

aCALL TO ORDER 5:30 PM

The Board of Commissioners for Cumberland County, Maine met for their regularly scheduled meeting at the Cumberland County Courthouse in the Peter Feeney Conference Room, the meeting was called to Order by Chair Susan Witonis.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**ATTENDANCE****Present:**

Commissioner Susan Witonis, Chair
Commissioner James Cloutier
Commissioner Stephen Gorden
Commissioner Thomas Coward
Commissioner Neil Jamieson

Absent:**County Staff:**

James Gailey, County Manager
Alex Kimball, Deputy Manager of Finance and Administration
Don Brewer, Director of Human Resources
Travis Kennedy, Director of Public Affairs
Elizabeth Blackwell-Moore, Director of Public Health
Mike Loconte, General Manager of Spectra

County Guests:**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chair Witonis requested a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of May 9, 2022. A motion was made by Commissioner Jamieson and seconded by Commissioner Cloutier.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

INFORMATIONAL REPORT/PRESENTATIONS**2021 CDBG Annual Report****Current List of Upcoming Workshops**

County Manager Jim Gailey confirmed that an upcoming workshop would be held in person on June 21, 2022 at 5:30 pm.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Director of Public Affairs Travis Kennedy read three written submissions from the public regarding ARPA funds. Emails were received from Thomas Nash, Madelyn Litz and Linda Winton which are attached to these minutes.

Liz Trice: Currently works with the Maine Development Cooperative and is constructing workforce housing with the City of Portland (COP) and developing three parcels in Portland. One parcel is on Douglas St and the other is off of Washington Ave in North Deering. 200 units for people with 60% AMI, the properties are multigenerational, transient oriented, green and because of the cooperative structure they will become permanently affordable. She added that the project was not considered for funding (ARPA) because it was not shovel ready, one of the projects just received approval from the COP and a second project was expected to be approved at the end of the summer.

Anita St. Onge: Director of Portland Adult Education which serves as the fiscal agent for the Cumberland County Adult education hub. There are 10 adult education centers in the County except for Brunswick which is part of Merry Meeting Bay. Her program teaches students the educational core to reach community college. The program focuses on helping students to reach college by offering high school diplomas. This is especially helpful for those effected by the pandemic and for students who have dropped out.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Jamieson and seconded by Commissioner Gorden to approve the consent agenda.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

- 22-051 Authorize the Summer Law enforcement Contract between the Sheriff's Office with the Town of Frye Island for \$49,472.66.**
- 22-052 Authorize the Summer Law enforcement Contract between the Sheriff's Office with the Town of Chebeague Island for \$33,128.07.**
- 22-053 Authorize the Summer Law enforcement Contract between the Sheriff's Office with the Town of Long Island for \$24,574.17.**
- 22-054 Authorize the Summer Law enforcement Contract between the Sheriff's Office with the Town of Harpswell for Marine Patrol Services for \$295,435.44.**
- 22-055 Authorize the Summer Law enforcement Contract between the**

Sheriff's Office with the Town of Harpswell for \$479,416.70.**ARPA BUSINESS****22-056 Approval of the award to Spurwink for Tri-Town Behavioral Health Liaison Project BID Award and Contract.**

Public Health Manager Liz Blackwell-Moore passed out the Bid Tab for the Tri-Town Crisis Health Work RFP which can be viewed in the agenda packet page 116.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gorden and seconded by Commissioner Cloutier to approve the award to Spurwink for the Tri-Town Behavioral Health Liaison Project Bid award and contract.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

22-057 Approval of the Action Plan for Round 1 Tiers 3 and 4 competitive grants. First Read.

Compliance and Audit Manager Sandy Warren presented the action plan for Round 1 Tiers 3 and 4 competitive grants. She stated that the ARPA Committee reviewed the proposed applications based on how shovel ready they were, sustainable or a onetime expenditure and if the community benefit of the project aligned with the Commissioner priorities. Compliance Manager Warren mentioned that the Final Rule was amended and there is increasing emphasis on disproportionately impacted communities because they're more likely to be impacted by COVID pandemic. The projects were reviewed with respect to zoning and their construction timeline. Sustainability was evaluated based on how much funding was part of the award request in relation to other sources of funds used. Evidence of a project being a long term, was there a plan in place to make the project sustainable or is it truly a onetime expenditure? Community impact was another factor considered based on how many people would be served by the project.

