

**ALLEGANY COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**August 3, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Philip G. Stockin called the meeting to order at 3:09 p.m.

**LEGISLATORS PRESENT:** G. Barnes, J. Burdick, P. Curran, A. Cyr, K. Demick, D. Fanton, G. Hanchett, B. Harris, S. Havey, D.M. Healy, J. Ricci, J. Ricketts-Swales, J. Rumfelt, P. Stockin (Absent: D. Root)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** T. Boyde, H.R. Budinger, A. Carrow, S. Cicirello, K. Hooker, C. Jones, C. Knapp, B. Riehle, T. Ross, T. Shaw, R. Whitney

**Executive Session**

A motion was made by Legislator Rumfelt, seconded by Legislator Havey, and carried to enter into executive session at 3:10 p.m. to discuss the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, or promotion of a particular person or corporation. Immediately following discussion, a motion was made by Legislator Rumfelt, seconded by Legislator Havey, and carried to end the executive session and return to the regular meeting at 3:58 p.m.

**American Rescue Plan Act Funds**

County Administrator Carissa Knapp stated that after the last ARPA discussions, they have been looking at the following three major purchases:

- Building Control System
- Pictometry
- Law Enforcement Records Management System

Administrator Knapp let those Department Heads know that there was interest in using ARPA money to work on those projects, and those Department Heads are working on obtaining quotes to bring back to the committee. Mrs. Knapp mentioned that a representative from Pictometry gave a presentation in the Board Room this morning and those in attendance are excited about the prospects. Pictometry could be used by public safety and law enforcement agencies, multiple County departments, towns and villages, and members of the public would have access to portions of it.

Legislator Kevin "Fred" Demick mentioned the money the Fair was requesting noting that part of that was for paving, and he believes that with help from the municipalities and some in-kind services, that the Fair's proposed paving project could be completed without hiring it out and for much less than the estimated \$225,000. The Fair also hopes to have electrical updates for an estimated \$50,000, and gas line updates for

an estimated \$25,000. Both Legislators Adam Cyr and Gretchen Hanchett expressed support for Legislator Demick's suggestion of involving the towns and DPW staff in the Fair's paving project. Legislator Demick added that we might even be able to complete this project this year before the paver goes back.

Legislator Gretchen Hanchett indicated that Legislator Dwight Fanton had also mentioned the Seneca Oil Spring, and County Administrator indicated that we would want to work with the new Public Works Superintendent Tom Windus to get something figured out.

Legislator John Ricci spoke about giving towns and villages a certain amount of money, and he suggested that if we decide to go in this direction, we would want to let them know and give them the money soon so that it can be used for projects this summer. Chairman Phil Stockin asked if we found out whether it's possible to give ARPA money to the towns and villages, and County Administrator Knapp indicated that she doesn't know if we looked into that or not; however, she spoke with our Director of Planning Kier Dirlam, and we have a current program with our CPIG (Comprehensive Plan Implementation Group) money, and perhaps we can use that model to look at towns and villages. County Administrator Knapp indicated that the Board would have to decide if we would want to just give them a lump sum or use it for a certain purpose or project. Legislator Hanchett indicated that she would like to leave it open for the towns and villages to decide what they need, rather than go through a process. Legislator Hanchett talked about creating a framework or guidelines broad enough to fit the needs of the towns and villages, rather than directing them on how it should be used. Administrator Knapp briefly described CPIG and the Comprehensive Plan that was developed, noting that ideally the towns and villages would come up with projects that would implement the Comprehensive Plan. A line item is included in the Planning budget every year, and a committee meets on how that money should be distributed to applicants. The Board needs to decide what the guidelines would be, but they should support the Comprehensive Plan. Legislator Hanchett stated that outdoor recreation and parks would be a great fit.

Legislator Steve Havey stated that some other counties have used money in order to create affordable housing stock or renovate existing housing stock. We need to figure out a good way to do this without just giving tons of free money away. A little research might be in order as some counties are doing it, and Allegany County really needs revitalized housing stock.

Legislator Havey asserted that there are big gaps in mental health services in rural America, and we are right in the middle of it. Our schools need mental health staff capable of handling mental health needs. Chairman Stockin mentioned mobile mental health, which is a unit that is here. Chairman Stockin also mentioned that when you talk about individuals in the schools, you would then have ongoing costs that will still be there when ARPA funds are gone, and that is something we are trying to avoid. Legislator Havey indicated that he understands; however, it is something we really need.

County Administrator Carissa Knapp stated that Legislators have some very strong investments in different issues and ideas that are coming from the top down, rather than from the departments. Usually Department Heads perform the most amount of research, and when Legislators have a direction they want to go in without a Department Head having done all the research on how to do it, the Board may want to consider hiring some consultants to assist them. Whether you want to look into EMS, mental health, or some other area, you can use ARPA money to hire consultants. Legislator Janice Burdick indicated that she does not like to spend money on consultants. She likes to see the money go toward something. Legislator Burdick went on to thank Legislator Brooke Harris for sharing *NACO's (National Association of Counties) Analysis of ARPA Funding Uses*, noting that it was a very valuable resource. Legislator Burdick suggested, rather than hiring a consultant, calling some of the counties listed in that resource to see what their ideas were and how they moved forward. Legislator Burdick asserted that she just really wants to see our ARPA money going to specific projects. Legislator Burdick asked how much of our ARPA money has been committed and how much do we have left. County Administrator Knapp confirmed that we have not made any commitments yet. County Administrator Knapp also noted that we do have the same information that other counties have; however, sometimes we do not have the infrastructure to implement some of these projects.

