

Wallingford ARPA Committee Meeting Minutes
June 21, 2022

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

Others Present: None

Peg Soule called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Additions/deletions to agenda: None

Approving Minutes from May 2022: Bruce Dobbins made a motion that was seconded by Jim Bagnall to table the approval of the minutes from June's meeting. Motion Carried (6-0)

Public Comment: None

Select board Meeting Update: None

Update on Announcement and Application: Elicia Pinsonault updated the committee on the application and announcement, which was shared with the Town to publish on the Town's website, Front Porch Forum, and in the monthly newsletter.

Peg noted that the application does not ask respondents how much additional funding or matching funds they have or expect to secure. Elicia will connect with Sandi to provide updated language and ask her to post through the various channels that an update has been made to the application form. Elicia is also going to confirm with Sandi how often the application information will be shared with the public before the November deadline.

Bruce will reach out to Sandi to determine what type of tracking mechanism the Town is using to organize and share submitted applications. He will also get contact information for those who have already applied and will ask them this additional question, rather than requiring them to complete the application again.

Peg is going to reach out to the Rutland Herald to try and get a story or announcement about the application being open.

Listing of Applications and Status: Peg reviewed what applications have been submitted as of the meeting. Jim asked if community members who submitted an idea to the select board in the fall might think they have already applied? Peg is going to post on Front Porch Forum and share in her newsletter update that those individuals who submitted an idea in the fall concerning the use of ARPA funds should submit a formal application, which is available on the town's website. She will also note that the ARPA final rules have expanded the eligibility requirements for projects and encourage those to apply whose projects didn't qualify under the initial guidelines.

Project valuation: Bruce reminded the committee that we need to find a mechanism to ensure the amount requested is accurate. He suggested the committee waits until it determines that a project is being seriously considered for recommendation to the select board, then reconnects with the person who submitted a request and work together to find a way to verify the amount requested. The committee also noted that inflation and the rising cost of goods and services could make this challenging; what someone submits in July will likely not cost the same as it will in October. The committee agreed we will need to verify the amount requested for each project.

ARPA recipient package: Committee questioned if creating this package is our role, which has to this point to be an advisory group that evaluates proposals and makes a recommendation to the select board for which projects to fund. Committee asked if there was a template from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. Peg confirmed that she and Sandi are asking for this. The concern is that this process isn't different from other projects the town has funded. Sandi also noted that individuals would be reimbursed by the town for the project. Peg is going to confirm this with Sandi and have a conversation about the viability of this and if it will exclude groups who would not be able to pay for the project upfront.

Draft Matrix: There are two matrices that have been established and the subcommittee is working to combine them into one document. They will bring forward another draft at the next committee meeting for approval.

Elicia noted that it seems like the committee has created a tracking spreadsheet, rather than a true evaluation matrix. She recommended that the committee establishes a matrix that each individual member could complete that would then be combined to help guide funding priorities in a non-biased manner. Bruce shared that he thought this process would take too much time and that he felt the subcommittee could take the first stab at reaching a consensus and bring it to the committee. Elicia shared that she did not feel comfortable with the subcommittee determining the priorities for a seven person committee and wants everyone to have the agency to bring their own experiences and opinions to the evaluation process. The committee agreed that the subcommittee would be responsible for tracking and organizing applications, but evaluation for each proposal would be done by each individual committee member before being discussed as a group.

Ann asked for clarification on Bruce saying he went to meet with the individuals from South Wallingford who submitted a proposal. She noted that this could be confusing to the process and the applicant. Bruce confirmed that this was prior to the committee starting to meet. The committee agreed that individuals should not be contacting applicants except to invite them to speak with the committee.

Other business: None

Agenda Building:

- Add valuation as a recurring agenda item
- Select board update
- Matrix process update
- Application update status
- Listing of applications and status
- Follow up on ARPA recipient package
- Application tracking follow-up from conversation with Sandi

Adjourn: Ann Awad made a motion that was seconded by Bruce to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried (6-0)

Next Meeting Date: July 19, 2022