

**Town of Ferrisburgh  
American Rescue Plan Act Funds Public Meeting  
November 2, 2021**

**Selectboard Members present:** Jessica James, Chris Campbell, Michael “Red” Muir, Jim Benoit

**Town officials present:** Laurie Curler, Assistant Town Clerk, Deb Healey, Treasurer

**Visitors present:** Rick Kerschner, Jean Richardson, Andy Kirkaldy, Steve Huffaker, Jon Deming, Rick Ebel, Carl Cole, Ashley LaFlam, Walter Reed, Christine Gingras,

**1. 5:30p.m. Open meeting**

Jessica James called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

**2. Review Results of Online Survey**

Jessica James shared the results of the Town of Ferrisburgh ARPA Funds Community Survey. There were 174 responses with 22.9% being business owners in Ferrisburgh. In the four categories of water, sewer, emergency services, and Maple Broadband the responses for the top priority were water infrastructure – 45, sewer infrastructure – 29, emergency services – 45, and Maple Broadband – 76.

Does your internet connection meet your needs? 55.6% responded yes and 44.4% said no. Those who responded no provided additional comments regarding their experiences with the majority of them related to speed and stability.

Were you economically impacted by COVID-19? 51.4% were able to continue working, 24.3% were impacted and 24.9% responded not applicable. The question for business owners being impacted was 72.4% responded not applicable with 15.4% seeing a reduction in income.

Residential landlords – 95.4% responded not applicable with 4.6% reporting residents not paying rent or a partial payment. Commercial landlords responded 100% not applicable.

The biggest challenges were fear of illness/being around other people - 43.3%, no challenges – 28.7%, emotional isolation – 24.6%, and financial 24%.

The following is an overview of the responses to what issues the town should address with the ARPA funding.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Highest # of responses</u>	<u>Importance (1-5)</u>
Community beautification	48	5
Maple Broadband	72	1
Food insecurity	47	1
Hazard pay	47	2
Public communication	67	3
Digitizing land records	49	3
Public safety	49	3
Roads	45	1
Services for homeless	38	3
Water/sewer	44	2

Storm water infrastructure	43	3
Recreational/youth programs	44	3
Water infrastructure	41	2
Access to mental health services	43	3
Technology/workforce education	55	3
Climate change mitigation	49	1
Cyber security in town offices	43	3

A full copy of the survey will be available on the town website.

### 3. Discussion and Public Comment

Discussion was held around what the ARPA funds can be used for and when the funds are available. Projects will need to be submitted for approval and if not approved the town would have to pay for it.

Rick Ebel commented on the water infrastructure, the need for improvements, and requested that Ferrisburgh private water associations have the opportunity to speak to the Vergennes-Panton water district about their governance structure and have a say in how funds are allocated based on the number of Ferrisburgh users. Jon Deming said that the water board meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month and notices are placed on Pantan and Ferrisburgh town boards.

Carl Cole presented a proposal for the Union Meeting Hall and Historical Society septic system. He provided an estimate of \$82,000. This would allow the building to be used for up to 200 people.

Christine Gingras was on a visualizing density project and wastewater is a limitation to any development in the town center and felt that this would be a good investment for the town. Ashley LaFlam and Jean Richardson expressed support to invest in wastewater for the town center.

Ashley LaFlam asked if funds were allocated to emergency services would they go to the Ferrisburgh Fire Department. She knows the Ferrisburgh Fire Department has some needs and she would support using the funds for our own fire department.

Jean Richardson stated that funds will be used to improve the audio/visual system in the town hall. The estimate is \$10,000 to improve the ability to hold hybrid meetings in both meeting rooms in the town hall.

Discussion was held on Maple Broadband regarding speed, longevity, and cost to subscriber. Steve Huffaker answered the questions and stated that the cost to subscribers is hard to determine now because it is based on the how much each town contributes and how much money will need to be borrowed.

### 4. Adjourn

Jim Benoit moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:40. Chris Campbell seconded the motion. All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Allen