

ARPA Committee Report to the Selectboard

May 1, 2023

The ARPA Committee received 27 applications for funds prior to the November 1, 2022 deadline for submissions. Of those, several were withdrawn, and a number were combined. The applications were widely divergent; they represent the needs of the town as a whole, the three villages, smaller groups within the town, and the business sector. We are extremely impressed and pleased with the impact this money will have in Wallingford for decades to come.

The committee thanks all the applicants for their work in gathering and presenting the information necessary to submitting and moving their requests forward; without these efforts, we would not be able to use this money nearly as effectively in meeting the Town's needs.

The committee would especially like to thank Sandi Switzer who has provided us with her tireless support, information, communication, and good humor throughout this process. We know she will have a very important role in implementing these projects as they move forward.

After reviewing the applications and gathering further necessary information, including itemized quotes from contractors, the Committee created three categories in order to prioritize the applications.

I. In the category of **Health and Safety**, we recommend:

Application #3: South Wallingford Water Company
\$8,445

The purpose of this request is to replace a failed water line that has resulted in two households having almost no water and all other homes on the line having minimal water pressure.

Application #4: South Wallingford Water Company
\$34,500

The purpose of this request is to replace the failed water main that has resulted in ~750,000 gallons of chlorinated water leaking into the ground. Not only is this a legal violation for polluting the environment, but it is also putting the entire system at risk of both freezing and of being insufficient in the event of a drought.

Application #6: Town of Wallingford
\$108,750

The purpose of this request is to replace the existing sidewalks on both sides of School Street. This sidewalk is used by all Wallingford Village students going to and from the school. It is used by students from all over Wallingford Town when going to day care, the library, the parks, or other places in the village from the school. The Town Hall, a church, housing for elderly people, and housing for physically challenged adults are on this street. Efforts have been made since 1985 to have these sidewalks replaced in order to prevent possible injury from falls and liability to the town.

Application #9: Highland Water Supply Association
\$9,200

The purpose of this request is to replace leaking curb stops in the Highland Water System that result in lowered water pressure and an increase in water usage, raising costs for both Highland water users and for the Fire District #1 system.

Application # 13: East Wallingford Fire Department
\$100,000

The purpose of this request is to purchase a new and larger tanker-pumper fire truck capable of carrying more water and more equipment, thus increasing the speed of response possible. (The East Wallingford Fire Department responds to fires in Wallingford, Shrewsbury, Mount Holly, Clarendon, and Ludlow through the Mutual Aid System.) The estimates on this truck are \$350,000-\$450,000. The Fire Department is proposing to replace their 1986 tanker, increasing the water-carrying capability by two-thirds. They have raised \$145,000 toward this purchase. They have submitted an application for a State grant, but such applications are highly competitive. The ARPA money, combined with the funds the Fire Department has put together will make a state award for the balance more feasible. In addition to the money recommended here, the committee recommends that all residual ARPA funds be given toward this purchase if sufficient funds have not yet been attained.

Application #14: Town of Wallingford
\$1,500

The purpose of this request is to install a security camera at the Town Hall. We are required to have our ballot drop box under 24-hour security. This would replace the current inconsistent camera with a hard-wired security camera.

Application #18: Town of Wallingford
\$20,700

The purpose of this request is to purchase a generator for the Wallingford Town Hall. Town Hall is the designated Emergency Operations Center for administrative functions and FEMA in case of catastrophic emergencies. It is the Primary Shelter under the Town's Emergency Management Plan. It is the reunification and evacuation location for the elementary school, and it is the designated Cooling Center in the event of a forecasted Heat Advisory. All of these have the potential to require an independent source of power. The amount requested is the Town's half of a requested matching grant.

Application #20: Wallingford Rescue Squad
\$9,228

The purpose of this request is to purchase both a stair-chair and a generator to be installed at the WRS building. Currently the WRS owns only one stair-chair, and there are two ambulances. This purchase will allow both to be equally equipped to respond to emergencies. The generator will establish the WRS building to be a secure environment in case of another natural disaster.

Application #21: Fire District #1
\$18,000

The purpose of this request is to fund the 20-year evaluation of the wastewater treatment plant required of the Fire District #1 by the state in order to continue to run the plant. This evaluation is currently underway.

Application #26: Cecile Betit and Jill Stone
\$1,395

The purpose of this request is to perform a need and risk assessment for telecommunications in the Town of Wallingford during power outages or other emergency situations. Since the installation of fiberoptic cable for our landlines, they are now dependent on electricity to function. The back-up batteries only have a life-expectancy of 8-hours when in use, and need to be replaced regularly. There are also many locations in Town where there is no cell phone reception, including on major thoroughfares. This limits our first-responders ability to communicate while on the road, potentially a very dangerous situation.

II. In the category of other applications that will **Benefit the Entire Town**, we recommend:

Application #7: Gilbert Hart Library
\$16,800

The purpose of this request is to replace the failing hip tiles on the library roof in order to protect the physical structure and the building's contents.

