

American Rescue Plan Act Funding

APPROVED

Town of Fairfield 2021

Presented by First Selectwoman Brenda L. Kupchick

Areas of Focus

MENTAL HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC SAFETY

ENVIRONMENT

QUALITY OF LIFE: RECREATION, ARTS & CULTURE

TOWN MODERNIZATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

COVID-19 Recovery Fund - \$250,000

During COVID-19, the Town set up the COVID-19 Relief Fund to provide limited, one-time assistance to Fairfield residents adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. More than \$150,000 was raised and distributed to Fairfield residents who experienced financial challenges related to COVID-19.

The past year and a half has been a whirlwind of emotions, struggles and also perseverance. As the community begins to move beyond the pandemic, the town is shifting its focus to helping our community to recover from the pandemic by establishing the COVID-19 Recovery Fund. The mission of the Recovery Fund is to provide financial assistance to individuals and families of Fairfield who are unable to meet their basic household needs due to the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible residents may receive much-needed help with bills such as rent or mortgage, auto expenses, utilities, and food. Social Workers are also available to make sure that residents know about local resources such as health foundations and food banks.

Lifebridge Community Services - \$150,000

Increasing Access to Behavioral Health Care in Fairfield

Resiliency, the ability to understand, handle and move forward after experiencing difficult life events, is a key ingredient to living a complete and happy life. The pandemic has severely tested our collective set of coping skills and shined a bright spotlight on how tentative our resiliency skills are, and always have been. The number of individuals across the country, and particularly in Lower Fairfield County, reporting feelings of depression, anxiety, loneliness, isolation and hopelessness are not new, but have been exacerbated by 18 months of isolation, fear and uncertainty.

The sheer volume of people affected is significant. The latest annual Behavioral Health Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey suggests that 16% of people in Connecticut have reported being depressed, which equates to approximately 9,600 Fairfield residents, of which 1,500 are over the age of 65 and 2,200 are under the age of 18. In addition, over any 30 day period, the average number of days that people in Connecticut feel their mental health is "not good" is almost 3.8 days. In other words, at least one time a week on average, Fairfield residents are focused inward and less able to care for their families, perform at a high level on their jobs, concentrate fully at school or make healthy decisions about their overall well-being.

SOCIAL SERVICES & MENTAL HEALTH

Equally disturbing is that The Household Pulse survey demonstrated that young adults are experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety at a higher rate than other age groups, with 22% of 18-29-year-olds reporting feeling "down, depressed, or hopeless" nearly every day.

For those who already understand that one's mental health is as important as physical health, Fairfield Counseling Services has been a valuable town resource for more than 30 years, providing quality individual, family and group counselling sessions for families in need. However, over the last few decades, studies consistently demonstrated that at least 1 in 4 people who are suffering with mental health issues do not get treatment. This cohort could benefit from what our agency offers but will require a higher level of outreach. This includes those who understand they need help but are fearful of the stigma, those who believe there is no way out of their current situation and those that make too much money for public healthcare options but not enough to afford treatment.

In order to increase access to care for that still vulnerable cohort, the additional ARPA funds will be used to pay for the following activities:

- Clinical staff will partner with local organizations and places of business to be on site at routine intervals to provide information and connections to clinical help in order to put a friendly, knowledgeable face to mental health recovery.
- A monthly schedule of free, resiliency-focused workshops will be made available to the public in order to promote mental health as a normal, healthy part of the human condition.
- A scholarship program for those who cannot afford treatment, including those with high deductibles and co-pays for whom treatment remains an unattainable idea.

Between the outreach efforts and the scholarship program, the additional ARPA funds will create a pathway to recovery for those families in Fairfield who have been suffering with the effects of behavioral health issues in silence for far too long.

