

**Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and General Affairs Meeting Notes**  
**Week of 2/11/2022 to 2/17/2022**

**Friday 2/11/2022**

There were no meetings of relevance to HCED today.

**Tuesday 2/15/2022**

There were no meetings of relevance to HCED today.

**Wednesday 2/16/2022**

There were no meetings of relevance to HCED today.

**Thursday 1/20/2022**

**Omnibus Economic Development**

- Joan Goldstein joined the committee to discuss various proposals in S.263, the omnibus economic development bill.
- Beginning with moving ERG funds to VEDA, the committee and the business community is seemingly on board.
- On segregating money specifically for the creative sector, Sen. Sirotkin is unsure that is more effective than just allowing creative sector businesses to have preference in grants.
  - Sen. Clarkson pointed out that the creative sector bill has other goals than just economic recovery (i.e. long-term investments), so keeping it separate is good.
  - They will discuss this more as the bill continues to be drafted.
- Moving to the general Capital Investment request, Sen. Sirotkin is concerned about the large amount of money (\$106M having few legislative guardrails)
  - Comm. Goldstein stressed that ARPA guidelines are already quite burdensome, so by no means are they being “handed a blank check”.
  - Sen. Sirotkin said he wants to discuss guardrails related to prioritization and grant caps.
  - Comm. Goldstein was insistent that the legislature add no other guardrails other than what is already in the ARPA final rule. Her agency’s job is difficult enough as is, with projects only getting a fraction of what they request.
  - Sen. Clarkson is supportive of having flexible guidelines that adhere closely to the ARPA final rule with only minor legislative tweaking.
- Moving to the Grand List Enhancement proposal, Sen. Sirotkin would like to know what the benefits of segregating money for GLE are in the eyes of the administration.
  - Comm. Goldstein said that it will allow for targeting development in towns that need growth while ensuring that the grant money will actually contribute to community growth, in addition to individual/business growth.

- 27 towns show negative GL value, while over 100 show growth between 0% and 1%
- The committee seems lukewarm on the proposal. Sen. Sirtokin is unsure that such a program is necessary for economic recovery. Sen. Clarkson said there are likely other provisions in the bill that can increase GL value. Sen. Ram Hinsdale is in favor of using metrics for directing money, but is unsure that GL is the best metric for community growth.
- Moving on, Sen. Sirotkin asked if the administration is requesting any money for brownfield development.
  - Yes, they are asking for a one-time appropriation of \$6M to add to unspent money from last year that they plan to have fully spent by the end of the year.
  - Comm. Goldstein said they money worked well for their goals and that the administration enjoyed the flexibility provided.
  - Sen. Clarkson mentioned that developers are seeking more money than the request, and will come in soon to discuss.
- Quickly discussing the remote worker relocation program, Comm. Goldstein said that she is looking for language that will address people on the waitlist, or that missed out on the last round of payments because funds ran out.
  - Sen. Sirotkin asked how many people are on that waitlist.
    - Comm. Goldstein is unsure, but will get some information to the committee that will help them decide how to address the waitlist.
  - David Hall read new language that allowed workers to be pre-approved for payments, but payment would not be disbursed until after relocation had been completed.