair Bartels' statement there is we have a, we're 100% in support of doing something in the Southern end of the county as well. So, I don't think that, I don't think it's a successful program if we don't.

**Chairman Criswell:** Okay, great. So, we're going to separate this out. We'll, we'll move forward more systematically with the Cornell Cooperative at our next meeting. Hopefully we'll see that full resolution at that point. I'd love to actually get that in the scoring process sooner rather than later. And then we can take a little bit more time with the community kitchens conversation. Does that, sounds good with anybody? Any last thoughts on this? Great. All right, I'm gonna move us on to the Main Streets Program. Oh, Legislator Hewitt, I'm sorry, I see your hand.

**Legislator Hewitt:** Thank you, Chair Criswell. I'm just pulling over. Give me one second so I can focus on my question. It's about the food security component. I listened to Amanda

LaValle's presentation and she started by saying that the pandemic revealed weaknesses in our supply chains. And if we run out of food again, I feel that the food security component addresses how we can get food to people, especially by cooking and distributing it, but I don't feel like it addresses how to, how to improve our supply chains. For example, I just read an article about how all four primary grain crops in the world are failing right now because of climate crises and either drought or flooding. So how do we get our grains locally and our meats locally? Or cheeses locally? And how are we incentivizing that?

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you for that. And I know that there's some conversations about a local meat distribution process. So, I think that that, it seems like we have a lot of focus on, on food security. So maybe we've got three things going now at this point: we've got the kitchens, we've got the conversation that we're having with Cornell Cooperative, and then we've got a distribution conversation going on at the same time. So, I'd say Legislator Hewitt, if you have some specific ideas about that, please bring them forward. And Legislator Sperry, if you want to bring your ideas forward with, I believe it's Legislator Litts you're having conversations with, I encourage you to bring that forward as well. So.

**Legislator Hewitt:** Great. Thank you.

**Chairman Criswell:** Sure. Thank you very much. All right. Moving on to Mr. Wiedemann, if you would have, give a little overview of the project that you're bringing before us.

**Director of Economic Development Weidemann:** Sure. Thank you Chair Chriswell. Can I share my screen? I'm going to try. Oh, yeah, it looks like it's letting me, so I'm going to just do a quick, not very fancy PowerPoint presentation that I think highlights what I believe was shared with the members of the committee. Can you see my screen?

**Chairman Criswell:** Yes.

**Director of Economic Development Weidemann:** Good. So, the concept here, which was arrived at, I think through a confluence of conversations with businesses that we have, but also I know, Legislator Criswell, and I have the opportunity to visit one business in Saugerties that I think is doing some really exciting things that started me at least thinking along the lines of a program like this, and I would be eager to get feedback. This is kind of a preliminary proposal, really, just to see how you all feel about it, and to get some feedback and questions so that we can refine it. The idea is really to create a program that mirrors in some ways, a successful state program called the New York Main Streets Program. It really builds on work that's been happening in the county for quite some time and I can point to Dennis Doyle, who I know, I actually remember working with him years ago on a New York Main Streets toolbox, or a Ulster County Main Streets Toolbox to try to make similar investments in our compact cores throughout the county. And those might be villages, hamlets, commercial strips, kind of all of the above. These places where there's a density of commercial uses, often mixed with some residential uses as well. So quick highlights of what the program proposes is to invest in these commercial cores to increase the economic vitality of those communities, and to enhance community quality of life. We all know that the trend has been towards residences in these compact walkable areas. You can look to the walkability scores that have been driving, you

know, significant portion of the attractiveness of certain communities in our, in our county and any conversation with a realtor will, will show you that that's a big attractive selling point in a lot of cases. And we have such great fabric in Ulster County in the small commercial cores that we do have. The, the funding would be proposed to be in two categories that mirrors in some ways New York Main Streets' program. One is in investments in the core itself. So, a kind of geographic area that receives the investment. And the other is in an anchor institution that really anchors that commercial core. The maximum award would be something in the range of 250,000, obviously, depending on the allocation of funds and the number of awards that we would wish to make. And it seems reasonable to require some match. I haven't given a lot of thought to what that match would be. I'd be interested in feedback or thoughts from the Committee on that. This is one where I think, pretty expectedly, we would see geographic diversity. There are commercial cores throughout the county. So I think we could really make sure that we get the word out and solicit those applications from the courts that are scattered throughout the community everywhere from, you know, the northern part to all the way down into the southern part, all throughout the county, hamlets, commercial strips, again, even places where, I think I go into this a little bit, the commercial court might be as small as one square mile or even, even smaller. The request here just marks out \$2 million of allocation of ARPA funds that would allow approximately eight awards at that 250,000 level, which by the way, it feels like the amount that usually is necessary in order for substantial investment in either the core itself or in the anchor institution that will help strengthen that core. And again, this leverages some past work done by the Planning Department and also the existing New York Main Streets program.

