

***Town of Weymouth
Massachusetts***

Robert L. Hedlund
Mayor

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Dear Councilor,

Happy New Year and congratulations on the start of a new term. A special welcome to the newly elected councilors.

As we begin a new year and council term, there is opportunity to build on the great progress we have made over the last six years. This opportunity is the result of our strong fiscal management through the COVID-19 pandemic and the infusion of federal relief funding to help cities and towns address and recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

I write to solicit your ideas, priorities and feedback as we move forward on these important decisions for Weymouth and our residents.

Below I will outline the available funding, some of the spending approved and being considered, as well as share the results of the resident survey regarding priorities for federal funding use, where more than two thousand residents responded.

The largest source of available funding is the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), a part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which became law in March of 2021.

ARPA Relief Funding:

Direct Funding Allocated to Weymouth	\$17,804,215.00
Weymouth Funding Allocated Thru Norfolk County	<u>\$11,216,484.00</u>
	\$29,020,699.00

Weymouth received \$8,902,107.50 in direct funding on 5/19/2021. We have since earned \$22,926.50 in interest. We expect the second half of the direct funding in May of this year.

Instead of sending Weymouth's allotted \$11.2M in ARPA funds directly to the Town to utilize along with our direct funding, Norfolk County established a duplicative process for requesting and receiving our allotted funding through the county. Norfolk County also plans to keep the interest earned from our allotted funding as an administrative fee.

Recently, the United States Treasury issued its Final Rule for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), a part of the American Rescue Plan. ARPA funds must be used for costs incurred on or after March 3, 2021. Further, costs must be obligated by December 31, 2024, and expended by December 31, 2026.

Here is a summary of the eligible uses of ARPA funds:

- **Replace lost public sector revenue**, using this funding to provide government services up to the amount of revenue loss due to the pandemic.
- **Support the COVID-19 public health and economic response** by addressing COVID-19 and its impact on public health as well as addressing economic harms to households, small businesses, nonprofits, impacted industries, and the public sector.
- **Provide premium pay for eligible workers performing essential work**, offering additional support to those who have and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical sectors.
- **Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure**, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, to support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and to expand affordable access to broadband internet.

Attached is the “Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Overview of the Final Rule” published by the U.S. Department of Treasury earlier this month. It provides a summary of the major provisions of the final rule on the eligible uses.

As you may recall, we surveyed residents asking each of them to select five (5) areas of investment they would like Weymouth to prioritize. We had a tremendous response, with over two thousand residents responding. Below are the results of the survey.

Weymouth ARPA Recovery Funds - Resident Feedback		
Select FIVE (5) areas of investment you would like Weymouth to prioritize.		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Roads/Sidewalks	50.61%	1033
Water/Sewer Infrastructure	33.61%	686
Access to Broadband/Internet Services	32.93%	672
Behavioral Health Care	31.90%	651
Address Needs of WPS students	31.01%	633
Support Small Businesses	30.72%	627
Parks and Recreation	30.18%	616
Public Safety	27.24%	556
Climate Change and Environment	23.27%	475
Food Insecurity	21.22%	433
Early Education	20.14%	411
Restore Delayed Projects and Services	18.67%	381
Affordable Housing	16.85%	344
Green Infrastructure	15.48%	316
Direct Assistance to Households	14.94%	305
Health and Wellness	14.80%	302
Support Non-Profits / Social Service Agencies	14.45%	295
COVID-19 Mitigation and Prevention	11.17%	228
Housing Assistance	9.46%	193
Cybersecurity	7.25%	148
Workforce Development	4.80%	98
Support Tourism/Entertainment Industry	3.92%	80
Assistance to Unemployed Workers	3.58%	73
	Answered	2041
	Skipped	11

On the next page is some information on who took the survey.

Weymouth ARPA Recovery Funds - Resident Feedback

What is your 5-digit zip code?

Answer Choices	Responses	
02188	24.85%	510
02189	23.83%	489
02190	32.55%	668
02191	18.76%	385
Answered		2052

What is your age?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 18	0.24%	5
18 to 24	1.36%	28
25 to 34	9.02%	185
35 to 44	19.79%	406
45 to 54	19.54%	401
55 to 64	16.67%	342
65 to 74	20.61%	423
75 or older	12.77%	262
Answered		2052

What is your race or ethnicity?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Asian	1.41%	29
Black or African American	1.07%	22
Hispanic or Latino	1.02%	21
Middle Eastern or North African	0.10%	2
Multiracial or Multiethnic	1.12%	23
Native American or Alaska Native	0.10%	2
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.29%	6
White	92.11%	1890
Another race or ethnicity	2.78%	57
Self-describe below:		66
Answered		2052

Gender: How do you identify?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Female	68.66%	1409
Male	28.46%	584
Non-binary	0.29%	6
Prefer not to answer	1.95%	40
Prefer to self-describe	0.63%	13
Self-describe below:		22
Answered		2052

To date, ARPA funding has been used for COVID testing and health department staff time, the final design of Columbian Square, the purchase of library materials in order to meet the MBLC's materials expenditure requirement, replacing the gym floor at the Senior Center, an updated Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, and efforts to address food insecurity through the Weymouth Food Pantry. In total, \$1,385,963.90 has been expended or encumbered, with over \$760,000 of that for COVID testing and \$450,000 for the final design of Columbian Square.

In addition to available ARPA funding, Weymouth's Free Cash was recently certified at \$15,918,770.00. Please note that \$10 million of this is from the Host Community Agreement (HCA) with Enbridge. \$2,748,906 of that HCA funding has already been used to purchase our new fire engine and ladder as well as for the demolition and removal of the Wharf Street incinerator and design services for Beals Park.

There are a number of projects in need of funding and under consideration, including the long-awaited reconstruction of Columbian Square, which is now fully designed. Other improvements, programs and progress to be funded or under consideration include a continuation of our Pave-The Wey road and sidewalk improvement program, Beals Park improvements, The Wessagusset Walk and coastal embankment stabilization, an after-school recreation program for elementary school students, addressing community behavioral health needs (possibly partnering with South Shore Health), Iron Hill Park improvements, water/sewer infrastructure upgrades, and expanding wireless access and security across town.

Please send me your feedback and ideas on areas or specific projects you'd like to see addressed with our available funding. For reference, we set the following "Priorities and Principals for Consideration" of ARPA spending:

- Projects that have the greatest impact on residents, both directly and indirectly
- Projects that lead to economic opportunity and recovery
- Projects that make an impact on the town's physical infrastructure
- Projects that effectively assist vulnerable populations impacted by COVID-19
- One-time projects with no or limited recurring or ancillary costs
- Projects that produce savings or increase the town's revenue base in the future
- Existing Weymouth-based projects/programs that can be enhanced/expanded
- Projects that avert disruptive and costly delays, and promote efficiency

I look forward to hearing from you within the new couple of weeks.

Sincerely,



Mayor Bob Hedlund