Application #8: Town Clerk
\$81,000

The purpose of this request is to digitize the Wallingford Land Records Volumes 1-100. Volumes 101-111 were digitized through a Coronavirus Municipal Records Digitization Grant, allowing access to these records while the Town Hall was closed to the public. The scanning and indexing of the remaining volumes would allow secure, easy access to these records from anywhere, and help to preserve them from possible damage. There would be an ongoing expense for digital storage of this information.

III. In the category of other applications that will **Benefit Some of the Town**, we recommend:

Application #12: The Main Street Cafe
\$36,000

The purpose of this request is to replace income lost to a small business due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This is one of the primary purposes of the ARPA money as described in the original, as well as the Final Rules as presented by VLCT.

Application #27: First Baptist Church of Wallingford
\$4,980

The purpose of this request is to repair the chimney/roof of the church, which has already had damage to three rooms due to leakage. Zoom meetings during the pandemic have resulted in a loss of income to the church, limiting their ability to handle this expense. This church, founded in 1780, is the oldest baptist church in Vermont.

IV. **Other Approved Applications** not recommended for funding at this time:

Application #15-17, 19: Wallingford Energy Committee
(requested) \$82,450

The purpose of these requests is to upgrade the energy efficiency of the Town Hall through weatherization, insulation, window coverings, renovations to the 2nd floor oil burner and AC units, and new HVAC units. We strongly support the process of upgrading the energy efficiency of Town Hall. We recommend that the Selectboard utilize the Town's Building Fund for these projects, which address the very issues for which this fund was created; this will maximize the effectiveness of ARPA funds. In addition, the state has prioritized a new grant opportunity specifically oriented toward making town facilities more energy efficient, with funds to be allocated in the fall. We recommend taking advantage of this new funding opportunity in order to maximize the effectiveness of our ARPA funds. The Energy Committee's requested funds, minus the money in the Building Fund, should be held in reserve to complete these projects.

Application #24: Sharon and Ralph Nimitz
(requested) \$10,500

The purpose of this request is to place three solar radar speed monitors on North and South Main Street (VT Route 7) and on VT Route 140W in order to remind unintentional speeders of the legal speed limit. We recommend waiting for a decision on grant money for which Ralph is applying, while holding the requested money in reserve to complete this project.

Application #25: Town of Wallingford
(requested) \$26,320

The purpose of this request is to improve cybersecurity, better fortifying Town records, personnel files, and other sensitive data. The committee recommends that the Town apply for available grants to support this effort, using ARPA funds for the matching component.

V. Applications Not Recommended for funding:

**Application #1: Wallingford Energy Committee
\$5,000**

The purpose of this request is to fund 50% of the cost (\$100) of home energy audits to Wallingford homeowners. The committee supports the concept of encouraging home energy audits; however, it is our understanding that free energy audits have been available recently, and were not utilized. Therefore, we do not see this as likely to be a successful allocation of resources.

**Application #2: Wallingford Energy Committee
\$50,000**

The purpose of this request is to address the multiple issues that negatively impact the energy efficiency at the Fire House. The committee does not support this project because the fire House is owned by the Railroad, not the Town.

**Application #5: Town Building Committee
\$15,000**

The purpose of this request is to weatherize the Community Food Shelf portion of Town Hall. This application was combined with other Town Hall projects.

**Applications #10-11: The Wallingford Village Market
\$13,250**

The purpose of this request is to provide ADA compliant entrance to the proposed building for the Wallingford Village Market. This application was withdrawn when other funding for this project fell through.

**Application #22: Wallingford Fire District #1
\$66,000**

The purpose of this request is to install new digital meters that are more accurate than the current meters. With the extensive expected expenses facing the Fire District, the committee did not find this a compelling use of ARPA funds.

**Application #23: Wallingford Fire District #1
Unknown**

The purpose of this request is to upgrade the water and sewer systems of Fire District #1. Information regarding the project and costs will be unavailable until the evaluation of the system is completed. According to information presented to the committee, this is likely to require such extensive funding that a bond will be required. Therefore, the committee decided ARPA funds should be used for other projects.

The ARPA Committee would be glad to provide any further services the Selectboard would find helpful, and we look forward to continuing to work together as these decisions are finalized.

Submitted by the ARPA Committee:

Peg Soule, Chair
Anne Awad, Vice Chair
Elicia Pinsonault, Clerk
James Bagnall
Robert Allen
Bruce Dobbins
Grey Wicker

Funding Totals

Recommended Funding Allocations:
\$450,498

Reserved Funding Requested
\$119,270

Building Fund (\$62,800)

Recommended Reserved Funding Allocations:
\$56,470

Total Funding Recommended:
\$506,968

Total ARPA Funds (March 31, 2023)
\$587,070

Residual Funds \$80,102