So, the document that was circulated gives preliminary definition, definition of these two different categories of funding. Commercial core would be a compact, contiguous geographic area of no more than one square mile but comprising no less than five independently owned and operated commercial facilities, and where commercial uses are a significant portion of the current historical land use anchor institutions. You know, it's a business or organization that is either a large physical presence or a large destination, or could include some housing, if there's an ability to add full-time year-round residents in a commercial core to add the mix of housing that can often strengthen the commercial presence in that core.

The objectives. This is again, you know, for feedback, but the objectives here that, you know, feel important to outline, to make sure that we're headed towards something that we all can agree is, is a good thing for our communities. Objective one: support physical improvements to both the anchor institutions and the compact courts. So, the physical institutions could see things like interior renovations and alterations, building systems upgrades, especially and we could get points to where such improvements provide energy effective, cost-effective options to improve building performance and efficiency. It could include exterior improvements, such as facade work, landscaping, an outdoor space, or renewable energy installation on the building. And, you know, it could include new infill construction, often there's, you know, a small vacant lot that could be developed and would add to the fabric of the commercial core. But in those cases, the thought would be to only award new infill construction where it meets certain performance standards. The second objective would be to strengthen placemaking efforts within these compact commercial cores. This is about really defining the place in order to make it more recognizable, more attractive, higher quality of life, we could improve walkability and bike-

ability in the area. Could improve sidewalks or bike trails or bike paths, bike lanes. Could improve mobility more generally. We could talk about whether there's other forms of mobility that should be prioritized, could beautify public spaces through things such as landscaping, or public art that could provide visitor amenities or open Wi-Fi networks or visitor information and signage, preserve or enhance the long-term success of multiple businesses within the course. So, that's the idea here. Examples that are common in the New York Main Street programs include things like a district-wide facade improvement program, or a local area marketing program. And then the third objective would be to prepare communities and organizations to compete successfully for additional funding for these kinds of efforts.

Again, the Main Streets Program, for those that aren't aware, is one that is only really open to municipalities to apply for on behalf of either anchor institutions or their business districts. And I think we've seen some communities in Ulster County successfully use this funding. Kingston has had it in the past. I'm sure there are others as well. But we would like to position our downtown areas or commercial cores to be more competitive for this funding. And there's a number of ways that we could do that. One that we could look at right away is where there are applications that are not urgent, time sensitive applications to this program, we could look to use this program as match to enhance the competitiveness of an application to the New York Main Streets program. And so, we can look into that more and discuss that as a possibility. There are other programs too: Downtown Revitalization Initiative, which we know New Paltz and Ellenville have competed for in the past. There's a new New York Forward Program that is similar, but it's going to focus on rural communities that the governor announced as part of the budget. And we're keeping track of that as it rolls out to see if there's opportunities for that as well. And then there's plenty of other opportunities that we work with regularly with businesses and communities to help strengthen these cores. And so, we'd be looking to leverage this funding to support additional funding from those sources.

The, quickly, the implementation plan. We try to leverage some of the existing kind of organizational infrastructure that we have from other competitive programs funded with ARPA funding: the Nonprofit Recovery and Resiliency, that pairs too, and water and sewer programs that have been recently advanced. The thought here, as with the CARES II program would be to sub award to see that, for implementation subject to a contract that would be approved by the Legislature, and to have a joint Legislative and Executive evaluation committee that would score the applications and that scoring evaluation would be based on a scoring rubric, which I've highlighted some of the things I would think would be at it, but we could design that in consultation with the Legislature.

And then proposed timeline. You know, I think this is rough at this point. But just kind of getting a sense that I think we could roll this out. Fairly quickly get to the point of announcing and promote, with promoting our request for applications, spend some time collecting and evaluating those applications, and then move into monitoring and reporting on the progress of the contracts. They're awarded for execution of projects. That's the quick summary. I'll turn it back over to you Chair Criswell.

**Chairman Criswell:** That's great. Thank you so much. If you could stop sharing your screen than we'll see each other. So, committee want to open this up to questions. Thank you very much for that presentation. It was thorough and I appreciate that.

**Director of Economic Development Weidemann:** Sure.

**Chairman Criswell:** Committee members. Anybody else on the, Chairwoman Bartels.

**Legislative Chair Bartels:** Um, just just briefly, you know, I, um, first of all, I want to, I want to thank Tim for the presentation, and as always, his thoughtfulness and his advocacy, which is, you know, I think, why I think, why I know you're the perfect person for this job, that you're always, always advocating for the businesses in our communities. And, and that's why we need you there.

