



**AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT STRATEGY & OUTCOMES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 2025**

REVISED

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chairman Tom Egan at 10:01 a.m. in the Susan T. Ertmer Conference room at 112 Otter Avenue, Oshkosh.

Members Present: 8 - Tom Egan, Gordon Hintz, Chuck Farrey, Morris Cox, Andy Buck, Brandon Hennes, Don Merkes and Paul Kaiser.

Absent: 2 - Nate Gustafson and Sean Fitzgerald

Also Present at this Meeting:

Julie Barthels, County Clerk

Mary Anne Mueller, Corporation Counsel

Jamie Rouch, Director of Administration

Lu Scheer, Housing Grants Specialist

Supervisor Conley Hanson, District 26

Brian Noe, Town of Omro Chairperson

Dana Woods, Town of Omro Clerk

Joyce Frohn, League of Women Voters

Via TEAMS:

Ashlee Rahmlow, Department of Public Health

Koby Schellenger, County Executive Assistant

Supervisor Frank Frassetto, District 32

Lynnsey Erickson, Department of Public Health

Adam BellCorelli, County Executive Office

Co-Chair Tom Egan asked everyone to introduce themselves and provide their connection to this commission.

B. Public Comments

The following individuals voiced their concerns and comments regarding Business Item No.

1. Discussion and Possible Commitment to Support \$3,500,000 of Spirit Funds to Partially Fund a Revolving Loan Program to Expedite Housing Development in Winnebago County:

- Conley Hanson, County Board Supervisor, District 26*
- Tricia Rathermel, President & Chief Executive Officer for Greater Oshkosh Economic Development Corporation*
- Brian Noe, Town of Omro Chairman*

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of January 27, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Motion by Supervisor Cox, seconded by Supervisor Farrey to approve the January 27, 2025, meeting minutes. CARRIED. (4-0-2-2) ABSTAIN: 3 - Hintz, Merkes and Hennes; ABSENT: 2 - Gustafson and Fitzgerald

2. Approval of August 8, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Motion by Supervisor Farrey, seconded by Supervisor Cox to approve the August 8, 2025, meeting minutes. CARRIED. (6-0-1-2) ABSTAIN: 1 - Buck; ABSENT: 2 - Gustafson and Fitzgerald.

D. Business Items

1. Discussion and possible Commitment to Support \$3,500,000 of Spirit Funds to partially fund a revolving loan program to expedite housing development in Winnebago County.

At this point, it was decided to discuss Business Item #2 prior to Item #1.

County Executive Hintz was asked to note his feelings and answered questions that he had received regarding the disbursement of \$3,500,000 of the Spirit Funds.

Supervisor Farrey voiced concerns about the broadness of this resolution. Page 9, 2nd paragraph from the bottom of the page reads "projects will help residents build equity - either through ownership or meaningful affordability - will be encouraged, but all housing types will be considered." He referred to the following pages of the packet: Sheboygan County is providing funding for construction of entry level homes; LaCrosse County is providing affordable housing for lowest income citizens; Milwaukee County is providing \$44 million for affordable housing for lowest income residents; Outagamie County is granting \$3.5 million for affordable housing. He supports the initiative but cannot support the term "all housing". This should just be for affordable housing, not apartments and such.

Don Merkes would like to submit an amendment that would support the need for a mix of units throughout the county. He would like to have the option for available loans to allow for additional housing.

Motion by Supervisor Buck, seconded by Don Merkes to support \$3,500,000 of Spirit Funds to partially fund a revolving loan program to expedite housing development in Winnebago County.

Motion by Don Merkes to amend line 42 to read as follows: "Whereas, the American Rescue Plan Act Strategy & Outcomes Commission has allocated three million five hundred thousand dollars (\$3,500,000) accrued interest in Spirit Funds, and has further determined that projects which promote the building of homeowner equity, incorporate missed mixed income housing, and/or provide workforce housing opportunities for households earning up to one hundred forty percent (140%) of the County Median Income (CMI) shall be afforded additional consideration;"

Brandon Hennes asked to include "accrued interest" after \$3,500,000 and then made a motion to second the amendment by Don Merkes.

After discussion with Corporation Counsel Mary Anne Mueller, it was determined to add this amendment after line 36.

Vote on Amendment: CARRIED by VOICE VOTE. Nays: 1 - Cox; Abstain: 0; Absent: 2 - Gustafson and Fitzgerald. (6-1-0-2)

Vote on Resolution: CARRIED by VOICE VOTE. Nays: 1 - Cox; Abstain: 0; Absent: 2 - Gustafson and Fitzgerald. (6-1-0-2)

2. Discussion: Process of how future ARPA Items/Projects would be considered.

County Executive Hintz asked the committee to provide feedback as to what items or projects they would like to consider for the Spirit Funds. His desire is to be intentional, deliberate and professional when deciding on these projects, to get the biggest results with the resources that are available. Executive Hintz would be in favor of a revolving loan proposal. He would like to see the money allocated for county initiatives, projects or studies that can benefit the county without using general fund monies. He is also looking for ways to leverage these monies with matching money or local money. Executive Hintz asked the committee to come up with some ideas and an agreement to allocate this money.

Committee members voiced concerns for the allocation of the remaining funds and sticking to the rules that were created for this commission.

County Executive Hintz noted that he is contacted by citizens daily regarding what he is doing to increase access to more housing to meet the demand for businesses for workforce housing and to help create a net new tax base. The amount that is being voted on for the new revolving loan is interest that was earned from Spirit Funds. Executive Hintz noted that the commission could be disbanded, and the money put toward the new master plan proposal. There would still be the question of what the county is doing to increase net new construction and housing.

Finance Director of Finance, Paul Kaiser, noted that the original document stated that the requirements are legacy onetime funds; geographical assortment, and enhancing funding opportunities; data avoidance sustainability, planning, emergency response of water quality and sustainability; and quality of life.

Discussion continued regarding what would be best for Winnebago County residents and the County's economic development and growth.

E. Next Meeting Date

Next meeting date: TBDASAP (To be determined - as soon as possible).

F. Adjourn

Motion by Supervisor Buck, seconded by Supervisor Farrey to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Submitted by:

Julie A. Barthels

Winnebago County Clerk

The video portion of this meeting is available on the County website:

<https://winnebagoowi.portal.civicclerk.com>