

**TOWN OF SOMERS**  
**BOARD OF FINANCE SPECIAL JOINT MEETING**  
**July 27, 2021**  
**7:00 PM**

**1. Call to Order**

Michael Parker called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**2. Members Present**

In attendance were Michael Parker, Bill Meier, Joe Tolisano, and Kathy Devlin; representing the Board of Selectmen was First Selectman Bud Knorr, Tim Potrikus, and Tim Keeney. Also, in attendance was CFO Michael Marinaccio, Assistant Finance Director Brian Wissinger, DPW Director Todd Rolland, Superintendent Brian Czapla, and Town Attorney Carl Landolina.

**3. BOE Plans for using American Rescue Plan Funds**

Superintendent Brian Czapla presented the Board with his planned usage of the education portion of funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARPA). These planned uses are to combat the learning gap caused by COVID-19. A report of usage can be found attached to these minutes.

Mr. Czapla then spoke about air quality concerns at both the Elementary School and the High School. Neither school has air conditioning and because of COVID, they can no longer use fans to move air on hot days. Mr. Czapla requested funding to do a study of the current air flow system to receive a cost estimate and work involved to update the air flow system to meet current post-COVID standards.

The Board asked Mr. Czapla to put together a RFP for the study, but also include Town buildings as part of the study. Mr. Czapla will coordinate with DPW Director Todd Rolland to put together an RFP. Once completed, the cost will be presented through the CIP process for approval to spend.

**4. Discussion with Board of Selectmen and Town Attorney on motion made by Board of Finance at June 28, 2021 Meeting Regarding the Adoption of a Proposed Regulation**

Michael Parker stated that he would entertain a motion to table this item. Mr. Parker felt there was no need to arguing between the Boards and asked that the boards be transparent and work in collaboration to achieve success for the Town.

*Joe Tolisano made a motion to table this discussion, seconded by Kathy Devlin.*

Bill Meier spoke openly about this topic and requested the Board reconsider. Mr. Meier stated that the item needed to be discussed and felt that it leaves the Town exposed for future crises by not having a formal policy and procedure involving this.

*There was no further discussion and a call to vote was made. The motion to table passed 3-1 with Michael Parker, Joe Tolisano, and Kathy Devlin voting in the affirmative and Bill Meier voting no.*

**5. FY2021 Year End Budget and Fund Balance Projections**

Assistant Finance Director Brian Wissinger presented the Board with the year-end figures for Fiscal Year 2021. Mr. Wissinger stated that these numbers were not final and that there would be a small, but non-material change to the bottom line.

The Town is estimating a return to fund balance of \$676,869. This is comprised of \$169,701 of reduced spending between the Town and the Board of Education, \$168,734 of over collection of revenues, and \$338,435 of un-used appropriated fund balance. This brings our estimated fund balance percentage to 17.70%, almost 1% more than the best practice set by the GFOA of 2 months of approved expenditures of 16.67%.

**6. Bonding Projects Status and Update**

Mr. Wissinger gave an update on the current status of the bonds issued in October 2020. The Board of Education currently has 5 projects completed with more to go. The last 2 major projects for the Board of Education are a partial roof replacement at the Elementary School and a boiler replacement at the High School. The Board of Education has \$1,589,433 of bond funds remaining to be spent.

As of the June 30, 2021, the roads project has \$1,851,221 remaining of bond funding to spend. The Town is anticipating \$500,000 of road paving invoices to be paid during the month of August. At this time, all roads that were part of the bonding have been completed. DPW Director Todd Rolland will assess the listing of roads and present a plan of additional roads to pave with the remaining funds.

**7. CIP Request – Piedmont Hall Roof**

Mr. Rolland presented the attached request for a roof replacement at Piedmont Hall. Due to the urgency of the request, Mr. Rolland requested to bypass the standard CIP process and asked the Board of Finance to fund the project.

