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Rogers County approve nearly \$7.3 million in ARPA funds

ROGERS COUNTY— During a special board meeting this morning, Rogers County Board of County Commissioners approved a total of \$7,266,889.58 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds the county received from the federal government to help recover from issues exacerbated by the pandemic.

ARPA offers an unprecedented amount of money flowing into communities that can be used for public health emergency; essential workers; lost revenue in governments; and assistance with broadband, water and sewer infrastructure.

This is the last tranche of ARPA funds going out to entities — unless entities fail to meet requirements causing funds to be returned for reallocation.

Commissioners carefully examined each request offering regrets of not being able to fund or fully fund applicants' request. Twelve of the 20 entities received full asking amounts while the others received half or a portion of their request.

BOCC Chairman Steve Hendrix of District 2 said there were twice as many dollar-amount requests than available resources — but said the county would keep those requests for future funding opportunities.

There is potential for ARPA money from other counties to be re-distributed if not allocated or even from those awarded funding if full requirements are not met, he mentioned. One of those requirements entails having an “active” System for Award Management (SAMS) number. Due to recent changes in the entity validation process, Hendrix said it places a hold on disbursements already approved. District 3 Commissioner Ron Burrows added that another obstacle one may encounter is the inability to find matching fund opportunities, which is a cost-sharing contribution.

A message to applicants who did not receive funding, Hendrix said, “We aren’t closing the doors on this yet.”

The following approved requests are:

- \$23,113.46 Rogers County Historical Society for Belvedere Mansion renovation.
- \$74,124 J.M. Davis Arms Museum for air/humidity quality assistance.
- \$1,500 American Legion Post 2020 for economic loss.
- \$975,500 Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance for a demonstration center.
- \$24,000 Rogers County Volunteers for Youth to enhance current program.
- \$837,000 Rogers County Youth Services to expand counseling services.
- \$500,000 SafeNet Services to increase staff.
- \$200,000 Claremore Expo Center for a generator.
- \$6,774 Claremore Expo Center for a clinic/mega pod.
- \$1,000,000 City of Claremore for a Tri-county Fire and Police Training Center.
- \$135,778.12 Rogers County Sheriff's Office for school security.
- \$311,000 Rural Water District No. 7 for a 12-inch water line extension.
- \$1,000,000 Rogers County Tourism to further promote tourism efforts.
- \$450,000 Chelsea Water District for a new storage tank.
- \$1,004,445 Atlas Broadband – Oologah Town for broadband.
- \$177,000 Rural Water District No. 9 for automated reader system.
- \$29,655 Adult Day Care for building expansion.
- \$101,000 Pelivan Transit for a new van.
- \$400,000 Light of Hope to purchase existing building location.
- \$16,000 Operation Community for media related processes.

Hendrix said the board was tasked with the tremendous responsibility of being stewards of the \$18 million granted to Rogers County. “We took that responsibility very seriously and I want to commend my partners (District 1 Commissioner Dan DeLozier and Commissioner Burrows) here for the work that they've done, the hours that they put in, and our relationship with Grand Gateway, who's guided us through this process.”

Grand Gateway serves under contract as the funding administrator of the ARPA funds.

DeLozier said, “We looked at every project.” He further highlighted all the organizations that do so much for people in the community like Light of Hope, Adult Daycare, Pelivan, American Legion, youth-serving organizations, Safenet and Operation Community to name a few.

“Even down to the deputies that we are going to put into schools. Those are big projects that have to happen — and luckily, we had the money to be able to do that,” DeLozier said.

Burrows ended by commending Chairman Hendrix for leading the efforts of this process.

Rules established by the federal government state ARPA funds must be allocated by the last day of 2024.