

American Rescue Plan Steering Committee

Governor's Conference Room

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

3:30 – 4:30 pm

IN ATTENDANCE

The Honorable Asa Hutchinson, Governor

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Larry Walther, Secretary, Department of Finance & Administration

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

Mike Preston, Secretary, Department of Commerce

Johnny Key, Secretary, Department of Education

Wes Ward, Secretary, Department of Agriculture

Jami Cook, Secretary, Department of Public Safety

Dr. Jose Romero, Secretary, Department of Health

Daryl Bassett, Secretary, Department of Labor & Licensing

Cindy Gillespie, Secretary, Department of Human Services

Senator Bill Sample

Senator Keith Ingram

Senator Ronald Caldwell

Representative Kenneth Ferguson

Representative Jeff Wardlaw

Representative Frances Cavanaugh

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Governor Hutchinson opened the meeting by welcoming the members, expressing appreciation for their willingness to serve and explained the focus of the American Rescue Plan Steering Committee.

Governor announced the appointment of Secretary Larry Walther as Chair of the Committee and Secretary Stacy Hurst as Vice Chair of the Committee.

Governor Hutchinson mentioned the unique opportunity the American Rescue Plan presents to the State of Arkansas to address both immediate and long-term needs of the state. The U.S. Department of Treasury has issued federal guidance in the form of the Interim Final Rule. As with the guidance provided following the passage of the CARES Act, it is anticipated Treasury will provide updates and clarification periodically in the weeks and months to follow.

Governor Hutchinson shared his view on the importance of addressing immediate needs such as continuing broadband deployment through the Rural Connect Program, coordinated by the Department of Commerce and continuation of vaccine deployment to further reduce the spread of COVID 19 in the state.

Governor Hutchinson explained the Steering Committee would serve as an advisory body to the Governor. The Governor addressed questions regarding the scope of work and focus of the committee, closing his remarks by again thanking members of the committee for their willingness to serve and that he looks forward to the work ahead.

STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR COMMENTS

Secretary Walther discussed and presented material to the committee including:

- State and Local Funding Allocations
- Capital Fiscal Recovery Fund
- Timeline for use of funds
- Process to obtain funds from U.S. Treasury
- Guidance for eligible use of funds
 - U.S. Treasury Interim Final Rule issued May 10, 2021
 - Frequently asked questions – U.S. Department of Treasury

Secretary Walther indicated to the committee his intent to review rules adopted by the CARES Steering Committee and propose similar rules for the American Rescue Plan Committee to consider. Draft rules will be presented at the next meeting for review and consideration.

Secretary Walther expressed appreciation to the Arkansas Legislature for approval of funding allowing DFA to engage the local and national consulting firm CTEH, in partnership with Hagerty Consulting to assist with the CARES Act funding initiatives. Secretary Hurst, Secretary Preston and others commented on the professional and critical assistance CTEH/Hagerty has provided to the State of Arkansas and it was recommended by the committee to pursue the opportunity to further engage the consulting firm in the assistance with American Rescue Plan program funding.

As mentioned by the Governor, broadband continues to be a critical priority for the state. Secretary Preston agreed to update the Committee during the next meeting on the deployment progress of the Rural Connect program.

Secretary Walther addressed questions regarding areas of potential investment and committee processes.

There being no further business to come before the committee the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, June 2, 2021 at 3:30 pm to be held in the Governor's Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned.