

**Town of Westford  
ARPA Committee Meeting  
Draft Minutes  
November 30, 2022**

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

**Also Present:** Callie Hamdy (Minute Clerk), Ben Bornstein, Glen Rogers, Sheila Franz, Laurie Miller

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

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

Westford Historical Society has returned for a Section F Adjustment added.

**MINUTES**

The approval of the minutes was pushed to the next time.

Bill Hill wanted to clarify on comments he had made on the November 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting regarding the town having two community centers. He stated that, although he was the odd one out for the vote it is because he thinks it is important that the two community centers communicate prior to funding requests to maximize the funding requests. He reiterated that he wants to keep both buildings, it is the functional improvements he feels needs to be thought through together.

**ADMIN**

Tomorrow is the first evening that the ARPA Committee will be presenting to the Selectboard with the Phase II Applications. They will also be discussing the Selectboard's previous decision to hold back \$200,000 of the ARPA money.

**REVIEW/SCORE/DETERMINE RECOMMENDATION TO THE SELECTBOARD FOR PHASE 2 APPLICATIONS:**

Dave went over the process for the presentation of the Phase 2 applications. First the project representative will present and then the Committee members will score the project individually before going over their scoring.

**Westford Historical Society**

Glen Rogers was present. The WHS had previously been asked to amend their Schedule F on their application. Schedule F was for the rainy day fund originally, so they withdrew it and put in the Westford Historical Society Speaker series to take place over the next couple of years. They have put in a fund of \$6,400. The speakers will be relevant to the Town of Westford. The Historical Society had also investigated mitigation of the graffiti and integrity preservation of the Covered Bridge, but due to lack of cost confirmation they decided to keep this off the request. Dave was willing to include the bridge regardless of the nonspecific price but thought the Selectboard should decide that. Glen agreed.

**Ben Bornstein – EMT/EMS Training**

Ben Bornstein was present. His proposal was about funding Emergency Medical Response Training for Westford residents. Emergency response access and care is extremely important but faces several challenges in Westford including increased costs and lack of volunteers and other stressors spurred by the pandemic. Ben's program would put high school juniors and seniors in training for CPR and other first aid. Ben had talked with the Fairfax Rescue head who offered to provide training if funded. Ben thinks getting younger people involved in emergency medical response is important. This would provide more resilience for the community.

Bree was not present at the meeting but had provided comments. She believes the application is the out of the box thinking they were hoping for in applications and she is excited about it. She wondered why the age limit was for juniors and seniors and wondered if we could open it up to a larger pool. There is an age requirement by the state and there is an insurance issue that is part of that. There is a window of two years from when one completes certain benchmark training and when one can take the exam. Younger people can take it, certainly the Level 1 of the ADR and CPR training, but the upper level where youth would be working directly with rescue squads there is an age cut off.

George asked if Ben had any idea of the level of interest from people in the community. Ben had spoken directly to around 50 people already, all of whom liked the community and giving back aspects of the project.

The Committee Scored as below (out of a total potential score of 36):

George: 20

Greg: 27

Martha: 22

Dave: 25

Bill: 20

Bree: 23

Nanette: 25

The Committee Voted 7/7 to approve the application as is.

#### **Town of Westford – Town Office Feasibility Study**

Based on instruction from the Selectboard, an application for a Town Office Feasibility Study had been submitted. The purpose of the study was to see what could be done regarding the current town office building and/or property. The current office is too small for the people that currently employed, not spacious enough for a meeting and staff are often on top of one another.

George explained that the Selectboard is cognizant of the space limitations as well as the age and health of the working environment. There has been an air quality issue in the building that needs to be monitored, a water quality concern, a wastewater concern, a parking concern, etc. A professional should conduct a study and let the town know what their options are and are not with the current property. He does not think anybody in the community wants to see the Town Office moved from the Common and this is the only property in the Common area the Town owns. He feels this is a good use of ARPA dollars and producing good data that will allow us to know the options moving forward before there is an emergency issue is ideal. They did not provide the selection of an engineering firm because they felt that was a Selectboard decision but got a lot of good responses from engineering firms in the area. They asked for up to \$62,000 for the project which was based on the RFPs.

To Martha, the response when they asked for people to look at the building was massive and surprising. People asked good questions and made good comments. One of the struggles they have is the difference between a feasibility study and an actual design which makes the rubric difficult. This is not a specific project that is going to be built, this is just about finding out what the possibilities are.

Dave explained that from a Selectboard position, having asked for this, it is critical for the Selectboard to know what they can or cannot do moving forward. They do put taxpayer money aside each year to do something with the building. The study would allow the town to have an informed decision when the time comes to move forward with the necessity of doing something with the town office.

Bill asked if there were constraints or scope limitations in terms of what is defined as 'feasibility.' Is the study limited to the current property? Martha explained that a feasibility can say that renovation or rebuilding is not possible on the property, but the scope is on the current property and cannot transfer to another property. George felt that they cannot predict at this time what an engineer would propose. Martha believes they will say they recommend expanding the building and that the current wastewater system will not accommodate any expansion. A feasibility study is not providing answers to problems but telling us what is possible on the current property so we can better plan and move forward.

Sheila Franz asked why limit the best solution by being constrained to the current property? George explained the town cannot go to a private property owner about doing a feasibility study on private property for a municipal building. Martha explained that yes, while the town technically owns other property, they do not own other property that is ideal for a town office. The feasibility study will look at this best option property on the Common. If they were going to move off the current site that would be a much larger consideration. This is just about if it is feasible to do something on the current property.

The Committee Scored as below (out of a total potential score of 36):

George: 28

Greg: 25

Martha: 27

Dave: 24

Bill: 27

Bree: 29

Nanette: 25

The Committee Voted 7/7 to approve the application as is.

### **Westford Recreation – Features Track**

Laurie Miller was present. The Recreation Committee is proposing a features track, aka a pump track, in the Misty Meadows. This was part of a grant they already put in that did not go through for the Department of Forest Recreation, so they already have a lot of the ground work done. This is in collaboration with Fellowship of the Wheel. FotW works within Chittenden county to create sustainable mountain biking trails on private and public land.

The ARPA request also included some additional trail improvements to some particularly wet spots. They would love to provide the community and kids with more opportunities for mountain biking. This would also benefit the school and their physical education program as they do use bikes occasionally. The features track would be a relatively small area.

Bree asked about signage. She could see this leading to more trail damage over time so is signage a part of this to let people know where they want to direct people? Yes that was part of it, as was the trail improvements on the more remote trails that would help keep uses separate.

Martha pointed to another grant program in the state called "Building Communities" which is run through the Department of Buildings and general services, but you must have matching funds. She thought that if they apply for that grant maybe the ARPA funds would only have to cover the matching funds, but the downside is the next round of applications is not until next fall.

Bree commented that this is a fun project, many of the projects the committee has heard are more "boring" and this project serves our younger population that is not being served by most of the ARPA requests. It is a

small amount of money to impact an underserved population of Westford. She does not think the youth demographic has been well represented amongst ARPA requests.

Greg had asked about sustaining and maintenance of the pump track. There is some maintenance required however Laurie feels the recreation committee and volunteer forces would do any repair and maintenance work.

The Committee Scored as below (out of a total potential score of 36):

George: 22

Greg: 26

Martha: 25

Dave: 25

Bill: 26

Bree: 27

Nanette: 24

The Committee Voted 7/7 to approve the application as is.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment currently.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.