Um, I, you know, I'm just gonna say it's, I'm feeling very, I had this conversation earlier with Deputy Executive Kelly and then via back and forth, with, with Amber just to confirm, you know, where we're at financially. And, you know, I'm feeling like an, a sense of urgency like we're so like, we've spent so much, have committed so much of this already. And what I realized today in talking to Deputy Executive Kelly is that we've actually expended less than I feel like we've expended. Like, I'm, I'm feeling like we're really at the, like, the last few decisions, and we may be depending on how much we want to spend. But, um, so at this stage of the game, it's, you know, it's going to be, it's going to be, the decisions get all the more difficult, because there's less, less funding. And I'm not saying that to be specific about this proposal, but I would very much want to know, when you speak about the Main Streets Program, functionally, how it's different? Like maybe there's a way we could spend less of this money by, by putting together our own Main Streets Program, but maybe focus on the last thing that you said, which is, in terms of helping our communities with writing grants, and I'm starting to think that maybe that's something as a county that we could think about, in a broader sense, not just as it relates to ARPA, because I think a lot of communities, there's very few that probably have their own grant writers, and there's a ton of missed opportunities. And when, when Gardiner succeeds, when Saugerties succeeds, when New Paltz, and Ellenville, then we all succeed, then Ulster County succeeds. Right? So, maybe we should think about how we might facilitate, I mean, maybe we should think about a grant writer position in the county that would be tasked with assisting communities on the subjects. And again, I'm just, I'm saying this out of that sense of realizing we're reaching the, the end of these funds, maybe not as quickly as I thought this morning, but we're reaching the end of these funds. But there's a, there's, there's a lot that's left on the table out there, all the time, for lack of certain resources and skills. So, thank you for bringing that to my attention again, Tim, because I think it's something we should be talking about not, not just in this committee, but as budget time approaches.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you. Deputy Executive Kelly.

**Deputy Executive Kelly:** Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to briefly follow on to a point Chair Bartels just made on grant writing. I did recently just see, Capital Region BOCES actually has a position where they, they have a grant writer who does grants for the school, so they basically treat the individual school districts that are a participating as their client. So, I do think it's, it's in

every conversation that I have, whether it's internally with the team or externally with the municipalities. So hopefully, I think the timing is right to have that conversation as we start to develop the 2023 budget. Thank you.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you. Other questions? Legislator Nolan, I see your hand.

**Legislator Nolan:** Yes, thank you. Chair Criswell. This will be a little bit of a tangent into something that's not on the agenda, but it relates to this issue about grant writing. Would that be appropriate now or should I hold that for...?

**Chairman Criswell:** Can you hold that for a moment I want to finish up with, with this, this project that we're talking about? Do we have? Yes, Mr. Doyle.

**Director of Planning Doyle:** Thank you. I just wanted to add on to what Mr. Kelly has had, Deputy Executive Kelly has talked about. You shouldn't be worried. The committee should be aware that the County Planning Board continues to make communities aware of grant assist, of grant opportunities, including the most recent CFA grant, the Community Development Block Grant funds, and others. We do regular sweeps of all grants that are available and pull them out to committees. But there is a there is a lack of capacity, both at our level as well as at the community level for applications. And so, in some instances, what we're doing is, we're encouraging nonprofits to work with communities, because not all grants are eligible for, on a municipal basis. Some of them are available on a nonprofit basis. And so, working together as a as a nonprofit, or public / private partnership also makes a lot of sense with respect to this. I would also say with respect to Tim's proposal for a Main Street Program, Main Street Programs are standard fare nationally in terms of making sure that your main streets are vibrant and attractive and continue to essentially accommodate change. And there's a great program that, that exists in Sullivan County called Sullivan Renaissance, and it's funded through a nonprofit. And they've been very, very successful. And there are similar programs that have been initiated in Greene County, particularly the town of Catskill, and there's others out there. We've had successful grant Main Street Programs in Ulster County, that funded areas in Rosendale and also funded Main Street Program in, in Ellenville. A lot of, some of the improvements and facade improvements that you see in Ellenville, were actually through a Main Street Program that came through the department. And we've done other work with respect to Main Streets. Particularly Main Street funding became available after Hurricane Irene, and we accessed that money and were able to get a substantial amount of money out of, after, after Irene for Main Street Program. So, it's, it's something that not only should the county consider looking at and how to do, it's also something that I think, that it would involve the county partnering with its other institutions. Particularly UCEDA and its IDA in terms of looking to how Main Street Programs can develop, as well as its, as well as its nonprofit institution.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you very much. I like this program because I think it has a potential for wide reach. I also liked the fact that it's got a match component. So, municipalities or districts will be ponying up money themselves. I think it's going to encourage economic development, which I think is part of the charge for some of this ARPA money. So, I see really good things in this. And I like Main Street Programs, too. I did a little bit of work with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and they had Main Street Programs that are very successful in identifying



anchor institutions or anchor districts, and helping revive them a bit, give them a little bit of a boost. So, so, what I'm going to suggest is that if we have specific questions or comments, we reach out to Mr. Weidemann and, and connect with him about that. And I'd like to see this then move to sort of the next phase. So, Tim, maybe you and I can connect directly about this. So, thank you for that presentation. I appreciate it. And I'm going to move us on to our last presentation, which is the Green Home Retrofit and Workforce Development and that is going to be Dennis Doyle, who's going to do a presentation on that.