Child & Family Guidance - \$150,000

The Child & Family Guidance Center provides culturally competent, best-practice trauma treatment and care management to Fairfield children, teens and caregivers, regardless of a family's ability to pay. Since 2018, CFGC has served 568 Fairfield children and their families in our Outpatient Clinic, Mobile Crisis Intervention Services, Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach for substance use recovery and the in-home Functional Family Therapy program. These programs provide both emergency support and the tools for long-term emotional and psychological health. With offices in Bridgeport and Norwalk, CFGC is a Department of Children and Families' (DCF) licensed Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic for Children and has been designated an Enhanced Care Clinic, providing individual and family therapy; psychiatric evaluations; case management; and medication management for children and youth. CFGC's multicultural and diverse team of clinicians and care managers are deeply committed to serving families of all backgrounds and removing the barriers that many ethnic and racial minorities experience in accessing care. More than half of the families we serve identify as persons of color.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on children and teens, leading to higher rates of depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation. A May 2021 report by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) details COVID-19's impact on children's mental health: "Adolescents, young children, LGBTQ youth, and children of color may be particularly vulnerable to negative mental health consequences of the pandemic. During the pandemic, more than 25% of high school students reported worsened emotional and cognitive health; and more than 20% of parents with children ages 5-12 reported their children experienced worsened mental or emotional health." Additionally, KFF reports that the mental health of parents also suffered due to financial and emotional stressors, which could lead to higher rates of child abuse or neglect. KFF adds that "children in low-income households are at greater risk for mental health issues and are less likely to have access to needed mental health care, compared to children in high-income households." Here in Connecticut, suicidal ideation and the numbers of children in crisis has increased, as reported by the CTMirror.org on May 25, 2021: "Increasing numbers of school-aged children are showing up at Connecticut emergency departments — many of them suicidal, out of control, or with hard-to-treat eating disorders — leading to an overflow of young patients in emergency departments."

CFGC provides a continuum of care, in which our Behavioral Health and Family Support Services Units work closely together to ensure a family can achieve long-term success through trauma treatment, education, care management and the building up of support systems.

SOCIAL SERVICES & MENTAL HEALTH

Operation Hope - \$150,000

Never has Operation Hope had the opportunity to demonstrate how important our programs and services are to this community more than this past year. When the pandemic hit, we knew our services were essential. We got to work redesigning how we provide groceries, meals, housing, and compassion. We switched to a drive-thru pantry system, implemented all COVID compliant safety protocols at the community kitchen, and staggered staff to ensure someone would always be present to help a struggling neighbor. While we are just beginning to see the effects of this crisis, we already have experienced an uptick in all emergency related programs – a 40% increase in pantry use, 32% increase in meals served, and a surge in the numbers of callers looking for shelter and housing. Ahead of us is a watershed of evictions and foreclosures, putting more people at risk of homelessness. Funding from APRA will allow us to continue to meet the needs in Fairfield, and will allow us to better align resources and leverage other funding to ensure stability for our neighbors in need.

Food Services Manager: \$70,000

This position will oversee all food service operations, including the community kitchen (serving lunch and dinner Monday through Friday to anyone hungry in our community) and the food pantry (providing groceries and other basic needs to community residents struggling to make ends meet). Duties include supervising the day-to-day operations, maintaining compliance with ServSafe and other safety protocols, tracking usage, record keeping, inventory control, and more. This role is critical to our ability to address food insecurity in our community.

Homeless Resource Center Staff: \$45,000

The HRC is the front door to accessing help if homeless or in need of direction. Our team consists of outreach workers, who go out into the community and meet with people on the streets, helping them access help if they are ready for change, and intake staff (navigators and diversion specialists) who conduct initial assessments, provide information and referral, offer light-touch case management and help clients design plans to end their homelessness and move forward with their lives. Together this team helps get people out of crisis and into stability. With the additional strains on our system since the pandemic, another staff person will allow us to deal with the increasing number of individuals and families seeking assistance.

Homeless Prevention Coordination: \$35,000

With so many people finding it difficult to make ends meet, filed evictions at an all-time high, landlords struggling due to lack of income during the moratorium, loss of income and employment and people struggling to come back after the pandemic, we know assistance is needed. We can offer rental arrearage assistance, foreclosure assistance, help securing social security benefits, relocation assistance and more to our community residents to keep them in housed and help them to get back on track. This position is a necessary piece of the puzzle – coordinating multiple programs, interventions, sources of funds, application processes and more. Preventing people from entering into the homeless system reduces trauma, keep families stable, and is often more cost effective than the alternatives.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Plan of Conservation & Development, Zoning Regulation Review \$175,000

The Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is the local plan and statement of policy goals for the physical and economic development of the town. The elements of the Plan are defined by State Statute and the plan is required to be updated every ten years. Aside from the statutory requirements, the Plan is important because it helps guide and shape the future of our community from a land use perspective. Absent such planning work, and the community engagement component that is critical to its success, the Town risks allowing others to dictate how and where development should occur.