Compliance Manager Warren highlighted the recommended projects which can be viewed in the June 13, 2022 agenda packet.

Commissioner Jamieson asked Compliance Manager Warren to elaborate on the number of centers that would be served in the Cumberland County Adult Education Hub and was other funding also sought. Compliance Manager Warren answered that funding included Federal, Maine DOE, and private investments. Director of Public Affairs Kennedy added that centers to be served (based on the submission from Thomas Nash) included Bonny Eagle, Freeport,

Gorham, Gray/New Gloucester, Lake Region/Fryburg Area, Portland, Scarborough, South Portland, Westbrook and Windham. Anita St. Onge elaborated that there are 10 communities total except for Brunswick which is part of Merry Meeting Bay. The plan of the application is to distribute teachers based on enrollment of students. Since Portland has a high number of students it would receive more teachers. Commissioner Jamieson asked if they had reached out to the COP to ask if they would contribute ARPA funds to the Program. Anita St. Onge answered that they had and had a fulltime ESOL teacher and that the \$4M mentioned by Compliance Audit Manager Warren was the Portland Hub budget and that each center has their own budget.

Commissioner Jamieson asked if the COP was contributing ARPA funds? Anita St. Onge responded that they did not apply. Compliance Audit Manager Warren added that the hub did receive ESSER funding as part of the CARES act. Thomas Nash, Windham Adult Education, spoke. He stated that Windham's budget is \$600k and has 100-125 students. This was the first year that their program had received any school board funding. The ESOL services that are offered are very popular for international students.

Commissioner Gorden stated that the municipalities and the state are responsible for education funding. Did they approach the state and municipalities for ARPA funds? Anita St. Onge answered that they reached out to the County for ARPA funding because it aligns with the priorities set by the County Commissioners. The Portland Adult Education received \$200k unsolicited from TIF from the COP. Commissioner Gorden asked what the other centers did. Thomas Nash answered that they received \$20k in ESSER funds and were not allowed to access other funding. Commissioner Jamieson asked if other centers in the Hub asked for funding. Thomas Nash responded that all of the centers are part of the school budget which are funded through the school board, Windham Center received \$13k of ARPA funds from the Windham School District which were used to purchase computers. Commissioner Gorden asked if the Hub approached Coastal County Workforce Board, Anita St. Onge answered that they partner with them and that they subsidize students for certain programs. Commissioner Gorden asked if the Adult Education Hub approached them for funding? Anita St. Onge stated that the Hub did not and they do not have the option to approach other funders so they did not.

Commissioner Cloutier asked fellow board members how they would like to proceed. Chair Witonis stated that the Portland Adult Education Hub does not align with the Commissioners plan with regard to funding

staff positions. She requested that the decision for funding be tabled. County Manager Gailey suggested that it be removed for more discussion but that the other projects move forward.

Commissioner Cloutier formally invited the public and project applicants to attend the June 21, 2022 public workshop to discuss the project further. He stated that he would like to understand the COP budget and determine how the Hub application aligned with the Commissioners' priorities list.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier and seconded by Commissioner Gorden to approve the first reading of the Tier 1 projects and table the Adult Education Hub for further discussion.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

County Manager Gailey requested that the Item 22-065 be read out of order so that staff could be excused prior to the executive session Item 22-064. There were no objections.

Chair Witonis request that the Item 22-064 be read after comments from staff and Commissioners. There were no objections.

22-058 Approval of the request from The Town of New Gloucester for the Sheriff Office to provide a six hour detail at the Community Fair on August 20, 2022 at no cost.

County Manager Gailey explained that he received this item from the Town Manager of New Gloucester. The Sheriff had denied this request and recommended that the Town appeal to the County Commissioners. County Manager Gailey invited Sheriff Kevin Joyce to provide some background. Sheriff Joyce stated that he received a similar request last summer and it was denied because it is not in the budget. The Sherriff was concerned that if the request was granted to one municipality than why not give it to other municipalities. Deputy Manager of Finance and Administration Alex Kimball stated that the Finance Department receives similar requests for services and they are denied regularly.

