

**Borough Council Special Meeting
September 22, 2021**

The Special meeting of Windber Borough Council was called to order by Windber Borough Council President, Michael Bryan at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

The following Council Members were present: Mike Bryan, John Holden, Timothy Layton, Jim Spinos and Joe Pallo were present. Attorney, Joe Green was present. Mayor Mike Thomas was present. James Furmanchik, Borough Manager was present through telecommunications. Ron Mash was absent. Dr. Doug Ledney arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Recognition Visitors There were no visitors present.

ARPA Funds Mrs. Gates reviewed the five allowable uses for the ARPA Funds - 5 Categories

1. Support the Public Health Response.
2. Address Negative Economic Impacts.
3. Provide government services to the extent of reduction in revenue.
4. Provide “Premium pay” to workers performing essential work during Covid-19.
5. Make necessary investments in water, sewer, stormwater, or broadband infrastructure.

Mrs. Gates said there was some confusion at the last meeting that this is Windber Borough taxpayers’ money, and it is not it is money received from the federal government to counties, municipalities and metropolitan cities to aide in fiscal recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mrs. Gates presented the wish list to council:

American Recovery Act Wish List

		Original	2021	2022
	Museum	\$10,000	\$8,000	
	Reimburse 2020 EMA Expenses for Covid	\$15,000.00	\$10,000	
	Donation to Fire Department	\$40,000.00	\$20,000	\$20,000
	Donation to Library	\$10,000.00	\$5,000	\$5,000
	Donation to Windber Recreation Park	\$15,000.00	\$15,000	
	Donation to Compassion House.	\$5,000.00	\$2,500	\$2,500
	R.E.A.C.H.	\$5,000.00	\$2,500	\$2,500
		\$100,000.00	\$63,000.00	\$30,000.00
Police	2021 Ford Explorer	\$33,335.00	38,835.00	
	Less Trade in	(\$7,500.00)		
	Upfit for Explorer	\$13,000.00		
	2 New Taser x26-P -Holster & Battery	\$3,100.00		\$3,100

	1 New Motorola Radio-Apx-4000 Portable	\$3,500.00		\$3,500
	Bushmaster AR-15 & sight	\$1,000.00		\$1,000
	6 Body Worn Camera System			
	Watch Guard 12 units Docking & Software	\$20,480.00	\$20,480.00	
	BearCom Maintenance Agreement	\$1,500.00		\$1,500
	Mach Computer Maintenance System	\$1,600.00		\$1,600
		\$70,015.00	\$59,315.00	\$10,700.00
Codes /EMA	2021 Ford Interceptor	\$33,910.00	\$45,023.60	
	Less Trade In	(\$4,000.00)		
	Upfit for Interceptor	\$15,113.60		
		\$45,023.60	\$45,023.60	0
Public Works	1 PAS 3' Extension	\$47.99	\$47.99	
	1 EX Mark Laser E Series 52" Zero Turn	\$8,468.60	\$8,468.60	
	1 Husqvarna Chain Saw w/20"	\$399.99	\$399.99	
	1 Husqvarna Chain Saw w/16"	\$295.99	\$295.99	
	1 Echo Power Source	\$255.99	\$255.99	
	1 Echo Pro-pruner	\$159.99	\$159.99	
		\$9,628.55	\$9,628.55	\$0.00
	Bonus/Premium Pay for Workers			
	4 public works employees	\$7,000.00	\$7,000	
	3 Office Staff			
	1 Police Clerk	\$1,000.00	\$1,000	
	2 Full time Officers	\$2,000.00	\$2,000	
	1 Chief of Police	\$1,000.00	\$1,000	
	5 32/39-hour Officers	\$5,000.00	\$5,000	
	9 Part-time Officers @ \$500	\$9,000.00	\$4,500	
		\$25,000.00	\$20,500.00	0
TOTAL - Columns		\$249,667.15	\$197,467.15	\$40,700.00

ARPA Money 2021	199,708.86
Minus Total of 2021 wish list	(197,419.16)
Balance	\$ 2,289.70
ARPA Money 2022	199,708.86

Minus Total of 2022 wish list	(40,700.00)
Balance	\$ 159,008.86
Total left after wish list	\$161,298.56
Revenue Reduction -transfer general fund	-141,531.00
Final Balance	\$ 19,767.56

Mrs. Gates said she received additional information with regards to the ARPA Funds that was shared with her from a CPA firm that gave a presentation at a conference in Pittsburgh. After reviewing the new information, she feels it would be in our best interest to after discussing the “wish list” and approving it or parts of it to send it to Wessel & Company CPA. Wessel has CPA’s handling the ARPA funding for several municipalities and are more verse in the do’s and don’t’s This would give us the security of knowing we are heading in the right direction.

Mrs. Gates spoke to one of their CPA’s late this afternoon. Mrs. Gates said she feels like we’re heading in the right direction but would like to have a more expert opinion before final approval. Mr. Spinos asked if the CPA gave Mrs. Gates a quote. Mrs. Gates said not yet but the CPA she spoke with is going to email that information to her tomorrow. Mr. Spinos said they are good, but they are not cheap.

Mr. Bryan asked if anyone did any prework as far as looking at this because everything we have been talking about so far meets the sniff test. He said the CPA can pretty much look at this list and in 10 minutes say yes, they are all appropriate. Mr. Holden said if Robin is on a zoom call while they are going over it, where they can say explain to me what this means, the cost should be minimal. Mr. Bryan said these are very cut and dry. Everything on here from what Joe, Robin and Jim have said and what he has read on multiple different sites all jive. Mr. Bryan said we can go ahead and make that back coverage back end to get the blessing of a CPA firm by doing that.