While the Town completed a partial update to its POCD in 2016, which incorporated new demographic and statistical data as well as elements of the regional plan prepared by MetroCOG, it has not performed a comprehensive review of its land use policies since 2000. Recognizing this, the TPZ Commission and staff began work on a more thorough update utilizing in-house resources due to budgetary constraints. This approach, which has been complicated by a global pandemic and demands on staff to keep pace with increased permit activity, will take at least several more years to complete. Funding to engage a planning consultant will enable the Town to complete an update to its POCD more expeditiously. Moreover, funding will allow for modernization of the Town's zoning regulations to reflect the policy goals outlined in the updated POCD. The zoning regulations have not undergone a similarly thorough review and re-write in more than thirty years. The update of the POCD combined with a regulation update will serve to better guide development activity in a manner consistent with the aspirational goals of the Town.

An updated POCD is critical to the Town's business investment and attraction efforts, since land use policies and regulations are the single biggest determinant of what can be built and where.

Downtown Resiliency Project with Permeable Surfacing \$1,420,000

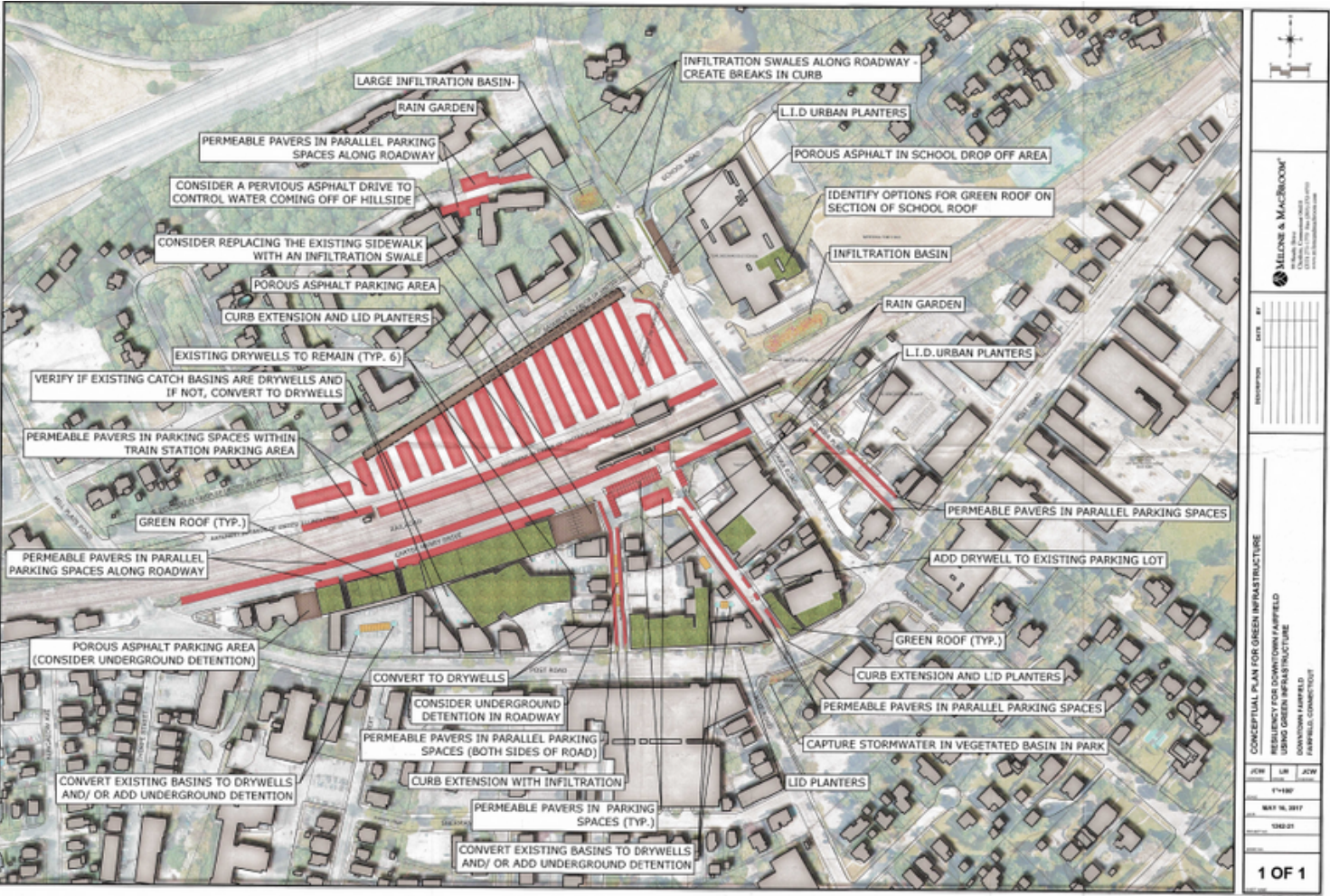
The goal of this project is to utilize and install "green" infrastructure to mitigate flooding and improve resiliency in downtown Fairfield. This project employs a range of strategies to reduce flooding effects on critical infrastructure and key businesses in the central business district by decreasing runoff and peak flows.