Commissioner Gorden asked if the Town had been informed about the fee associated with a deputy patrol? Sheriff Joyce confirmed that they had and that he suggested the Town Manager reach out to the County Commissioners because the Board sets the rates and terms of the patrol contracts.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier and seconded by Commissioner Jamieson to table Agenda Item 22-058 indefinitely.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

22-059 Approval of the 2022-2023 Cross Insurance Arena Operations, Capital and Trustee Budgets.

County Manager Gailey introduced General Manager Michael Loconte who was there to present the three budgets as recommended by the Cross Insurance Board of Trustees (CIA) to bring forth to the Commissioners for approval. General Manager Loconte thanked the Commissioners and introduced the budget which he had wanted to break from the traditional approach and use a more creative approach to the upcoming event mix. He forecasted the budget based on an average of 100 events which is conservative and with the combined operating and ancillary income less indirect expenses there is a projected negative \$512K budget. Compared to last years deficit what was due to negative \$900K deficit due to the pandemic, limited opportunities to generate revenue. Staffing levels have been low, shows doubled and overall activity increased. Maine Event strategies included approaching nontraditional shows, using return performers and increasing the number of days that performers perform.

Commissioner Gorden asked why some events are zero and what does MMA and PBR stand for? GM Loconte explained that they are hoping to get or have not gotten confirmation. MMA is an abbreviation of mixed martial arts and PBR is an abbreviation of professional bull riding. County Manager Gailey added that the budget is solid and achievable. Commissioner Gorden asked Chair Witonis, in her role as liason to the CIA, what did she think about the budget? Chair Witonis stated that overall it looks good but asked GM Loconte if he could explain why July did not have any events. GM Loconte explained that it's hard to get performers in July and attendance is usually low. For July there are 3 lacrosse games scheduled. Chair Witonis congratulated GM Loconte on his budget.

County Manager Gailey presented the next budget, the Capitol Budget request. GM Loconte presented 6 items but 3 were formally requesting approval from the County Commissioners. The following items were brought to the Commissioners for approval: An Arena Marquee with an LED display on Spring St that would highlight events and emergency alerts from the County and hopefully would be funded using ARPA funds; WiFi expansion, install wifi in the dressing

rooms and locker rooms; Sound System upgrade as the current sound system is 20 years old.

County Manager Gailey presented the Trustees Budget which is responsible for funding the following items: legal and professional services, board meeting costs, Parent company Spectra Management requires an incentive fee based on performance benchmarks; and four insurances for the total amount of \$146,400.

Commissioner Jamison thanked GM Loconte for his hard work. Commissioner Coward complimented GM Loconte on the presentation and overall improvement and that the management of the budget was realistically achievable.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier and seconded by Commissioner Jamieson to approve the 2022-2023 Cross Insurance Arena Operations, Capital and Trustee Budgets.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

22-060 Approval of the 2022-2023 County Jail Budget.

Major Timothy Kortes presented the Jail budget which was prepared by reviewing current budget discrepancies and adjusting items for inflation and reallocating where necessary. He noted that for this budget there were no new positions; uniforms had been reallocated where possible; Maintenance included electrical and plumbing and required some allocation; Food and Beverage increased due to inflation. He noted that there were less boarders which impacted the budget revenue. Sheriff Joyce added that Federal government restrictions had made it challenging to meet accreditation requirements and the Jail is taking less inmates from the Federal Marshalls, ICE and they're no longer sharing inmates with York County Jail. Commissioner Gorden asked if the Maine State police limiting their patrol will affect the County. Sheriff Joyce stated it would not and Cumberland County is probably one of the only Counties in Maine that would not be impacted by that reduction.

County Manager Gailey asked Deputy Manager of Finance and Administration Kimball to elaborate on the Jail budget. Deputy Manager of Finance and Administration Kimball stated that looking at wages and benefits is a \$600k increase based on the contract of budgeted employees which remains unchanged. He complimented Major Kortes and Sheriff Joyce for their hard work on the budget. Increases in expenses include the cost of the contract for MAT services; increase in liability insurance due to COVID-19 in a

congregate setting; the impact of inflation on food prices, and an increase in Maine Pretrial Services. There is a combined increase of \$880k to the budget. The final request is for \$690k to apply to the budget or alternatively cut staff. Commissioner Jamieson asked how many staff are employed at the Jail, Major Kortez replied there are currently 64. County Manager Gailey added that there is a need everywhere for jail member staffing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier and seconded by Commissioner Jamieson to approve the 2022-2023 County Jail Budget.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

22-061 Approval of the Interlocal Agreement between City of Westbrook and Cumberland County Sheriff's Office.