**Director of Planning Doyle:** Well, thank you for the committee. And my apologies to the committee. I do not have a PowerPoint presentation. Or perhaps maybe it's, it's advantageous that I don't. I'm not sure anymore. I know that having sent through a number of them that after a while, it's kind of nice to have a conversation rather than rather than a presentation. So, I apologize. I promise you that the next time I will have a presentation and we'll go from there.

**Chairman Criswell:** No worries, and actually I just like to recognize Legislator Greene and her efforts to move this forward. So, thank you, Legislator Greene. I just wanted to recognize that publicly. Please continue on, Mr. Doyle.

**Director of Planning Doyle:** So, what, what this is about is literally, it's an extension of the County's Green New Deal Process and Program. And what we're trying to do is, is when you look at the cost of, of in particularly what's happening right now, the cost of, of services, energy services, at a low- and moderate-income level, they make up a substantial proportion of low and moderate income, individuals budget. So, the county went through a process, which the Legislature approved and have a, an existing community development block grant fund, which is geared to low, toward improvements to low- and moderate- income households, homeowners. And those improvements essentially are to make them a, to make them building, building ready so that they meet building code and they do major, major works and that amount of funding was \$800,000. It's one of the largest awards that the county has in the Community Development Block Grant sector. And as part of that, we, we had a conversation with respect to OCR (Office of Community Renewables) and others about trying to figure out how we can do a deeper dive into energy, energy conservation, on the houses that we're working on with regard to efforts that we're doing in terms of code compliance. And we reached out to Citizens for Local Power, we reached out to our own economic, BOCES folks, as well as the current contractor for our housing rehab program, which is RUPCO, and then, and then also talking to our Office of Employment and Training, in terms of what that what that would look like. And what we found is, is that the Citizens for Local Power have a existing program that they use that essentially is under capacity, they don't have the capacity and necessary capacity to bring up the speed. And they've requested that we help them do some of the administrative share some of that administrative burden. To bring that up to speed, they currently have funding from a nonprofit, to have 16, up to 16 interns paid to work with existing contractors and the thought we had was is that if we could help them in their capacity to manage that program, as well as then do work on existing housing, to do deep energy dives, that we would solve two problems. One is, is we would do a workforce training program with them; two is we would involve contractors that are currently engaged in workforce training; and three is we would end up doing housing work for low- and moderate- income homeowners to relieve them of some of the burdens of the costs of their, their, their current energy costs.

And that program is, effectively looks like about somewhere in the neighborhood of about three, 350 to \$400,000 going, going into actual program delivery. They would actually do work on the ground. And then some of the rest of that program, we'd go to some of the administrative expenses associated with that, as well as hiring a coach helping the, the Citizens for Local Power hire a full time coordinator to allow that, to allow them to increase not only their work with respect to this program, but their other work with respect to, for meeting the County's green energy goals.

Looking at this, what we would anticipate doing is, is working with our existing contractor RUPCO with respect to the existing work that we're doing on the houses that are going through the Community Rehab Program right now and extending that Community Rehab Program into deep energy dives in those houses. And we would do that working with contractors that have been pre-qualified by Citizens for Local Power, in terms of their use of interns and what we would end up doing is, is we do a call for bids on those houses using those pre-qualified contractors and using those pre-qualified contractors, be able to essentially offer them multiple houses at a time in terms of the work that they've done. And we've had some experience in this. Back in the, in, I would say, maybe six or seven years ago, we wrote a grant through NYSERDA and through Office of Community Renewal, to essentially install community solar projects, individual solar projects on low- and moderate-income housing. And we did that working with a call for, a call for proposals for those installations on those houses and then having them be able to be offered to about, like we did about 23 individual houses for low- and moderate- income families. So, it's similar to that.

Looking at..., any questions? I'm going to pause.

**Chairman Criswell:** I had one quick question.

**Director of Planning Doyle:** Sure.

**Chairman Criswell:** And then I see your hand, Legislator Geene. So, I'm going to ask the question I asked about the mental health in schools project. So, a lot of conversation that we've had about this ARP of money is that it's seed money, and that it's supposed to be a one-off fee that helps grow something that then can sustain itself. And so, can you speak to that?

**Director of Planning Doyle:** I can. And I think I think that's a legitimate concern for a number of these projects in terms of, how do we make sure that they're sustainable long-term? And what I would tell you is, is that we have been successful with housing rehab projects on a regular basis with respect to looking at Community Development Block Grant funds. So, that's the first piece is, one is our success, which suggests that moving forward, adding this component to our normal application process for housing rehab would be successful. That's the first thing. The second thing that I would say to you is that there's a commitment for New York State to do about 20,000 housing retrofits on a regular basis and that's in the state budget. Having a program as a pilot set up, ready to go with the necessary administrative capacity available to it, is one way that went, when you, that investment allows you to essentially go to the funding sources and say, raise your hand and say, Hey, we're ready to go and we think that we can, we can deliver 20 units, 30 units,

whatever number of units we are. And the focus that we already have is on low- and moderate-income housing. And that's the focus that the state is telling us is where they're going to put their money moving forward. So that's why I think it's sustainable. Is it a guarantee, I can't guarantee it.