Following Superstorms Sandy and Irene, the Town of Fairfield retained a consultant to conduct an engineering study to assess the feasibility of using green infrastructure approaches to reduce downtown flooding and to improve the resiliency of key infrastructure. The downtown business district is a key economic hub, which has been increasingly prone to flooding in recent years due to excessive urban storm water runoff in conjunction with an under-sized and tidally influenced storm drainage system.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The study concluded that soil and groundwater conditions are favorable and that there are significant opportunities within the downtown core to utilize green infrastructure approaches that could help significantly reduce runoff peak flows and volumes and lessen the severity and frequency of flooding.

The study recommended a range of approaches including the installation of curb extensions and rain gardens, tree boxes, porous pavement and permeable pavers, green roofs and rooftop detention systems, among other strategies. This project intends to build on some of the work that has already been done including the installation of underground galleries to provide additional detention capacity in Sherman Green.



Body Cameras, Dashboard Cameras & Tasers - \$3,700,000

Recognizing legislative changes related to police accountability and the necessity to evolve as a police agency with regard to transparency and accountability as well as the need to improve training surrounding empathy and use of force, the Fairfield Police Department has found Axon Enterprise, Inc, to provide services, and meet those needs. In addition, with understanding that federal funding may be available to assist in this acquisition, the proposed Axon package bundles hardware, software, accessories, training programs, 24/7 customer support, equipment refreshes, and warranties together, to help equip our officers with the technology solutions they need. In addition, this package includes technology and training programs which allow officers to better connect with the public on calls for services as well as prepare to handle situations in the most effective and empathetic way possible while focusing on de-escalation prior to the use of force. As our current technology ages and the need for additional and more advanced technology increases, the Axon platforms provide us with the most reliable, efficient and cost-effective solution to maintain our services at the highest level.

Axon products work together seamlessly as a single network and are designed to give law enforcement the tools they need to focus on what matters, get to the truth faster and make the community a safer place. Axon allows us to keep our community safe and save on critical budget items by bundling products and services. This proposal would provide our agency with next-generation devices and software, delivering seamless integration, budget predictability and automatic upgrades with no additional costs. It is the most cost-effective and fiscally responsible way to equip our personnel with the latest technology.

The total 10 Year Costs for this technology solution which, by investing in it as a bundle, versus a la carte purchases, reflects an overall savings of over \$1,570,000.00 over the span of a 10-year contract.