*Joe Tolisano made a motion to waive the CIP process and appropriate \$18,500 from the Capital Projects Fund to replace the roof at Piedmont Hall, seconded by Bill Meier. There was no further discussion and a unanimous decision followed.*

**8. Discussion and Action on Modification of Previously Approved 2021 Regular Meeting Schedule**

The attached schedule was presented to the Board of Finance to discuss. CFO Michael Marinaccio informed the Board that if approved, it would take 30 days from delivery to the Town Clerk to become effective. Any previously scheduled meetings during that 30-day period would be considered a special meeting. Since there is no scheduled August meeting, the 30-day period would not affect any future meetings.

*Joe Tolisano made a motion to modify the remaining regular meeting schedule to the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month, Option 1, moving the currently regular scheduled meeting forward one day, seconded by Kathy Devlin. There was no further discussion and a unanimous decision followed.*

**9. Adjournment**

*Kathy Devlin made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 pm, seconded by Bill Meier. There was no further discussion and a unanimous decision followed.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Wissinger

*MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FIU4XoiAQ0>



# SOMERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1 Vision Boulevard, Somers, Connecticut 06071  
(860)749-2270 Fax (860)763-0748

Mr. Brian P. Czapla  
Superintendent of Schools

July 8, 2021

Dear Members of the Boards of Selectman and Finance,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Education to share our plans to address learning loss due to COVID-19 and how the school system will utilize its allocation of American Rescue Plan funds. Additionally, I am requesting consideration by the Boards of Selectman and Finance to allocate ARP funds received by the town to address additional needs of the school system, specifically instructional resources and HVAC system upgrades at the elementary and high schools.

Enclosed you will find the ARP plan approved by the BOE to address learning loss. The school system's ARP allocation is \$363,040. While we appreciate receiving this allocation, it is simply not enough to address many of the school system's needs identified by COVID-19. The majority of our funding will go to reduce larger class sizes. Research has shown teachers can provide more targeted and differentiated instruction in smaller class sizes. In addition, enrollment projections for the next school year indicate large student populations in Kindergarten, Grade 4, and possibly Grade 3. Other allocations will focus on social/emotional learning, special education, and supplies to support new classes.

When students return to school in September, we will conduct benchmark assessments to determine student mastery levels and areas of needed support. This may require additional resources based on the data. Potential other resources could include:

- Grade 3 Teacher
- Tutors and classroom aides
- Academic Interventionists

A critical system that needs to be addressed is the HVAC system at Somers Elementary and Somers High School. COVID-19 has brought to the forefront the importance of air quality as it impacts both health and learning. "The Environmental Protection Agency has ranked indoor air pollution as one of the top five environmental risks to public health, and health risks associated with poor indoor air quality (including skin and eye irritation, allergies, and asthma attacks) have the potential to directly impede student learning and achievement. According to a literature review conducted by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, increased ventilation rates are associated with higher student performance in reading and math, as well as reduced respiratory health effects and absenteeism." (source: The Learning Policy Institute, <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/covid-hvac-systems-essential-resource>).

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*Vision: The Somers Public Schools strives to be an exceptional and innovative educational community.*

*Mission: Prepare each student to contribute and succeed in an ever-changing global society.*

Somers Elementary School currently has an antiquated HVAC system that provides minimal exchange of fresh outside air. It is an exhaust-out system. During hot and humid days, the lack of cooling and air circulation can cause classroom temperatures to rise into the 90's with little to no cooling overnight. These extreme temperatures impact staff, students, and parents as we often have to dismiss students early from school or possibly cancel school altogether. Summer use of SES is limited due to environmental conditions. Summer school, enrichment camps, parks and recreation, and community use are extremely limited or unavailable during the summer months.

Most of Somers High School, while having air exchange, is not air-conditioned and similarly impacts students, staff, parents, and community use.

As the Boards of Selectman and Finance begin discussing allocating the \$3.2M ARP town funds, I would request you consider the school system's needs as stated above. As a preliminary step, it would be prudent to have an HVAC engineering consultant assess the current HVAC status and associated costs for upgrading the systems at SES and SHS. We are currently exploring the costs associated with such a consultation and report. Funding for this consultation would need a discussion as the BOE has not budgeted this expense.

