



## Oceana County Administrator's Office

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### NEWS RELEASE

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### Advisory Committee Established to Guide Oceana County's Use of American Rescue Plan Funds

**Oceana County, MI** - - Commissioner Craig Hardy (District 3) is leading a small group of county and community leaders who will offer guidance to Oceana County on how best to utilize its \$5.1 million allocation from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to assist in turning around the negative economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hardy chairs the county's finance committee which is one of six standing committees of the Board of Commissioners.

"This is a rare opportunity for our county and knowing how to use the funds is critically important," said Hardy. "It won't be easy because of the nearly 150 pages of rules for how the money is to be used."

Additional committee members may be added but the current members are Mary Lou Phillips, County Treasurer, Lynne Cavazos, Pentwater Township Supervisor, James Kelley, MSU Extension District Director, and Tammy Carey, Chief Executive Officer for the Community Foundation for Oceana County. Each committee member offers different points of view to facilitate identifying and reviewing eligible uses for the American Rescue Plan funding.

"This committee of advisors will provide very important insight into the needs of the county for both short-term and long-term benefits," said Phillips.

The committee is supported by Bob Sobie, County Administrator, who is tasked with conducting the necessary research and analysis for each proposed project before funding recommendations are submitted to the Board of Commissioners for final approval. "I'm excited to support the important decision making efforts of the committee as it develops a project list and then to follow that up with action plans to implement those projects approved by the Board of Commissioners."

Sobie is currently developing content for the county's web site that will describe the advisory committee's activities, project updates, provide links to federal and state information about ARPA, as well as describing the process organizations can use to request funding for eligible projects. The web site is <https://oceana.mi.us/ARP> and will be updated as new information becomes available.

When asked what types of funding requests would most likely receive support, Hardy was quick to point out that the advisory committee is just getting started. "It's important for everyone to understand that this will be a slow moving endeavor until we've developed all of the support systems we need to begin recommending a commitment of funds for eligible projects, including both county and regional project priorities."

Commissioner Robert Walker (District 7), chairperson of the Board of Commissioners, believes the committee's work is very important to the community. "Creating an ad hoc advisory committee represents an organized effort to establish funding priorities by representatives who will speak with one voice that focuses on goals to aid in our recovery from the negative economic impacts experienced in the county."

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