

American Rescue Plan Act Funding and Belmont

as of February 8, 2022

Tune in to February 14 Select Board meeting for a presentation of a draft plan for use of ARPA funds

The Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was signed into law in March 2021. Under ARPA, Belmont expects to receive a total of **\$7.8 million** from the Coronavirus Local Stability Fund plus **\$1.0 million** from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund III (ESSER III).

ARPA

Belmont will receive **\$7.8 million** in ARPA money in a series of partial payments during 2021 and 2022. In July and August 2021, Belmont received approximately **\$3.9 million**. The remainder is expected to be received in July and August 2022. All of these funds must be spent by December 2024.

Eligible uses of ARPA funds:

- Public health and/or economic impacts due to COVID
- Replacement of lost public sector revenue due to COVID
- Premium pay for essential workers
- Water, sewer, and/or broadband infrastructure

Belmont will likely use ARPA funding to cover:

- COVID-related expenses
- Mitigation of other potential COVID-19 impacts, such as:
 - Testing and vaccines for schools and community
 - Ventilation of town and school buildings
 - Outreach to seniors
 - Personnel costs
 - Election costs
 - Capital expenses and roads
 - Affordable housing
 - COVID expenses in the Middle and High School building project
 - Business relief
- FY23 and FY24 operating expenses

Allocation of ARPA funding does not require a vote by Town Meeting. The Town Administrator will present a draft plan for spending the majority of ARPA funds at the February 14 meeting of the Select Board. The Select Board has already allocated some ARPA funds to the Board of Health for items such as COVID testing.

ESSER III

The Belmont Public School Department submitted its application for **\$1.0 million** in ESSER III funding in July 2021. In addition, **\$456,000** in unspent ESSER II funding is still available. The

School Department has indicated that it intends to spend half of this ESSER II/III money in FY22 and the rest in FY23. In addition, the School Department has requested that the Select Board allocate **\$1.4 million** of the ARPA funds for school needs.

Eligible uses of ESSER III funds include:

- General school support (80%)
- Learning loss (20%)

The School Department has identified a list of needs and has created a plan for funding these needs during FY22 and FY23. They have prioritized the following COVID needs:

- Academic recovery
- Mental health and social-emotional recovery
- Equity, access, and supports for students
- Professional development for staff

Initial decisions regarding the use of the ESSER II/III funds were made by the Belmont School Committee and BPS Administration during the summer of 2021. School-related requests for the use of ARPA money will be submitted to the Select Board and Town Administrator for approval.

Next Steps on ARPA and ESSER III

Specific school and town spending decisions regarding ARPA and ESSER III funds are and will be made during the development of the FY23 and FY24 budgets. The FY23 budget is currently being finalized. Decisions will be made by the Select Board and School Committee at public meetings in early 2022, starting with the February 14 Select Board meeting.

ARPA and ESSER III are one-time funds. The Warrant Committee cautions against using one-time funds for recurring expenses.

Sources:

- ARPA Presentation to Belmont Select Board on 8/18/2021:
https://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf6831f/uploads/arpa_presentation_august_18_rev.8.19_0.pdf
- Video of 8/18/2021 Belmont Select Board meeting:
https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/uClclN88BHKHJoveFoaVN_8_5Tg72P0o/playlists/6554/media/662291?fullscreen=false&autostart=false&showtabssearch=false
- About COVID-19 Federal Funds (mass.gov):
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-federal-funds>

This document was created by the Communications Subcommittee of the Warrant Committee. This is a Warrant Committee initiative to communicate more effectively with Town Meeting members and the public.