**Chairman Criswell:** Right. But it's really the same argument that they're making for the mental health program that if the pilot is up and running, that there's some success shown that that puts you to the front of the line almost when you're looking for additional support. So, I get what you're saying there. Legislator Greene.

**Director of Planning Doyle:** And I, and I would say that, I would say that similar to the mental health, health program that you're talking about, the impact on the school aged kids with respect to the pandemic is at, is abnormal, in terms of, in terms of the need for mental health programs. So even if it's not sustainable, doing it now makes a whole lot of sense. The same thing here, the impact on energy costs that we're seeing right now, we're, heating oil, it's going to be \$6 a gallon come this winter. And we're, what we're seeing in terms of electricity costs, even if it's not sustainable, working through that process, and getting it up and running and having that conversation out in the community with respect to energy efficiency, and how to do it, and getting the contractors so that they have the necessary workforce to do it. Because that's what's, that's what's also at stake here is providing the contractors, the workforce. It's worth doing now. And I'm fairly certain that we'll be successful in future Community Development Block Grants. If we're not successful, and other grants that are going to come out from the state with respect to this, the commitment for climate change efforts from a low- and moderate-income perspective is huge in the state of New York.

**Chairman Criswell:** Right. Thank you. Legislator Greene.

**Legislator Greene:** Yeah. I want to thank Director Doyle for an excellent presentation and concept. I want to start with just mentioning that CIA, CPA. No, that's, that's the climate act, CLP. The organization with Empower Kingston has really created a life changing program by combining with the stages calling young people from disadvantaged communities, I prefer the term priority communities, giving them hands on and academic, you know, information to start a career that they might not otherwise considered. The other thing is, in addition to state funding, sooner or later Build Back Better is going to get passed and that's going to present substantial funding for, in New York. Those was it 20,000 or 200,000, buildings that need to be retrofitted to meet the state's climate action goals, which includes 70%, renewable, but also 85% emission reductions. And I just want to give one personal anecdote that some of my colleagues have already heard, but just because it's so relevant, and that is, this house that I'm in right now, I was able to get a grant from NYSERDA to do a deep energy retrofit. And in November, my boiler went out and I scrambled to decide am I going to do ground source heat pump or air source heat pump, and in the meantime, it was getting cold, so I borrowed a couple of small space heaters from my neighbor. And I got through the entire winter with two small space heaters. My bills prior to the deep energy retrofit were three times higher than my bills after the deep energy retrofit. So, I just want to share some personal experience because it makes it real for me and it's why I'm so passionate about this multi-benefit. It has, I think the term is co-benefits in terms of training for a real climate need that will be met, needs to be met within the next decade. It, it

provides training and employment. It enhances our green careers pathway. BOCES and others can also be involved. And it creates a successful pilot project that will put us at the top of the list for federal and state money that are coming down the pike. So, and it's also a very, I didn't know the amount until Dennis just mentioned it. But I think it's a really reasonable amount. It's not, because there's other funding already in place, but in order to create this pilot and, and actually do, do some energy retrofits, and it may also include some beneficial electrification. And I'll stop. But thank you so much for making, allowing this to be on today's agenda.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you. And I really appreciate the workforce development component that got highlighted in this. It wasn't really in the forefront before, but now it is for me. And so again, that's one of the priorities that we've been looking at. And so, I appreciate that. Any committee members have questions for, for Director Doyle, on this project? Anybody else from the, who's on the call? Okay, well, we really appreciate that. And we will have further discussion about it. We'd like to actually see that, see the documents when they are available. And if you could pass those along, that'd be great. And I want to make a correction for Director Weidemann's project. If anybody has questions about that, please funnel those to Amber. I want to make sure that the committee funnels all the questions to Amber so that she stays in the loop on everything and can sort of manage the flow back and forth. So, thank you for that. All right, I'm gonna move us along then. I think we have one piece of old business. Deputy Executive Kelly, I think you're going to update us on the broadband funding conversation that you had with Senator Hinchey.

**Deputy Executive Kelly:** Thank you, Chair. So not much of, in, hold on. Sorry. I'm a bit out of sorts today. Not much of a substantial update. The discussion I had with Senator Hinchey and her Chief of Staff Leah Goldman, centered around the rule set that's going to flow the money down. I don't know if Comptroller Gallagher's found out anything in the last two weeks. That was the last time I broached the topic. But we're basically waiting for ESD to come back down and tell us how it's gonna go. I know there's going to be pressure from people to get that done. But I haven't heard anything else as of this moment. But I just returned. So, I'll continue. I see March has her hand up too.