I would be happy to discuss the school district's needs, plans, next steps, and other possible solutions.

Respectfully,



Brian P. Czapla  
Superintendent, Somers Public Schools

cc: Somers Board of Education  
William B. Boutwell  
Michael Marinaccio

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**Board of Education  
Administrative Report**

Title of Report: ARP Grant

Board Meeting Date: June 28, 2021 **UPDATED July 6, 2021**

Action

Report

Information

Discussion

Submitted by: Brian Czapla

***Executive Summary***

The state of Connecticut is prioritizing ARP grant spending in the areas of:

Learning Acceleration, Academic Renewal, and Student Enrichment *20% automatic allocation	Family and Community Connections
Social, Emotional and Mental Health of the Students and of the School Staff	Strategic Use of Technology, Staff Development, and the Digital Divide
Building Safe and Healthy Schools	

The chart below outlines how the Somers Public School District will allocate ARP grant funding for the two areas of:

- Learning Acceleration, Academic Renewal, and Student Enrichment
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health of the Students and of the School Staff



**Board of Education  
Administrative Report**

**Report**

At this time, we are anticipating allocating ARP grant funding to support the following:

Total District Allocation: \$363,040		
<u>Item</u>	<u>2021-2022</u>	<u>2022-2023</u>
<p><b>Special Education Teacher Kindergarten @ SES</b></p> <p>Currently, special education students in kindergarten and 1st grade are managed by one Special Education teacher and case manager.</p> <p>Having an additional special education teacher would allow each grade level to have a designated special education teacher and case manager which is in alignment with special education support district wide. (One special education inclusion / resource teacher and case manager per grade level)</p> <p>As a result of delayed developmental skills due to Covid isolation, we anticipate increased Special Education identification in kindergarten and 1st grade levels.</p> <p>There are currently 16 SES PreK special education students who are moving to kindergarten. The special education needs of students new to kindergarten are unknown. Therefore, it is anticipated that the kindergarten special education caseload will increase.</p> <p>There are 9 special education students identified in kindergarten moving to 1st grade. The special education needs of students new to 1st grade as well as those who participated remotely is unknown. Therefore, it is anticipated that the 1st grade special education caseload will increase.</p> <p>Managing the combined known K and 1st grade caseload (case management/providing services and supports) of 21 special education students is not feasible. This does not account for students yet to be identified at the K &amp; 1st grade level.</p>	<p>Salary: \$50,023 Benefits: \$16,000</p>	<p>Salary: \$52,158 Benefits: \$16,800</p>



**Board of Education  
Administrative Report**

<u>Item</u>	<u>2021-2022</u>	<u>2022-2023</u>
<p><b>Kindergarten Teacher @ SES</b></p> <p>"Researchers generally agree a class size of no larger than 18 students is required to produce the desired benefit... reduction in class sizes has the greatest benefit when applied longitudinally to grades K-3. At this age, one must consider the foundational literacy and math skills children acquire at this age...districts would be better served focusing their energy and their resources related to class sizes on primary grades." (adapted from: <a href="https://www.hmhco.com/blog/class-size-matters">https://www.hmhco.com/blog/class-size-matters</a>)</p> <p>Current Kindergarten Enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year as of 6/10/21: 104. Students per section (7 sections): 14/15</p>	<p>Salary: \$49,566 Benefits: \$16,000</p>	<p>Salary: \$51,688 Benefits: \$16,800</p>
<p><b>Grade 4 Teacher @ SES</b></p> <p>Grade 4 enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year is currently 101. Without this additional teacher, we would only have 5 sections resulting in larger than optimal class sizes.</p>	<p>Salary: \$50,023 Benefits: \$16,000</p>	
<p><b>SHS Social Emotional Learning Program Materials from School Connect</b></p> <p>The mission of the Somers Public Schools is to prepare each student to contribute and succeed in an ever-changing global society. In order to do this, students need to learn and develop social and emotional learning competencies, in addition to academic competencies.</p> <p>Topics from this program are CASEL aligned and will be embedded into already existing Advisory Lessons.</p>	<p>\$9,000</p>	
<p><b>Second Step Program Materials for staff professional development</b></p>	<p>\$6,500</p>	
<p><b>Supplies to Support Additional Positions</b></p> <p>Curriculum, Assessment and Classroom Materials</p>	<p>\$12,482</p>	