It should also be noted that currently the Police Department has \$75,000 budgeted annually for Tasers alone. The proposed package includes the Taser program with additional discounts included. Axon further discounted the Fleet 3 Advanced Bundle in an effort to ensure they remained competitive and to offer the most cost-effective solution. This solution typically costs \$208 per vehicle per month. In the attached 10-year quote, they have discounted that to less than \$160 per vehicle per month, a savings of over \$201,000 for the Fleet bundle alone.

Perry's Green Bulkhead - \$1,000,000

Perry's Green Bulkhead is located at Perry's Green Park at Southport Harbor along Harbor Road. The bulkhead system is estimated to be at least 55 years old and probably much older. Replacement of the Bulkheads has been requested as part of the Capital Improvement Plan for decades.

From time to time, DPW has backfilled sinkholes, repaired concrete cap and repointed stones when they have popped out. Unfortunately, the condition of the timber frame and steel bulkhead have deteriorated beyond repair. This has created a potentially dangerous situation. The concrete wall has cracks, timber has blunt ends and steel has corroded with sharp edges that stick up or are very close to existing grade. On the Northwest side of Harbor Road, there is also a stone culvert with associated tide gate structure located at the terminus of Horse Tavern Brook that needs significant repair or replacement.

The purpose of the project is to replace the existing bulkhead with a new bulkhead that will secure the surrounding park area from erosion, prevent sinkholes and remove a potentially dangerous structure. The new bulkhead will improve conditions for the park and park users.

The tide gate structure across the street is now in poor condition. Stones have popped out, tide flap gates are not functioning properly because the gates are hitting the sidewall (as soil pressures have shifted the headwall).

Our previous "band aid" approach to these issues are no longer feasible.

Town Wide Guard Rail & Fence Improvements \$200,000

Engineering has identified guard rails in need of replacements and fence improvements to increase pedestrian and traffic safety, and to adhere to CT DOT letters of deficiencies.

Firehouse Renovations - \$500,000

The Fairfield Fire Department is in the second year of a multi-year fire station rehabilitation project. All Stations are 50 or more years old and have not received much maintenance of building envelopes HVAC and electrical systems or the functional interior spaces. The department coordinates closely with Department of Public works who is responsible for maintaining the building envelope, utilities and core building systems.

The goal of the rehabilitation program is to modernize and extend the serviceable life of these important municipal facilities.

This funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) the department will continue with key elements of the rehabilitation master plan. The next projects to be undertaken include:

- 1) Renovation of the Administrative Offices of the second floor of the Reef Rd. Firehouse including ADA accessibility
- 2) Renovation of the 1st Floor living spaces of the Reef Rd Firehouse
- 3) Construction of storage addition to the Reef Rd Firehouse
- 4) Design Reef Rd Elevator for ADA compliance (construction contingent on subsequent funding)
- 5) Design for renovated/construction of Apparatus Maintenance Facilities (construction contingent on subsequent funding)
- 6) Renovation of Jennings Rd living spaces including; watch room, officers' quarters and shop offices.

Fill Pile Remediation - \$1,000,000

The Town's Licensed Environmental Professional, Weston & Sampson, completed the second round of testing at the fill pile/reclamation yard site, pursuant to a work plan developed with and approved by DEEP and EPA staff. The testing results are being compiled and shared with DEEP and EPA for discussion about the next steps in developing a remediation plan for the site. After regulators and the Town's advisors develop an agreed-upon remediation approach, a draft plan will be developed.

Once the Town has a draft remediation plan, I will host a Town meeting with the LEP and DEEP / EPA staff, to share the information with our community. This will be an opportunity for our residents to listen to the details of the remediation plan for the fill pile and ask questions. Following the public meeting, the final remediation plan will be developed in concurrence with both the EPA and DEEP, and we will move forward with remediation of the fill pile.

At this time it is still unknown the full cost to clean up the fill pile but we know additional funds will be required.

Electric/Hybrid Town Vehicles & Charging Stations - \$940,000

The town fleet at Town Hall consists of 29 old Crown Victorias that are old and require continual maintenance. We are proposing to sell and/or dispose of the old vehicles, and replace them with a combination of hybrid and electric vehicles for employees. The cost will also cover upgrading the electric service to Sullivan Independence Hall and installing charging stations for the electric vehicles.