**Chairman Criswell:** Comptroller Gallagher, please.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** Yeah, I don't have any new news about state funding. I can just say that there are going to be gaps because the state funding is going to be cable fiber only. And we are going to places that probably will not be served no matter what. So, and it may be inexpensive solutions to pilot tests that and, and I think, you know, Deputy Executive Kelly, Planning Commissioner Doyle, myself and Alan Macaluso from the IS Department are all very interested in this. And we may be back to you with an inexpensive, very small, probably literally dust and dust in the dustpan size compared to the other projects possible pilot to float by you, but it's going to take some time.

**Chairman Criswell:** That's great. Thank you. I think it's a really interesting idea. So yeah, I'm looking forward to seeing that.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** I'd like to add if I could, Chair Criswell, that there are really good robust maps now that, a map of Ulster County that you can zoom in, you can actually look at individual addresses, because it has a layer that is individual structures. And we are collecting feedback. I'm getting it daily. We will be updating that map. Even Spectrum Charter has given us some feedback on the map and you know how hard they are to work with. So, I would just say, everybody on this call who cares about broadband please, encourage your constituents to access the map. I will send a link to Amber to share out again with the committee. Thank you.

**Chairman Criswell:** You're welcome. Well, the other thing I like about this, I think we could act quickly on this. And I think this could change people's lives very, very quickly. So, I think this is something that we should really highly consider. Yes.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** Chair Criswell, can I add one thing, which is to say in some cases, it's not just about infrastructure, it's about ability to pay. And, and I think that that is a separate conversation, but one that also really could tap into ARPA funds. And it is something that should be considered because we have a lot of families who really struggled during the pandemic, with their kids on cellular phones rather than directly connected. And again, it's just going to take a little bit of time. So, we'll be back. Thanks.

**Chairman Criswell:** Great. Thank you. Director Doyle.

**Director of Planning Doyle:** Thank you, I just wanted to say that, add a little, just a couple of things. One is, is that the, for better or for worse, broadband is one of those things where everybody's a player. And, and one of the things that we're looking at and working with is the county is engaged in essentially changing its communication systems for its emergency first responders. And that is a significant capital project. And we're looking at tower needs that extend essentially from Rosendale to Saugerties. We're currently under construction with in Saugerties, as well as up in the Shandaken Valley and into and into the Rochester area, and as we explore those towers and look at those, one of the things we're doing from a design perspective, is making sure that we provide on those towers, component, the ability of the tower load, to handle components for a, cellular facilities, which are particularly important west of Phoenicia in the, in the valley up there where there's no, there's no cell provider up there that provides decent service, and also for what they call point to multipoint broadband, which can extend up to four miles away from a tower and provide essentially download speeds that are similar to fiber broadband. And that I think, is one of the things that Comptroller Gallagher was talking about, was there are other solutions besides, besides on the ground or, or in the air fiber, to essentially provide broadband service. And we're making sure that when we build towers, that we have the ability to essentially accommodate those facilities in the future.

**Chairman Criswell:** Great, thank you for letting us know that. All right. Any other old business? Legislator Nolan.

**Legislator Nolan:** This is not exactly old business, might be actually new business. But it relates to the conversation earlier on, regards to the grant writers, and the crisis that farmers in Ulster County are facing. So, we have with us tonight, Jake Wedemeyer, who's the Executive Director for Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District. The chair of that committee, of that

board, convened an emergency meeting earlier this week, yesterday, to help us all understand the nature of the crisis, and to see what resources might be available in the county to help address it. And this is, the conversation was started by the rapidly increasing cost of diesel fuel and fertilizer. But there's also staffing issues and other problems that farmers are facing, brought out by and exacerbated by the pandemic. So, we're, we're looking to put together a proposal and one of the points that we identified, that we thought might be very helpful would be a grant writer for types of grants that are not the usual grants that the district regularly and routinely gets which the Executive Director handles and can continue doing. So, I was very happy to hear that conversation or relationship to the Main Street Program and other things. But it may have particular applicability in regard to farmers, who are often sole proprietors or small businesses and do not have the resources. That's not the reason they go into farming, is not to sit down and write a grant proposal or administer one. So, we're kind of coming to you to let you know that we have identified this area that we haven't heard come before this committee yet. We haven't yet talked to the Executive's office to find out which, you know, person or persons we should be working with on it, and to solicit people from the Legislature who might want to work on it. But we want to flag it and see your initial reaction. And maybe Jake could say a word or two to elaborate what I've introduced here.

**Chairman Criswell:** Absolutely. Feel free, Jake.

**Jake Wedemeyer:** Thank you. So, what the board of directors and myself have discussed is how to provide relief to farmers equitably. And one way of doing that is every farm files a Schedule F, right? Profits and Losses from Farming. And if we can look at their input costs compared to their income, and what their net income is, it'd be a way to gauge, you know, some sort of agricultural relief. So, we plan on doing another farm survey. We did one back in March. Kathy helped me with that, just to see the comfort level of sharing that information. And again, it would be confidential. We don't need anybody's social security numbers. But you know, and we would help administer, you know, expediting this source of relief, but the way diesel fuel is and fertilizer we're in, we're in the business of reducing fertilizer usage with the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District, but it is required to make a habit for farmers to have a different, decent yield. But some way to help them along, you know, so we are open for different ideas, and we're still trying to, you know, figure out an equitable, equitable, equitable way to, you know, disseminate the funding, you know, fairly amongst producers.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you very much for that. Does anybody have questions? Legislator Sperry.

