



June 11, 2021

Federal ARPA Recovery Stimulus Funding for Greene County

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) will distribute over \$1 trillion to communities recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Greene County's share will be approximately \$9.15 million. As with all federal programs, conditions and requirements must be met before monies are dispersed. County Leadership is currently working through these requirements and will be issuing a 'Stimulus Funding Plan' to the full Greene County Legislature in the coming months.

"The economic shut-down of 2020 caught many counties 'off-guard' says Patrick S. Linger (Chairman of the Greene County Legislature). "They simply weren't prepared and ended up with budget deficits and service cutbacks. Greene County's fiscal discipline and planning prevented this from happening to us. County services, including a massive Public Health response, actually increased during the pandemic. The county continued to provide departmental services during all phases of the pandemic, scaling in-office personnel as restrictions were lifted."

"The overwhelming fact is that Greene County has never been more fiscally sound. The Greene County Legislature has been steadfast in both creating and maintaining this fiscal responsibility and will apply that same discipline to create an action plan for the best use of these recovery funds."

Greene County's fiscal preparedness has been achieved through prudent, disciplined budgeting and spending that has resulted in the following:

- Greene County takes a conservative approach to estimating the amount of sales tax it expects to receive each year. It is the single largest revenue source for the county budget. Sales Tax Receipts have exceeded the yearly budget estimate in all recent years, including during the 2020 pandemic as increased resident and visitor spending assisted with stimulus funds created a dramatic increase. Sales tax collections in Greene County have risen every year since 2009, which is one of the longest such streaks among counties in New York State.
- The Greene County Property Tax Levy has remained within the 2% state property tax cap legislation in seven out of the last eight years. Greene County has a competitive property tax advantage with the 14th lowest tax rate out of the 57 counties outside of NYC.

- Greene County created a special Sales Tax Reserve Fund in 2017 in anticipation of an emergency, which allowed the county to apply funds during the 2021 budget to offset lost revenue, enabling the tax levy to remain the same as 2020.
- The 2021 Effective Full Value Tax Rate of 4.30 per thousand of assessed valuation has declined each year for the past four years.
- Every year for the last ten years, Greene County's revenues have exceeded expenses resulting in a yearly surplus, enabling the county to contribute to and maintain a healthy fund balance. Greene County's healthy financial position, tax base, and economy were instrumental in its recent bond rating upgrade to Aa2 by Moody's Investors Service, which cited the county's strong financial management as evidenced by consistently sound reserves, conservative budget management and a formal policy to maintain reserves.

"Property taxes in Greene County are some of the lowest in the region, notes Chairman Patrick S. Linger. We also have a 'rainy day fund' and a very conservative and responsible operations budget that delivers services while keeping a disciplined eye on spending. We are also one of the few counties that saw their sales tax revenue increase in 2020."

"Chairman Linger continued, since the county had its 'fiscal house in order' and did not suffer what the ARPA defines as 'significant revenue loss to the county budget' (despite major impacts to our tourism and hospitality businesses) the county has restrictions and must comply with very specific rules in the use of the ARPA funds."

"Our real challenge," County Administrator Shaun Groden stated, "Is to apply as much of this one-time federal funding to building a better future for our residents and businesses. There are a lot of hurdles we need to jump, but if we approach this effort as investment in our communities, we can bolster our economy and quality-of-life for years to come."

Greene County's initial focus of potential investment areas includes eligible infrastructure projects and building out broadband connectivity in our rural communities.

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