

Wallingford ARPA Committee Meeting Minutes March 15, 2022

Committee Members Present: Peg Soule, Ann Awad, Bruce Dobbins, Elicia Pinsonault, Jim Bagnall, Robert Allen

Others Present: Grey Wicker

Peg Soule called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m.

Receive New Appointed Member: Grey Wicker introduced himself to the committee. Bruce Dobbins made a motion that was seconded by Ann Awad to recommend the Select Board appoint Grey Wicker to fill the vacancy. Motion Carried (6-0).

Agenda Additions/Deletions: Bruce Dobbins requested to provide an update to the group about the select board meeting he attended after the public comment agenda item. It was requested that this be added as a standing agenda item.

Review and Approve Minutes: Peg Soule requested clarification about the minutes reflecting that the committee will not consider payments to individuals as that's not what is reflected in the guidelines. Bruce Dobbins noted that was his understanding following the select board meeting he attended. Peg Soule asked that the minutes reflect that the select board appears to be in favor of not providing personal payments using the funding. Robert Allen made a motion that was seconded by Bruce Dobbins to approve the ARPA Committee meeting minutes from February 15 as amended. Motion carried (5-0). Peg Soule abstained from voting because she was not in attendance at February's meeting.

Public Comment: None

Select Board Update: Bruce Dobbins reported that the select board approved the committee's mission statement. He updated the select board on the committee's next steps.

The committee discussed the lost revenue provision which was recently added to the U.S. Treasury guidelines for ARPA funds. Robert Allen recommended the committee take advantage of this provision and recommend to the select board that they transfer the funds under this provision. This would prevent any misinterpretation of funding guidelines and would expand project eligibility. If this provision was acted on, the committee would continue their work and make recommendations to the select board as to how to expend the ARPA funds, keeping the spirit of the ARPA guidelines in mind. Robert Allen is going to clarify with Eric Hall of the Rutland Region Planning Commission what would be required if the Town was to take advantage of this provision, including what type of documentation would be needed and if the Town could establish a separate account or if the funds must be transferred into the general fund.

The committee engaged in discussion about recommending projects based on ARPA guidelines if the decision is eventually made to take advantage of the lost revenue provision, or do we open proposal solicitation up to any project that would benefit our communities? Some felt it was important to use the funds as they were originally intended (to help towns recover from the pandemic and promote public welfare) while others felt that some organizations were trying to make their projects fit into the strict

guidelines and relaxing the requirements through the provision would make funding these projects viable.

Follow up on Elfin Lake Project: No update available

Receive Draft of General Criterion for Public Announcement: Bruce Dobbins and Elicia Pinsonault were unable to connect but will establish the public announcement before April's meeting. Bruce Dobbins recommended Grey Wicker join this subcommittee.

Discuss Public Announcement: Peg Soule noted the need to establish an application that would give respondents the opportunity to present uniform information to the committee for review. The committee began discussing the process for soliciting and evaluating projects/proposals. Peg Soule believes that a one-month period for accepting proposals is too short and recommended accepting proposals for at least three months.

The sub-committee will establish a public announcement that includes an application form. These will be collected and reviewed using a standard evaluation tool, such as a matrix.

The committee reviewed what solicitation tools and evaluation methods other towns are using and discussed targeted areas for public input, including contact representatives of organizations to encourage them to submit a proposal.

Discuss Timeline of Key Informant Interviews: The committee agreed that it should welcome representatives and experts from various organizations and areas to present to the committee while accepting proposals to keep the process moving forward.

Other Business: None

Agenda Building: Robert Allen follows up on his conversation with Eric Hall, select board meeting update, review of public announcement and application, confirmation of Grey's appointment, and public comment.

Adjourn: Robert Allen made a motion that was seconded by Ann Awad to adjourn at 8 p.m. Motion Carried (6-0).