**Legislator Sperry:** Has there been any conversation with Cornell yet?

**Jake Wedemeyer:** There has. Yes.

**Legislator Sperry:** Okay. So, what, I mean, what are the services that they provide in this realm already?

**Jake Wedemeyer:** Cornell does more education and outreach. The Dist-, and we partner with them. The District is an action agency. We actually do implementation. So, with New York State

Ag and Markets Law, we actually do get funding for agricultural best management practices. We're dealing with climate resilient farming as well. So, we're getting money into Ulster County for cover crops. Okay? We applied for a grant for a no-till drill to plant cover crops for pasture and hay renovations. So, you know, Cornell is aware of that.

**Legislator Nolan:** It, maybe if I can add on to that. One of the, these programs are all really good. And they have been helping, and they're helping to make this transition. A lot of them are projects and implementation projects where there's a certain amount of administration and, and so there's an additional burden that comes to farmers, who because of increased fuel costs, and fertilizer costs, are actually, we're getting reports of people taking acreage out of production. And one of the members of board reported 100 acres coming out of production. This is a downward spiral. Because when you take acreage out of production, you're at great risk of reducing your income, and then the cycle perpetuates. So, we're looking to try to do very short-term targeted, very efficient, low administrative cost interventions. And we spent two hours last night brainstorming on what those could be and thought that, you know, as Jake has presented that maybe by identifying those farmers that have seen in the 2020 to 2022 timeframe, the greatest loss of income to somehow target relief to them, that could be basically a cash infusion, perhaps with some incentives towards green transition, if we can do that in a way that doesn't itself create another hurdle. Looks like we stimulated some conversation.

**Chairman Criswell:** I see. So, Deputy Executive Kelly and then Director Weidemann, Legislator Greene. Order that I saw.

**Deputy Executive Kelly:** Thank you, Chair. I just, you've certainly piqued my interest this evening. Thank you for bringing this issue up. And I'm really looking forward to engaging in this conversation. I know Tim is as well, so let's, let's put together a group of people and talk about how we can best assist. Thank you.

**Director of Economic Development Weidemann:** I cede my time, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman Criswell:** Legislator Greene, if you would.

**Legislator Greene:** Is it my turn?

**Chairman Criswell:** Yes.

**Legislator Greene:** Okay. I, I just want to put in a word for agrivoltaics as a way of promoting, protecting prime farmland, but also, you, keeping farms that are on the margin, able to continue farming because of an additional source of revenue. And I know that there's at least one Ulster County based developer, the New York State Solar Farm out of Gardiner is looking to work with farmers to promote regenerative agriculture, you know, really good farming practices that enhance the soil's ability to be a carbon sink, but also to install solar. We have been working with now close to 30 municipalities, encouraging them to take leadership in solar installation, while installation of renewables and energy storage. And I'm hoping Rosendale will model that. But I do want to put in a plug for agrivoltaics for the committee that is working on this. Thank you.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you very much. Yes, Legislator Nolan.

**Legislator Nolan:** Just a quick reply on that. I agree. But I think that's a longer-term solution than what we need right now. I mean, we really have a crisis situation. So, I've actually been looking at electrification of farming. And I think there's some very exciting potential for that with electric tractors, for example. And other equipment that might help reduce energy burden and that, because it would be green transition, might be something that we could provide, perhaps, for a match of installing a charging system at a, at a farm site. So, the Soil and Water District will continue to have this conversation. We're going to try to compress it, and maybe bring at least a conceptual project, perhaps at the mid-month meeting, if that, there's space on the agenda for it.

**Chairman Criswell:** I'm glad you said that, because I wanted to kind of steer it back to ARPA funding. I know this conversation could go in a lot of directions. But I want us to stay focused on seed funding, that's not going to be something that has to be county sustainable, necessarily. That's going to be an infusion that then can be you know, whether it's, I was thinking about, you know, asking Director Wedemeyer if farms had been applying to the small business programs, or is there some way that we can do a similar program to the small business programs that's actually focused specifically on farms? You know, something along those lines. But I wanted to make sure that we're keeping under the ARPA world of this idea of, of a, an infusion to, to assist and then not sustain in the long run. So, I see Legislator Erner. And then I'll come to you, Jake.

