ARKANSAS AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Zoom Meeting

Thursday, August 26, 2021 – 3:30pm

IN ATTENDANCE

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Larry Walther, Secretary, Department of Finance & Administration

Johnny Key, Secretary, Department of Education

Cindy Gillespie, Secretary, Department of Human Services

Jim Hudson, Deputy Director of Operations & General Counsel, Department of Commerce

Wes Ward, Secretary, Department of Agriculture

A.J. Gary, Director of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management

Stacy Hurst, Secretary, Department of Parks, Heritage & Tourism

Daryl Bassett, Secretary, Department of Labor & Licensing

Dr. Jose Romero, Secretary, Department of Health

Senator Bill Sample

Senator Keith Ingram

Senator Ronald Caldwell

Representative Kenneth Ferguson Representative Jeff Wardlaw

Representative Frances Cavenaugh

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES**

Alan McVey, Chief of Staff, Department of Finance and Administration

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks – Secretary Walther
2. Department Presentation

* Department of Health – Secretary Jose Romero

1. Next Meeting September 22nd at 3:30pm

Adjournment

**WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

Secretary Larry Walther welcomed the committee to the meeting and called the meeting to order.

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: COVID-19 ICU BEDS**

Dr. Romero presented a formal request for $18.156 million for COVID-19 ICU beds after briefing the committee on the request during the August 25, 2021 meeting. Dr. Romero noted that Mr. Chris Barber from St. Bernard’s Hospital, Mr. Chad Aduddell from CHI Vincent, and Mr. Bryan Jackson from Jefferson Regional Medical Center were on the line to help answer any questions.

Dr. Romero mentioned that Representative Wardlaw had questions for him regarding the proposal, and he noted that he would elaborate on those questions for the group. The first question was how many ICU beds are currently available in the state. Dr. Romero answered that the state has about 1,100 adult ICU beds available, but not all of these beds are capable of supporting care for COVID patients. As of today, 48.9 percent of ICU beds are occupied by COVID infected patients requiring intensive care.

Dr. Romero also noted a change from the previous meeting, as Jefferson Regional Medical Center is asking for 8 COVID ICU beds for 60 days, rather than 90 days as stated before. With a cost of $5,700 per bed per day, this brings the proposal to 54 beds for a cost of $18.156 million. Dr. Romero reminded the committee that these are not-for-profit hospitals, and the committee can apply for reimbursement of these funds from FEMA.

Representative Cavenaugh asked if there was still no guarantee that these funds would be reimbursed by FEMA, and Dr. Romero confirmed that there is no guarantee. The committee will also be able to apply for reimbursement of the funds granted to Baptist Health during the August 4, 2021 meeting.

Representative Wardlaw motioned to approve the proposal, and Secretary Gillespie provided a second. Secretary Walther called for a vote, and the motion passed.

**SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, September 22, 2021 at 3:30pm.

**The meeting was adjourned.**