

Town of Cushing

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Selectboard:
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Town Clerk: Lisa Young
Treasurer: Lisa Young
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October 20, 2021

Dear Commissioners Meriwether, Parent and Pohlman, and Administrator Hart:

We have watched with frustration and disappointment the proceedings on the Knox County ARPA funding process. We have the following comments and we would appreciate a direct response to each one.

1. Why did you omit the criteria from the original grant request process that you had no intention of funding ANY town specific grants? Cushing submitted 3 requests and we could argue that 2 of the 3 had bigger regional benefits than just Cushing (public access to the St. George River and broadband through a regional utility) yet they were summarily rejected at your first grant meeting. Why did you reach out to all Knox county towns to submit grants when you had no plans to fund any of them?
2. Per the Knox County charter and state law it is our understanding that the Knox County Budget committee must approve all expenditures. This is per state statute 30-A-MRS-751. Do you plan on including them in this process per the charter?
3. We were deeply disturbed by the way the October 12 Commissioner meeting was conducted. There seemed to be several unethical and possibly unconstitutional breaches during the meeting and the general tone towards the citizens of this county who attended was shameful. Do you plan to apologize and correct these issues in further meetings?
4. We would appeal to your sense of fairness and equity for the entire county in your plans for these ARPA funds. Knox county has a diversity of issues. Certainly homelessness and affordable housing are important issues but they do not affect each town equally nor the entire county. Issues like broadband access have a much more universal impact for everyone in Knox county.
5. Final thought- Our reading of the ARPA legislation indicates there is NO prohibition on counties and towns (unlike states) to use the funds to reduce taxes. Please consider this alternative use of the ARPA funds in your deliberations as we understand you are planning a hefty 12% increase in county spending.

Thank you and we look forward to your response.

Town of Cushing Selectboard