County Manager Gailey requested that the item be tabled because it is in the process of being reviewed by the County's attorney who also represents the City of Westbrook and the City needs to waive their conflict of interest before the Attorney may review the agreement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jamieson and seconded by Commissioner Cloutier to table item 22-061 for further review.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

22-062 Amending Administrative Regulations – Adding Appendix F3 Response to workplace-related incidents of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, and dating violence.

County Manager Gailey explained that Human Resources was incorporating the Federal language in the Administrative Regulations as required for recipients of Federal funds that is associated with Faye Luppi's Violence Intervention program.

County Manager Gailey added that Commissioner Gorden had requested that on page 2, section 5(A)(i) the document be amended to include "solely" and would read:

"Non-Discrimination and Non-Retaliation: Cumberland County will not discharge or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against an employee solely because of the employee's status as a survivor of domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking, if the survivor provides notice to the organization of the status, or the organization has actual knowledge of the status."

A motion was made by Commissioner Jamieson and seconded by Commissioner Cloutier to amend the Administrative Regulation and add the word “solely” to section 5(A)(i) page 2.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

Commissioner Coward added that he felt that the addition of the word, “solely”, did not add or take away from the paragraph but it remained neutral. Commissioner Cloutier agreed that it was neutral.

HR Director Don Brewer stated that he like the addition of “solely” because the survivors are a protected class but the County does have the right as an employer to discharge for lack of performance or behavior issues. In this particular instance, the employee would be offered a reasonable set of accommodations for their situation. However if their performance was suffering and it was unrelated to stalking or domestic violence, the County would proceed with just cause and due process and address performance or behaviors separately.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier and seconded by Commissioner Jamieson to accept the Administrative Regulations as amended.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

22-063 Amending the Cumberland County Personnel Policy, Article III, Centralized Hiring Procedure, Section 3.3, Process, sub-sections B and D.

HR Director Brewer stated that the County’s current practice is to retain all job applications that they receive for up to two years. This is a year longer than is currently required by the Maine Human Rights Commission in section 3.3. Adopting the practice of retaining job applications for one year would be in line with the State requirements and save storage space.

HR Director Brewer presented the next amendment which related to the vaccination status of employees in Section D. “Fully Vaccinated” has changed according to Maine CDC. The proposed language would be more flexible and align with the Maine CDC’s definition of “Fully Vaccinated” which also depends on the individual’s age group and vaccine manufacturer.

Commissioner Coward asked if there was a process in place for disposing of confidential documents, HR Director Brewer confirmed that there was a process and it was regularly used.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier and seconded by Commissioner Jamieson to accept the amended Cumberland County Personnel Policy.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

22-065 Amending the Jail Health Services Contract between Armor Correctional Health Services, Inc. and Cumberland County. This amendment is the 7th Amendment to the Contract.

Deputy Manager of Finance Kimball said that the Health Services Agreement between Armor Medical and the Jail was being amended because liability insurance was being increased. This is because the jail is a congregate setting and at a greater risk for the spread of COVID.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier and seconded by Commissioner Coward to approve the 7th Amendment to the Jail Health Services Contract.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

Chair Witonis request that the Item 22-064 be read after comments from staff and Commissioners. She also requested that County Manager Gailey share his comments last. There were no objections.

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE STAFF

Sheriff Joyce shared that summer patrol contracts are starting and that 3 deputies responded to an 11 year old child cardiac arrest. They administered CPR until mutual aid emergency services arrived.

Public Affairs Director Kennedy shared that the County had applied for the Communications Center radio equipment upgrade under the new Federal earmark program which was forwarded by Senator King to that specific appropriations committee. He will keep the Commissioners informed as he learns more.

