

A Resolution to guide Tompkins County in its final distributions from the Community Recovery Fund

RESOLUTION #2024-_____

Whereas, by Resolutions adopted in September 2021 and June 2022, the Tompkins County Legislature established the Community Recovery Fund (CRF), to be supported with \$6,535,344 from the \$19,847,267 Tompkins County has received or will receive through the federally-supported American Rescue Plan (ARPA), with the CRF's stated purpose being to "address community needs arising from or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic;" and

Whereas, Tompkins County subsequently established a Community Recovery Fund Advisory Committee (the Advisory Committee) within the Legislature, retained a professional consultant, and invited businesses, non-profit community organizations, and municipal governments to apply for CRF awards; and

Whereas, Enfield Food Distribution, the Enfield Community Council (ECC), the Enfield Volunteer Fire Company (EVFC), and the Town of Enfield were among those that sought CRF awards from the Advisory Committee; and

Whereas, following the Advisory Committee's and its consultant's review, as well as a review by the full Tompkins County Legislature, the Legislature on December 20, 2022 awarded CRF funds to 55 of the program's 212 applicants, with neither the Town of Enfield nor its resident agencies having been among those selected, but with Cayuga Medical Center (CMC) and its parent agency, Cayuga Health, having received the largest funding award, \$1.5 Million, to establish a Crisis Stabilization Center in Tompkins County, subject to New York State approval; and

Whereas, the Tompkins County Legislature on May 2, 2023, in response to a major funding recipient's withdrawal of its application, and with legislators and the Advisory Committee having prepared a refined list of 35 potential CRF award recipients from the 212 initially submitted, awarded funding to 14 of those 35, providing the Town of Enfield \$26,592 for purchase of Highway Department radios, but providing neither the ECC nor EVFC, each of which was included on that narrowed list of 35, any support; and

Whereas, CMC has to date been unable to secure the requisite New York State approvals needed for it to access its \$1.5 Million from the CRF for construction of a Crisis Stabilization Center, with the Advisory Committee on June 24, 2024 having set an August 30, 2024 deadline for CMC to either secure those approvals or forfeit its award; and

Whereas, at a meeting of the the Advisory Committee on August 5th, its chairman indicated that should CMC default on its funding, the contracting deadlines imposed by ARPA rules would likely prompt the Advisory Committee and/or the Legislature, as a contingency, to redirect the \$1.5 Million to "highway equipment or something expensive and easily justified with ARPA money," but with the chair then qualifying that "if anybody has a different idea, we can revisit that question;" and

Whereas, both the Enfield Volunteer Fire Company and the Enfield Community Council stand ready, willing and able to utilize CRF funds and comply with appropriate government deadlines, and

Resolution: T.C. Community Recovery Fund

Whereas, contrary to the representations by some, strict New York State “gifting” prohibitions will limit Tompkins County Government’s ability to assign its own taxpayer funds to replenish the CRF’s resources for distribution to agencies otherwise eligible under the more lenient rules of ARPA, a prohibition that affirms the prediction of Enfield legislator Randy Brown that for many such agencies, without direct Community Recovery Fund support, “the opportunity is lost;” and

Whereas, the removal of nearly one-quarter (23%) of the original CRF allocation through redirecting its resources to County purposes would severely weaken the program’s beneficial community impact and run contrary to the program’s original intent and its stated promise to Tompkins County residents; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Enfield Town Board urges the Tompkins County Legislature, assisted by its Community Recovery Fund Advisory Committee and its consultant, to reopen the application process for Community Recovery Fund awards, redistributing up to \$1.5 Million, should Cayuga Medical Center and its parent organization fail to meet the August 30, 2024 deadline set for it to secure New York State approvals for its Crisis Stabilization Center; and be it further

Resolved, that in redistributing CMC’s forfeited funds, the eligible applicant pool for these funds shall be restricted to the 21 parties that qualified on the May 2023 list of 35, yet did not receive funding, said parties including the Enfield Community Council and the Enfield Volunteer Fire Company; and be it further

Resolved, that to be eligible for this final CRF distribution, applicants must demonstrate to the satisfaction of Tompkins County legislators, administrators, and consultant staff their ability to meet all American Rescue Plan funding deadlines so as not to jeopardize Tompkins County’s eligibility to receive those ARPA funds; and be it further

Resolved, that the Town Clerk shall forward a copy of this Resolution to the Clerk of the Tompkins County Legislature, for distribution to all legislators.

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