The ARPA request is only directed to replacing the Town Fleet with an electric fleet. Estimates from DPW include \$100,000 for upgrading the electrical service at Independence Hall (which will also be required if any extension of the building occurs) which will allow the building to handle the increased electrical needs of the cars. Another \$100,000 is estimated for charging stations at Independence Hall (and perhaps down at DPW offices if funding is adequate) to charge the cars as appropriate.

The remaining \$740,000 was arrived at by estimating the cost of 15 electric vehicles at approximately \$35,000 each if purchased. An additional \$5000 per car is estimated and added for an extended warranty. We have also added \$100,000 to purchase 2-3 all-wheel drive hybrids to be used by Town personnel in inclement weather. The final \$40,000 is for contingency.

Burr Historical Gardens - \$25,000

The Burr Homestead Gardens is the four-acre public garden behind the Burr Homestead located on the Old Post Road. The historic gardens include a reflecting pond and fountain with weeping cherry trees, a notable arboretum, Summer House, marble exedra and formal garden welcoming visitors to re-live history and make new memories.

The Burr Homestead Gardens are a magnificent representation of our town's rich history. Built in 1730, burned by the British in 1779 and rebuilt in 1790, the Burr mansion and its gardens hosted many founding fathers of our country including George Washington, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams and Aaron Burr.

A Town grant of \$25,000 to the BGAC in support of site improvements will launch their matching funds campaign. The grant will demonstrate to potential donors the Town's commitment to this historic property. This will also kick-start some of the necessary improvements to the gardens outlined in the Town-approved master plan.

Rooster River Detention Area - \$3,250,000

In 2006, 2007 and 2018 the Rooster River overflowed its banks and flooded several streets and neighborhoods. For a few neighborhoods flooding occurs even more frequently. After holding a handful of neighborhood meetings, Fairfield DPW hired a consultant to perform a hydrologic study of the Rooster River watershed with designs at six strategic locations. This study concentrated on potential detention sites along the Rooster river watershed that would provide some relief for property and homeowners within the watershed. This request includes Construction, property acquisition and Inspection for the project.

The purpose of the project is to reduce flooding potential within the Rooster River watershed. In most cases, holding back storm water runoff through detention reduces the flow rate and reduces the amount of flooding for areas downstream that should benefit most homeowners. These construction improvements should reduce the amount of flooding, reduce the frequency of flooding, reduce property damage, improve access, and improve water quality.

The proposal includes construction of the proposed detention areas. In some cases, excavation will be required but in most cases, a berm or dike will be constructed to “hold back the water” and to limit environmental impacts. Local inland wetland permits are required. Depending on size and location, CT DEEP and US Army Corps of Engineers permits will be required. The proposal includes construction of the detention areas, potential property acquisition, wetland mitigation, landscaping, and inspection for the project.

We have also been in discussions with the City of Bridgeport, and they have committed some funds toward detention areas for Rooster River on their side of the river in a coordinated effort to tackle this well-known flooding problem.

High Intensity Wave/Erosion Damage & Resiliency Study - \$400,000

Study/preliminary design and modeling with cost benefit analysis to explore a series of living shoreline and Gray/Green solutions to mitigate high intensity wave and erosion damage along the coastline. The objective would be to reduce the erosion impact of strong storm waves and reduce the damages to infrastructure inland.

Playground Renovations & Upgrades \$925,000

Many of Fairfield's playgrounds are outdated and in need of upgrades or full renovations. This proposal includes a renovation to the following playgrounds:

- Tunxis Hill
- Melville Park
- Lincoln Park
- Dover Park
- Highwood Park

Jennings Beach Concession - \$100,000

The building is in need of a refresh. Funds will include:

- Exterior facelift to Jennings Concession
- Kitchen upgrades
- Improvements to the lifeguard office
- Sunshades and improved seating for guests

Golf Course Maintenance Equipment - \$230,000

There are several machines needed for the upkeep of our golf courses listed in our capital plan for the Town. The proposal is to purchase a new triplex greenways, 5 plex fairway and a range cart with cage. The machines will help keep our golf courses in good shape with over 3,500 residents as season pass holders and a large increase in the number of rounds each year.

Fairfield Theatre Company - \$50,000

The Fairfield Theater Company requested \$115,000 for a variety of small projects related to their free outdoor community concerts. Given the contribution of to local arts/culture and the economy, the Town believes in investing \$50,000 of the ARPA funding to help with costs, mostly related to the safety of the venue, including permanent fencing and power and lighting in the parking lot. We want to encourage these types of events that bring people together and help make Fairfield more vibrant, especially outdoor events during the pandemic.

ADA Consultant - \$75,000

A consultant will carry out an evaluation under the oversight of the ADA Coordinator and newly established Commission on disAbilities.

The consultant will produce a report, which will present the findings and recommendations of an Americans with Disabilities Act compliance evaluation and planning process carried out on behalf of the Town. The purpose of the initiative and the actions recommended in this report are to move the Town towards full compliance with the requirements of ADA Title II by:

- Identifying gaps and omissions in policies and procedures, and architectural barriers limiting access to programs and services;
- Presenting recommendations for adoption by the Town as its compliance and transition plan designed to bring the Town into full compliance and to ensure that qualified persons with disabilities are able to participate in and benefit from all public programs, services, and activities.

Bigelow Center for Senior Activities Upgrades - \$850,000

The existing Oldfield School facility, which is currently home to the Town's Senior Center, was constructed in 1963. Due to the age of the facility, the structure is in need of renovations to update many of the existing functions for use as the Town's current Senior Center. The building still has bathrooms that were used for the former Oldfield School facility, and are antiquated for the senior population that uses the facility on a daily basis. The purpose of the project is to begin to modernize the Senior Center building and to provide much needed upgrades to the buildings infrastructure and make the portions of the building ADA compliant.

This project includes the new bathrooms that are ADA compliant, new HVAC, and update the kitchen. The purpose of the project is to begin to modernize the Senior Center building and to provide much needed upgrades to the buildings infrastructure and make the portions of the building ADA compliant.

Bigelow Center for Senior Activities Patio - \$100,000

To provide seniors with an outdoor patio for lunches, events and other gatherings in an outdoor setting. This will include repairs to the walkways to ensure it is ADA compliant, as well as lighting and electrical outlets.

Sidewalks - \$700,000

Stratfield Road & Fairfield Woods Four Corner Installation

The Stratfield Village Association and the Town have been working together on the Four Corners Project at the intersection of Stratfield Rd/Rt 59 and Fairfield Woods Rd, the commercial center of Stratfield. The broader project includes streetscape and pedestrian improvements to the Stratfield Village Business District to enhance pedestrian safety and mobility and beautify and renovate the commercial center of the Stratfield neighborhood. Work is expected to include the installation of concrete walks, new curbing, landscaping, ornamental street lights and other appurtenances. The project encompasses the four corner intersection of Stratfield and Fairfield Woods Roads as well as their respective approaches.

The Town retained BL Companies to prepare design and construction plans for the project. BL has completed the semi-final design phase, and is awaiting comments from CT DOT. The estimated cost of the project is \$1.35 million, including design costs. The Town has received a \$650K Urban Act grant, and has committed an additional \$100K. SVNA has committed to raising an additional \$150K. The \$450K in ARPA funds will allow for the completion of the project as designed.

Southport Connectivity Project

The Southport Connectivity project is intended to rehabilitate, enhance and enrich the pedestrian experience along the Post Road corridor in Southport by utilizing consistent streetscape treatments such as new universally accessible and ADA compliant concrete sidewalks and pedestrian ramps, curbs, pedestrian signals, traffic calming bulb outs, pavement markings, minor landscaping, turf establishment and other safety/pedestrian improvements. The project is focused on both sides of Route 1 (Post Road) in Southport, stretching from Exit 19/Pease Avenue to approximately 300 feet west of Hulls Highway intersection.

This area was identified as needing improvement following a State funded Road Safety Audit conducted in 2016 which identified numerous issues regarding the lack of pedestrian amenities and condition of walks and other infrastructure. The project goal is to improve pedestrian safety and connectivity along Post Road (US 1) while improving economic development in the area. The design will connect pedestrians from the surrounding neighborhoods with various businesses, restaurants, doctor offices and mass transit within the Fairfield “Designed Commercial District”.