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chair Witonis remarked that this was HR Director Don Brewer's last meeting. She noted that he had a long professional career in government and spent the last 6 years with the County. She thanked him and wished him well. Commissioner Cloutier thanked HR Director Brewer and said that he enjoyed working with him at the County and at the City of Portland where he was well known and respected. Commissioner Jamieson thanked HR Director Brewer for his contributions to the County. Commissioner Gorden thanked HR Director Brewer and noted that many community leaders were openly jealous of Cumberland County's HR leader.

HR Director Brewer thanked the Commissioners' for their praise.

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER

County Manager Gailey shared that he had worked with HR Director Brewer in South Portland and again in Cumberland County. He shared an email from an employee who responded to the announcement of HR Director Brewer's retirement. The email highlighted HR Director's leadership and complimented him on facilitating a positive cultural shift in the County and was overall very positive and thoughtful. He always considered all points of view when deliberating a situation. County Manager Gailey agreed with the employees assessment and that he wished HR Director Brewer would stay with the County for 10 more years.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

22-064 Approval of 3-year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Cumberland County Commissioners and the Communication Association.

The County Commissioners will enter into Executive Session in accordance with 1 M.R.S.A §405 (6) (D) to discuss contract negotiations with the Cumberland County Communications Association.

At 7:40 pm Chair Witonis requested a motion to go into executive session, a motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier and seconded by Commissioner Jamieson to go into Executive Session for the discussion of contract negotiations between the County and the Cumberland County Communications Association.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

At 8:08 pm a motion to come out of Executive Session was made by Commissioner Jamieson and seconded by Commissioner Coward.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

At 8:09 pm a motion was made by Commissioner Jamieson and seconded by Commissioner Cloutier to approve the 3 year collective bargaining agreement.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

22-066 In accordance with 1 M.R.S.A §405(6)(A) the County Commissioners will enter Executive Session to evaluate the County Manager.

At 8:11 pm Chair Witonis requested a motion to go into executive session, a motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier and seconded by Commissioner Jamieson to go into Executive Session for the evaluation of the County Manager.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

At 9:22 pm a motion to come out of Executive Session was made by Commissioner Coward and seconded by Commissioner Jamieson.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously in favor, 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting immediately adjourned after the Executive Session.

Fwd: Comment Regarding ARPA Funds

1 message

Travis Kennedy <kennedy@cumberlandcounty.org>
To: Jim Gailey <gailey@cumberlandcounty.org>

Mon, Jun 13, 2022 at 4:40 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Linda Winton** <lwinton@bonnyeagle.org>
Date: Mon, Jun 13, 2022 at 4:39 PM
Subject: Comment Regarding ARPA Funds
To: <kennedy@cumberlandcounty.org>

Re: ARPA Funds for the Cumberland County Adult Education and Career Development Hub.

I am the director of Bonny Eagle Adult Education. I cannot be at the meeting tonight as I will be testing students who wish to graduate with us on Wednesday.

Our Hub (consisting of ten adult education programs) requested a reward of \$2,000,000 to expand student enrollment in our programs. This funding was to have supported nine contracted teachers and advisors to teach English for Speakers of Other Languages and support young adults in their pursuit of a high school diploma, those who were not able to sustain their education as a result of the pandemic.

Bonny Eagle's request would have covered \$27,000 (per year for three years) for part time English and math instructors with benefits and an additional \$10,000 (per year for three years) for scholarships for our students toward workforce training activities (such as the Clinical Medical Assistant program we offer).

We currently hire high school diploma and HiSET (high school completion) instructors on an hourly basis, for two hours per class per week with no benefits. These are evening classes. There is a need for daytime classes as a lot of our students can attend during the day, but do not have the opportunity because our local budget cannot support these additional daytime classes. This ARPA funding would open up the doors for math and English classes in the daytime hours. Also, the majority of students who have attended our CMA class need support to pay for the tuition.

I can only speak for our program, but I know that other programs in our Hub are all facing the same issues. I ask that you consider fully funding the proposal to be able to support more educational programs throughout our Hub and Cumberland County.

Thank you,
Linda Winton
Director, Bonny Eagle Adult Education

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Linda Winton

Director, Bonny Eagle Adult Education

Serving Buxton, Hollis, Limington, Standish, Frye Island and You!