Mr. Gates said the CPA firm would also give us information on doing everything the correct way as far as paperwork and the yearly report. Mr. Bryan said there are templates being made for this. He said he doesn’t feel we have to spend that money for what we have.

Mr. Pallo asked according to this “wish list” we can fund the entire wish list and still have \$141,531 put into the general fund? Mrs. Gates said yes. She said you would still have a balance of \$19,767.58 to use towards something else. Mr. Bryan said that dollar needs to have a purpose and a name, it must go somewhere. He said we are reimbursing the revenues that we have lost. Mr. Pallo said that should help us avoid a tax increase. Mrs. Gates said the revenue reduction money would be used in 2022. By reimbursing the borough for revenue lost will help in offsetting our 2022 budget.

Mr. Furmanchik said two things that should be considered for a project that he spoke about in the last meeting were alley repairs and putting down some base material in some of our worst

alleys. Using it for paving of the alleys would fall under stormwater management because heaving rains wash all the sediment into our stormwater management system.

Another project was the sidewalk behind the borough office and the curb. Public works could replace the catch basins and put curbs in from our parking lot to Berwind's parking lot. The curb is still in good condition from 15th Street to Berwind. All that water comes down 14th street, makes that turn, overflows the parking lot and goes into that trench next to the rail bed. Employees from the borough have seen with heavy rains that trough next to the railroad tracks is almost level at the top. This would prohibit flooding at the railbed, or you can just put in sidewalk and curb.

Mr. Furmanchik gave a ballpark figure to replace the sidewalk around \$20,000 and \$12,000 to do all the curb. It could go as a stormwater management project or use it under parks and public plazas due to Miner's Park. Replacing the sidewalk would solidify Miner's Park.

There was lengthy discussion of the proposed "wish list" pertaining to the ARPA Funds. Council agreed on many items and approval will take place at the October 12th meeting.

Mr. Spinos left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Dr. Ledney arrived at 7:05 p.m.

**Ballroom
Proposal**

Mr. Furmanchik said today he had a meeting with RCAP and the architect and engineers. We will be putting the project out for bid at the end of October and hopefully you can open up the bids at the beginning of November and have construction start in December.

In order to make this beautiful facility function and command that high dollar reverence, you need someone who can give it the attention it deserves and give the renters the service they require to keep them coming back. It all comes down to service sells and he is a firm believer in that.

Mr. Furmanchik asked council to consider hiring an event coordinator in the beginning of 2022, around March. When construction starts, we should enter our bargaining campaign. They are still shooting for completion in July, but it depends a lot on the weather. It would be a good idea to move forward with your marketing.

The revenue stream that we always talk about will be a home run for this community because of the possibility you can mitigate tax increases for the future. The royalties could be split up to subsidize your \$300,000 loan payment, your salary for you part-time coordinator and keep money in the bank so you do not have to have tax increases.

Mrs. Gates said right now if we go off how well the ballroom is currently booked, which is every weekend in the Summer, and then compare it to becoming a year around facility once it is completed, the revenue stream is definitely there to pay off the loan, hire an event coordinator and offset tax increases.

Mr. Layton said he likes the idea of an event coordinator. It increases the value of the venue and justifies the cost involved. Mr. Pallo said weddings at the Hayloft are \$3,250 plus a \$250

nonrefundable booking deposit. So, you're looking at \$3,500 with seating up to 250 guests. Mr. Furmanchik said he called the Barn, and it is \$4,000 just to rent the hall. Decorations, table coverings, and chair coverings are extra money. Mr. Bryan said the ballroom will potentially command an upper venue. Having certified bartenders, linens etc. If we have a preferred vendor and we promote them as a preferred vendor, we will get a nick of that.

Mr. Bloom said having an event coordinator for things they have done at the fire company made a big difference. A lot of times you need someone to speak to about the venue, they know where everything is at, and if you blow a breaker, they know that person can fix it. Mr. Holden said we need someone with a hospitality background.

Mr. Holden said we need a groundbreaking ceremony. Why not have the renderings of what the finished project is going to look like. You must draw attention to it before it is open. Mr. Holden said the fire department has talked about having a shared service. Mr. Bloom said they talked about it at the last meeting. We are all kind of in the same spot, public safety, borough management you're funding us, and we are running fundraisers and we're trying to even out the dollar, the value of the dollar that you pay. We would be interested in entertaining something like that because the borough and the fire department benefits. So maybe your overall salary is 50%. Maybe because we can't do that right now, we pay 25% and you pay 75%. The avenue does exist for people with a background in marketing, and advertising for event coordinators to see how far this thing can go.

Council convened to an executive session at 7:15 p.m. for personnel.

Council reconvened from executive session at 7:35 p.m.

Manager's Position Mr. Bryan said council received a resume for the position and asked council if they wanted to interview the individual. Council agreed they wanted to interview the individual. They will interview him before the next regular council meeting on October 12, 2021.

Mrs. Gates asked council if they wanted her to engage with Wessel CPA and to review the "wish list"? Council said yes to email it to them.

Next Meeting Next meeting will be held on October 12, 2021. Interview for the borough manager's position at 6:00 p.m. followed by a budget session at 6:30 then the regular meeting at 7 p.m.

Adjourn Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. by Council President Mike Bryan.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Robin S. Gates
Administrative Assistant