Diversity & Inclusion Consultant - \$75,000

Working with the Human Resources Director, a consultant will review the blueprint assembled by the Racial, Equity, and Justice Task Force, which outlines goals, actions, and timelines identified by the Task Force as areas of improvement. The Diversity and Inclusion Consultant will then assist with the implementation of recommendations as adopted by the Board of Selectmen.

HVAC for Fairfield Public Schools - \$1,000,000

The administration asked for an HVAC project to fund in the schools and at the request of Superintendent Mike Cummings, this funding will go towards the air conditioning in the sixth grade wing of Fairfield Woods Middle School.

Town & Board of Education Fiber Optic Network - \$2,400,000

The Town-wide fiber-optic Wide Area Network connects twenty Town buildings, and twenty BOE buildings to each other and the Internet. Five additional smaller Town sites are also connected to the Town WAN via cable modem; three Town sites are not connected at all. The Town currently leases the fiber-optic lines through its managed network provider, ChimeNet, who in turn leases the circuits from Crown Castle. Currently, the fiber lease portion of the annual WAN expenses are \$341,673 per year.

This cost goes up every five years at contract renewal. (Some of this cost may be reduced through E-Rate reimbursement for BOE's portion of the network.) Recent one-off additions to the network (i.e., new redundant connection from Police HQ to Fire 2, and the new BOE Maintenance Facility) have been quoted at substantially higher costs than existing circuits that are "grandfathered in" at the existing rates.

This proposal is for the Town to exercise its Municipal Gain rights to attach its own fiber lines to utility poles in order to install its own network infrastructure with far higher capacity. The Town's managed network provider would continue to manage the network and contact the fiber vendor for repair when needed. The payback period is estimated at approximately ten years, after which the annual cost to the taxpayer would drop to just maintenance/repair costs, estimated to be well below \$50,000 per year.

Paving & Sidewalk Repair - \$3,000,000

A town-wide evaluation already is in progress by an outside consultant who will rate every road in the Town in order to develop a prioritization matrix with repair solutions and costs. The paving program will be developed from this engineering document expected in October.

A sidewalk evaluation is also being conducted in concert with the roadway review, and a matrix will be developed for for sidewalk repairs.

Traffic Lights -\$1,000,000

The Town has 15 intersections that it maintains. These installations were done over many years and as such, obsolete parts and part availability impact repairs. Controllers do not match and present problems for maintenance. A Traffic Engineer will be engaged to determine the most vulnerable locations, prioritize projects and design improvements.

Improvements will include standardization of controllers and all other components, new mast arm where needed, centralized management of operations and design to facilitate future technological improvements and help ease the increasing burdens of traffic throughout the Town.

These changes will help improve traffic safety and the flow of traffic in Town, and enable the Town to keep pace with increasing development.

Hybrid Town Meetings - \$400,000

We are proposing an upgrade to the current live-streaming capabilities of the Town and Board of Education. In order to live-stream meetings and to allow board member and public participation, in person and virtually, and work with Fair TV, the rooms must be equipped with new technology.

The system proposed would consist of ceiling-mounted microphones that would work in tandem with multi-position ceiling-mounted cameras. This system was chosen because of the ease of operation and required no IT support during the meeting.

In addition, the system will allow for easy plug-and-play connectivity to the town's Fair-TV broadcast network.

Locations were chosen for their ease of public access, the building capacity, and working hours to allow for this change with as little disruption to existing operations as possible. Sites selected include two meeting rooms at the town hall, the conference room at the Board of Ed building, and rooms to be identified at a school.

Digitizing Records \$125,000

During internal discussions regarding the movement of town offices to better serve the public, we determined that we can better utilize some of the square footage at Town Hall by digitizing existing hard-copies of records throughout certain departments. Ultimately, this will save taxpayers money because we will be able to eliminate space related to retention of hard-copy documents and utilize space more efficiently. We have included \$125,000 for this project and are in the process of determining the volume of documents that can be converted for that amount. The primary objective is to digitize the permitting departments.