**Legislator Erner:** Thank you, Chair Criswell. Certainly, we must have seen this coming, that the, ultimately the, I mean, the food obviously is one of the bare essentials. And so, as the price of everything is going up, we clearly need to prepare for a different way of, of obtaining our food. And I think that speaks a lot to the, what can be done here in here in District Six. We need to find ways to support more people growing their own gardens in their lawns. Sheep, not lawn mowers. As we decarbonize and I would even go a step farther than Legislator Nolan and we can certainly electrify vehicles, but we also need to figure out ways to simply use less energy intensive processes in our growing of food and that, shudder to the thought, but actually means a return to more human labor doing it, which, if done in a different way from the historical way, which is highly oppressive, but can in fact really be liberatory of individuals time, and other resources that they might otherwise have to spend on, spend on food, when, in fact, more of us could participate I, in growing our own food. I could refer the those of us here, to several books by the first farmer that I let, lived with. Her name was Sharon Astyk and she wrote a, Depletion & Abundance, A Nation of Farmers, and a few other books, which put out a call for and a plan for how more could grow their own and how that could be supported through government and community partnerships, whose books are about 10, 15 years old at this point, but anyway, just I appreciate this conversation, and I want to be, continued to be a part of it as a grower myself. Thank you.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you for those thoughts. Appreciate it. Jake. I'm sorry. Tell me your last name. Again. I'm calling you Jake and I should be more formal, but.

**Jake Wedemeyer:** Wedemeyer.



**Chairman Criswell:** Mr. Wedemeyer.

**Jake Wedemeyer:** If you said Weidemann, I would pay attention. So, we, Kathy did bring up using tractors that rely on electric. And I'm a farmer too, and I have gas and diesel. And what surprised me is that there's not a lot, a lot available right now. Caterpillar has protected that technology. John Deere just came out with the tractor. So, it is available. But if we say, if we bought a John Deere electric over diesel tractor, half the county would, would want it. We need a fleet of them, you know, but, and the good news is that technology will be adopted over time with the significant fuel savings. That's good news. So, the technology is out there. Now, the thing is that we focus heavily on soil health. And the good news is we found somebody to backfill my old position, who's a certified crop advisor like me. So, we're going to be running all over the county, assisting with farmers to reduce fertilizer inputs. And in the past, we have, what, gone from traditional fertilizers to poultry manure for the grain and soybean crops. That has been a significant savings. And we're going to expand your cover crop program.

**Chairman Criswell:** Great. Thank you so much. And I do want to keep, this is a really interesting conversation. This is the ARPA committee. So, I do want to keep us focused on what our tasks are here. So, I know that this conversation could go on for another hour, but I'm gonna move us along and keep us on our task here, which is spending the ARPA funds.

**Legislator Greene:** Chair. Chair.

**Chairman Criswell:** Yes, I recognize you.

**Legislator Greene:** It's just one sentence. And that is I want to caution us. If we move to beneficial electrification, before we put the renewable energy infrastructure in place with storage and efficiency, we're going to end up burning more fossil fuel anyway. So, I, I don't object to beneficial electrification, whether it be in for buildings, or transportation or farm equipment, but I just really want to stress the need to get the renewable energy infrastructure in place, otherwise, it can sort of backfire. And I won't say anything more. Thank you.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you. Thank you. Okay, I'm gonna give somebody the last word. Who wants the last word here? Nate, I saw your hand up. Are you gonna take the last word?

**Director of Resilience Litwin:** Sure, I, it is on point. Through the nonprofit grants and despite all of our best efforts to only get 501(C)3s and 501(C)19s, veteran services organizations, to apply, we still had a nonprofit agricultural business and agricultural nonprofit apply. So, I just wanted to share that information because it was, I'd have to look at the application again, to be totally sure exactly all the circumstances, but it was compelling. They put a lot of effort in. They were I believe the only applicant that went through the additional process of fiscal sponsorship, but there are 501(C)8, so they're just not eligible. So, I was pretty taken, though, just with the amount of effort they put into it. And, you know, it was a little heartbreaking of course that they can't, they're just not part of the program. But it's, it's out there. We have an application like that. And it's something to add to the pool of information.

**Chairman Criswell:** I am inspired that we take this conversation and think more about, can we do something specific for our farmers? So, let's continue that conversation and see if we can maybe craft something that's similar to our nonprofits support and the small business support and do that in the farm realm. And to say that we have \$9.5 million, which is to slowly getting spent down. So if, if somebody wants to jump on that proposal, I would suggest doing that sooner rather than later because the money's going to be spent and then it will be gone. So. Alright, so I guess I have the last word. Unless I hear anything else. I'm going to call for a, a motion to adjourn. Yes, somebody?

**Legislator Sperry:** Motion to adjourn.

**Chairman Criswell:** And a second, please.

**Legislator Levine:** I will second it.

**Chairman Criswell:** Thank you. All in favor.

**Group:** Aye.

**Chairman Criswell:** All right. Thank you all for a stimulating conversation. Have a great evening.

---

**Time:** 6:53 PM

**Respectfully submitted:** Amber Feaster

**Minutes Approved:** June 29, 2022