

# Community Conversations

*Welcome to the first edition of Community Conversations!*

## "What is ARPA?" OR THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

As many of you know, the town of Kent has been awarded \$821,855 in funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The funds will be distributed to the Town in two phases; \$410,927 in 2021 and \$410,927 in 2022. Guidelines for the use of these funds have been clearly outlined by the Federal Government. Generally stated, funds must be used to aid in recovery and remediation from COVID.



### Needs Assessment Committee Established

The Kent Board of Selectman has established a Needs Assessment Committee as Step One in the determination of how best to utilize our ARPA funds. The Committee is made up of town officers Jean Speck, First Selectman, and Barbara Herbst, Treasurer, and community volunteers Connie Manes, Patricia Oris, Matt Starr and Joe Agli.

The Needs Assessment Committee has had two meetings thus far. They have defined their goal as the preparation of a comprehensive report detailing the COVID-driven needs of various groups of people within the Kent community. The report will be presented to the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance who will ultimately decide how funds will be distributed. To advance their data gathering, the Needs Assessment Committee will publish two surveys in upcoming days, which are geared for taxpayers and business owners in the community. It is important to complete a survey if you live or run a business in Kent and have suffered economic distress as a result of COVID.

### What comes next?

The Needs Assessment Committee will also be organizing a series of focus groups to hear from members of our community directly on how they have been impacted by the pandemic. Focus groups may include: parents of school-aged children, seniors, retail and restaurant owners, service business owners such as insurance agents, accountants, wellness providers, etc., farmers and taxpayers. If you are interested in participating in one of these focus groups, please email [ARPA@townofkentct.org](mailto:ARPA@townofkentct.org) with your contact information.

The Needs Assessment Committee has been established to ensure a fair and transparent process for the distribution of the ARPA funds. We encourage everyone in Kent to make their voices heard through the survey and focus groups so that our decisions about distribution of funds are in direct response to your needs.

Visit the Town [ARPA Assessment Committee webpage](#) for documents regarding the ARPA funds.

Great appreciation goes to the volunteers who will be doing this hard work.

Stay well,



Jean C. Speck  
First Selectman  
Town of Kent