

TOWN OF WESTFORD
ARPA COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes
December 15, 2021

Members Present: Dave Baczewski, Greg Barrows, George Lamphere, Nanette Rogers, Bill Hill, Martha Heath, Bree Drapa

Members Absent: n/a

Also Present: Callie Hamdy (Minute Clerk)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and was held in person and via Zoom.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

MINUTES

Martha Heath motioned to approve the Minutes of November 17, 2021, as amended. George Lamphere seconded. Motion passed 7-0.

ADMIN

Dave recommended January 19th for the next meeting and the committee agreed.

PRACTICE/REVIEW PHASE 1-2 SUBMISSION PROCESS AND RUBRIC DEVELOPMENT

The committee roleplayed the Phase 1-2 Submission Process and Rubric scenario. Dave presented a fake application for the committee to practice against. The application was realistic, but intentionally not very close to any actual application in which we expect to receive in Westford.

Simulation #1: the scenario covered a newly formed non-profit that would need funds at an unspecified point in time. Greg asked how this is possible if we must allocate and spend the money by a certain timeframe.

The Committee worked through the scenario coming to a recommendation as part of the Phase 1 submission, including the choosing of an expenditure category. Dave felt that while filling out the Phase 1 application as the applicant he really wanted to be able to talk to the committee and explain some of the areas in more detail versus just submitting the application for review. Bree agreed and thought that we could assess the Phase 1 application and then ask the applicant to be present in person/zoom during Phase 2 to better explain the application and to answer potential questions. Martha added it would help us and the applicants if we figured out the questions we would like to ask applicants so that the applicants can come prepared – perhaps this is where a project mentor comes in.

The committee then began looking at the Phase II application for Scenario 1. The committee discussed the difference between beneficiary and sub-recipient.

The committee discussed the rubric. To Bill he looks at Phase I in the context of “can we spend it,” part 1 of the rubric would be the committee checking off the “yes we can” aspects of a project. Page 2 would cover “should we spend it”. Dave feels that every committee member’s Phase I sheet should ideally look the same as it looks at the “can” and factual evidence. Where we would get into opinion it would be more in Phase II and the “should” and how it stacks on the other potential impacts other groups are making. Bill feels the forms raise plenty of points of discussion for the group to make decisions.

The committee scored Scenario 1 on the rubric and presented their individual scores. Martha noticed there was nothing in the rubric on the immediacy of the impact and inquired if this was something we wanted to consider. The committee was unsure, Bill noticed that the topic of immediacy has come up in all three meetings the committee has had. With some projects longevity is a good thing and with others it is not.

All scores for each committee member would be averaged into one and the highest and lowest scores would also be highlighted. Martha would ask the Selectboard as to how they want to see scores presented.

Bill went over the recommendation page. George thinks a quad chart that becomes a living document that went with a project would be nice. The rest of the committee thought quad charts worked well. Bill wanted a memorandum of understanding between the Selectboard, the committee and the project that lays out what is agreed to. VLCT may have something. The Committee felt that Phase I & II and rubric were ready to show the Selectboard in draft form, it will continue to evolve. Changes in Phase I were when talking about project duration to change that to implementation of the project duration, not how long is the project going on. The other change was to provide a link to the town plan.

Bree wanted to put something in the January newsletter that would let the community know that they are still working on ARPA things, to continue the visibility. A public hearing describing the process to the public would also help keep things transparent. The committee also discussed meeting with all the town groups, we need to keep things simple and positive.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.