Legislator Gary Barnes stated that he has some reservations on spending money on social programs, noting that money for social programs is generally provided for on an annual basis through state and federal funding. He would like to spend the ARPA money on something that will still be here and being used by County residents 25-50 years from now. Mr. Barnes agrees that mental health is very important, but he just doesn't believe that it's a good use for ARPA funds. County Administrator Carissa Knapp stated that a good portion of the opioid lawsuit settlement money could be used towards mental health and save the ARPA money toward suggested projects.

County Treasurer Terri Ross commented on Legislator Ricci's suggestion of giving ARPA money to the towns and villages, noting that she knows several counties have distributed ARPA money to the municipalities. She will be going to a County Treasurer's Conference next week, and she will ask several of them what they have done to implement that and what restrictions may have been imposed. There are some good models without hiring a consultant, but we may need assistance to implement some things. We just do not have the staff that some of the bigger counties have to dedicate to researching some of these things. Like Legislator Barnes said, this is one-time money, and it would be nice to finance something with a long lifespan versus using your own money to do it.

Treasurer Ross commented on County Administrator Knapp's statement about using the opioid settlement money for mental health, and Ms. Ross noted that the opioid money is 50 percent restricted and 50 percent unrestricted. Rather than using the unrestricted portion toward other things, Treasurer Ross suggested using it all for mental health.

Treasurer Ross stated the Departmental 2023 Budget requests are coming in, and many departments mentioned that they budgeted for some projects that they also included on their ARPA money wish list. We will have to weed through some of these to see if the Board is willing to spend any of the ARPA money on those requests.

Chairman Phil Stockin requested Legislator Demick to look into his suggestions on the Fair Board's funding request for paving. Chairman Stockin also requested that the research for the three projects Administrator Knapp had mentioned be continued. County Administrator Carissa Knapp stated that the Pictometry one is time sensitive as we would like to have them fly this fall, and we would want them to fly three times before this ARPA money needs to be spent. If the Board is interested in moving forward with the Pictometry Project, she would like them to take action this month. Legislator Brooke Harris said that the Legislators would really benefit from a white paper listing all of the County-wide benefits of moving forward with the Pictometry Project. Administrator Knapp stated that she believes they gave the Department Heads in attendance at the presentation this morning good marching orders on telling us how they plan to use Pictometry.

Legislator Harris also mentioned that the Board of Elections is up against it with their voting machines, and that will be a "big chunk of change." It is one of those "must buys" estimated at \$500,000.

Legislator Gary Barnes asked where we are on redistricting, noting that Cattaraugus County just approved a plan, and he hasn't heard anything about where we are at. County Attorney Allison Carrow stated that Legislator Harris, County Administrator Knapp, and she plan to schedule a telephone conference with Jeff Weis. Administrator Knapp explained that Mr. Weis works closely with NYSAC, and he is an expert in redistricting and will walk us through the process. Attorney Carrow indicated that we still need to get some final questions answered. Legislator Barnes asked how come Cattaraugus County has been able to adopt a plan, and we haven't started. Attorney Carrow stated that Cattaraugus County had a much larger variance than Allegany County, and they also eliminated some districts. It is not the intent of our administration to change the composition of the Board. Chairman Stockin stated that some people in Cattaraugus County are not happy with the way they moved forward, and Administrator Knapp added that they want to make sure they have good advice before moving forward. Legislator Harris remarked that we hope to determine the required timeframes as well as answers to other questions such as what are the requirements for redistricting. Legislator Harris stated that he believes if Allegany County needs to redistrict, that we should plan to have it coincide with the regular election opposed to a special election. Chairman Stockin stated that if we end up having to move a town, it would change the Legislators that represent them. County Administrator stated that it comes down to a timing question of special elections and now with the election cycle backed up to January, what is the latest you could draw this out and have primaries and other things involved. There are questions regarding weighting voting and probably a dozen different main questions that they hope to have the consultant to walk them through so they can give the Board the best guidance, and then the Board can make a decision from there.

Legislator Dwight “Mike” Healy stated that he would like to see us put all of our efforts into economic development for the entire County and not designate “pork” for one group or area, but something that will be sustainable. All of our school populations are declining, and the social demand for jail and mental health are rising and are constant. Legislator Healy asserted that what we need, and what he believes would be best for everyone is real jobs – manufacturing jobs. Legislator Healy stated that we can’t just save one area, we need to save the whole County, or we aren’t going to save anything.

Legislator Demick stated that they have received a lot of feedback from Supervisors and Mayors about EMS. He would like to see the County Administrator and County Attorney draw up a letter to Supervisors and Mayors to let them know there are some things happening. It should caution some of their actions of contracting and how they’re doing it. They are really looking to the County for some advice.

### **Upcoming Committee of the Whole Meetings**

The next Committee of the Whole meetings will be held at 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 10.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m. on a motion by Legislator Rumfelt, seconded by Legislator Ricketts-Swales, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Rigby Riehle, Clerk of the Board  
Allegany County Board of Legislators