Fwd: public comment

1 message

Travis Kennedy <kennedy@cumberlandcounty.org>
To: Jim Gailey <gailey@cumberlandcounty.org>

Mon, Jun 13, 2022 at 3:49 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Madelyn Litz** <madelyn.litz@lakeregionschools.org>
Date: Mon, Jun 13, 2022 at 3:48 PM
Subject: public comment
To: <kennedy@cumberlandcounty.org>

Hello,

A question for public comment for tonight's meeting: I did write to the two commissioners from D1 and D2, but I think they might consider more of an award than \$500,000. There are 10 programs in the CCAE hub. Some are overwhelmed with ELL/ESOL learners, others are feeling a surge, and it's only a matter of time before the outlying areas, including my program (MSAD 61 & 72) feels the effects of increased programming and staff. Our 16 - 20 population alone has increased dramatically since Covid as well, and we've already increased our teaching hours because of the increased demand, while our local share has been decreased to decrease tax obligations for our district. Please consider more than the \$500,000 on tonight's agenda.

Thank you.

Madelyn Litz

Madelyn Litz, Director

MSAD 61 & 72 Regional Adult & Community Education
Lake Region & Fryeburg Area Adult Education
1881 Roosevelt Trail
Naples, ME 04055
Main office: 207-627-4291
Direct line: 647-5135
Fax: 693-3003
madelyn.litz@lakeregionschools.org



We proudly serve the communities of:

MSAD 61 - Lake Region Adult Ed in Bridgton, Naples, & Casco

MSAD 72 - Fryeburg Area Adult Ed in Fryeburg, Brownfield, Lovell, Stow, Stoneham, Sweden, Denmark & Chatham, N.H.

visit us at www.lakeregion-fryeburg.maineadulted.org
Visit us and "Like" us on Facebook

**Fwd: Cumberland County Commissioners Meeting (6/13/22) ARPA Grant Fund
Request Public Comment**

1 message

Travis Kennedy <kennedy@cumberlandcounty.org>
To: Jim Gailey <gailey@cumberlandcounty.org>

Mon, Jun 13, 2022 at 12:52 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Thomas Nash** <tnash@rsu14.org>

Date: Mon, Jun 13, 2022 at 12:51 PM

Subject: Cumberland County Commissioners Meeting (6/13/22) ARPA Grant Fund Request Public Comment

To: kennedy@cumberlandcounty.org <kennedy@cumberlandcounty.org>

Please accept this email below (with some minor edits) that was sent to Commissioner Witonis as a submittal for public comment for tonight's meeting.

I am writing as a member of the Cumberland County Adult Education and Career Development Hub (Hub), a consortium of Adult Education programs located throughout Cumberland County (Bonny Eagle, Freeport, Gorham, Gray/New Gloucester, Lake Region/Fryeburg Area, Portland, Scarborough, South Portland, Westbrook and Windham). On Monday evening you will be hearing about our request for ARPA funds. Our grant seeks to address the acute workforce shortage exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the Hub proposes to focus on two groups of people disproportionately impacted by the current economic and health crises brought on by the pandemic: 1) English language learners and 2) young adults (ages 17-28). The Hub will take a county-wide approach to address the barriers these two populations face to prepare for entry, participation, and advancement in the workforce.

For Windham Raymond Adult Education, the pandemic initially required that we switch from all in-person learning to all remote learning. We re-opened our in-person education on a very limited basis in the fall of 2020 but have retained a significant remote learning program since then based on our understanding that both students and teachers found the practice working well for them. We also re-examined our class sizes and determined that we needed to hire more teachers (part time or possibly a full-time one) and increase advisor hours to support students through their educational journey. This grant is one of a number of strategies to build a strong complement of teachers who can address both our critical needs at this time and will allow us to continue to build a strong, sustainable program that will meet the long term needs of our students.

One of our colleagues, Anita St. Onge will be attending Monday's meeting and would be happy to answer any questions you may have. We are all hopeful that you may consider funding this project at a level that would allow us to make a significant difference in Cumberland County.

Please accept this invitation to attend our Adult Education Graduation this Thursday night, 7:00 PM at the Windham HS Performing Arts Center. You are always welcome to visit our Adult Education Learning Center, located behind the high school, to see first-hand the type of programming that we provide. I believe all Cumberland County adult education programs would be more than happy to have any or all commissioners visit their programs.

If you have any questions for me, I can be reached at 892-1819 or tnash@rsu14.org.

Be well,