**Board of Education  
Administrative Report**

Potential positions and programs being considered to further support student learning and skill gap remediation are:

- Social Emotional Learning Interventionist at SES
- Additional tutors/tutor hours (district-wide)
- Additional paraeducators at SES
- Kindergarten Classroom Aids
- iReady Diagnostic (district-wide)
- STEM Coach (grades 6-12)
- MBA School Social Worker
- Reading Interventionist at SHS
- Additional Math Interventionist at SES

**TOWN OF SOMERS  
CAPITAL EQUIPMENT / PROJECT REQUEST  
TYPE D. ACQUISITION**

**GOV'T FUNCTION:** Board of Selectman  
**Contact Person:** Todd Rolland  
**Phone:** (860)763-8238

**Department:** Public Works  
**E-mail:** [trolland@somersct.gov](mailto:trolland@somersct.gov)  
**Fax:** (860)749-3018

**Capital Item:** Piedmont Hall Roof Replacement

**Proposed Acquisition Date:** 7/1/2021

**Proposed Acquisition Cost:** \$18,500.00

**1. Description of Capital Item with all accessories, spare parts, and warranties.**

Strip existing asphalt shingles from roof and cupola, strip white vinyl siding from cupola walls. Install ice & water barrier on roof decks, install new flashing around cupola, install 30 year asphalt shingles.

**2. Projected Useful Life.**

25 years

**3. Frequency of Use.**

Continual

**4. Repair Costs – stated on same basis as Useful Life.**

Non during normal useful life

**5. Price/Quality Analysis.**

The current roof is leaking into the building. We have made repairs to attempt to repair the leaks and extend the life. These repairs have been unsuccessful;  
August 2019, Became aware of roof leaking during heavy rains

- October 2019 received a bid to repair roof
- October 2019 issued purchase order and completed inspection and repair around cupola. The review recommended re-siding the cupola
- January 2020 received bid to reside cupola. The bid was over \$25,000.  
Requested more bids
- April 2020, a wind storm blew siding off cupola, began insurance claim to repair
- May 2020, Received bid to reside cupola
- June 2020, issue purchase order and had work completed (insurance claim)
- March 2021, new roof leaks during heavy rains. Inspection finds leaks around the cupola and other areas of the main roof
- April 2021, requested bids to replace all of the roof, cupola siding and roof

We have had several vendors out to inspect the roof and they recommend replacement. We believe this roof is was last replaced in the early 1990's making it approximately 30 years old.

**6. Effect on delivery of service/cost of service if acquisition is delayed.**

The leaks will continue to degrade the interior of the building and make it un-useable. This facility is used by community organizations including the Cultural Commission for their Photography show, Art show and Coffee House events.

The Cultural Commission is very concerned about using the facility this fall for their photography shop. If the roof leaks while the shop is set up, it could result in several thousand dollars in damage to the enter photographs.

**7. Method of Determining Price.**

Vendor Quote

Approvals

Approved BOS: 

7-15-21  
Date

Approved BOF Capital Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approved BOF: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Town of Somers

## Board of Finance

### Optional dates to modify Regular 2021 Meeting Schedule

<b>Current Schedule – 4<sup>th</sup> Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday Option 1</b>	<b>Wednesday Option 2</b>
August – No Meeting	August – No Meeting	August – No Meeting
9/27/2021	9/28/2021	9/29/2021
10/25/2021	10/26/2021	10/27/2021
11/22/2021	11/23/2021	Thanksgiving eve
12/20/2021	12/21/2021	12/22/2021