

**SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
**December 1, 2022**  
**Minutes**

Present:	Bill Cleary Lee McClenny Dave Baczewski	Nanette Rogers Greg Barrows Callie Hamdy
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Guests:        See attached list

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA**

Added road closure request for the Westford Winter Festival & Concert.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joe and Sheila Franz were present. They received the Planning Commission's response regarding the email from Joe and Sheila Franz regarding traffic patterns in general and particularly on back roads if there is development in the village center. Joe and Shelia would like the Selectboard to discuss the PC's response at an upcoming meeting. They think Westford does not have a good understanding of what is going on with traffic in town.

Barb Peck added that last fall she sat on the Common and counted cars as they went by; she counted over 200 cars. She believes this is an increase from the past due to development in neighboring towns. In her opinion, this should be considered when thinking about development in Westford.

**ARPA APPLICATIONS**

Dave Baczewski, who was involved with the ARPA Committee, explained the review and awarding process. The applicants went through a two-phase application process, with the latter part being more in depth with specifics. The Committee asked the applicant questions, there was an opportunity for public comment, and then the Committee scored the application using the rubric. The Committee then made a recommendation to the Selectboard. The process will be similar for the Selectboard. Dave will explain the Committee's sentiment for each application and break down how it was scored. He noted that the amount of the requests exceeds the amount allotted to the Town.

**REVIEW DECISION TO HOLD \$200,000 OF ARPA FUNDS IN RESERVE**

In the early part of the ARPA process, the Board decided to hold back \$200,000 of the \$632,000 allotted. The Committee's work is done. There were fourteen applications, and the amount being requested exceeds the amount received. The Selectboard must now choose to use those funds on the current requests or continue to hold the \$200,000 for town matters. Dave's recommendation is to put it all on the table and see where it falls, using any leftover funds to benefit the Town. Bill didn't have an objection to that. Lee commented that among the ARPA applications is one from the Planning Commission for a community wastewater system. He has difficulty saying yes to something that is absent a clear statement from Westford residents that it's a project they want to pursue. Bill feels this can be decided on during the process. The Planning Commission can present their project, make their plea, and the Board can choose how much, if any, funds will be awarded.

There is no intention of opening the ARPA process for more applications. Therefore, the question is whether the Town should use the \$200,000 for town business only or hear all the applications and use any funds that may be leftover.

Lee feels there is no need to set the \$200,000 aside because there is no intention of opening the process up for more applications. Bill noted that the Board has received increased budget requests for FY'24, including a significant increase in the Highway Department. The Board is facing a challenging budget season. This will be on his mind when hearing the ARPA applications. Dave Baczewski made a motion to offer the entire ARPA allocation of \$632,605.29 as available to allocate over this round of ARPA applications, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

### **DOG WARDEN**

Dave explained that the overall reason for this application is to purchase necessary equipment to better serve the position of Dog Warden. The Dog Warden application scored a 13 out of 14. The sentiment of the Committee was that this was a great proposal even though it didn't score well on the rubric. All seven committee members voted to approve the application with full allocation. During the pandemic there was a request for needed supplies and equipment for the Dog Wardens. The Town has not been able to meet the needs through the Town budget.

Elisabeth Smith, Dog Warden, was present. Elisabeth thanked the Board for their time and support. She emphasized that this is a onetime expense that will sustain the position for many years. She thinks that the trust the community will increase knowing that the Town has invested in the Dog Warden by providing them with items such as bite proof gloves, kennels, and funds for emergency vet care.

Bill thanked Elisabeth for a job well done. He noted that if the funds for emergency care are not spent by the deadline, the Town will need to re-allocate the funds. Elisabeth suggested purchasing a VISA card with the funds. She feels the funds will have been spend and will be readily available if an occasion arises. Dave thought this was a good idea. Joel Fay asked if the dog owner will need to reimburse the Town for emergency care. Elisabeth confirmed that would be the case if the owner is known. This would be for times when the owner is not known or has relinquished the dog.

Lee fully supported the Dog Wardens' ARPA application. He stated that the management of dogs is a municipal obligation, and that the Town has taken steps to improve the role/service. He feels the ARPA application will enhance the improvement to make things more professional. The amount of money is small for the benefits. He thanked the Dog Wardens for their thoroughness and professionalism.

Dave Baczewski made a motion to approve the Dog Warden application for ARPA funds in the amount of \$2,100, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

### **CONSERVATION COMMISSION – SNOWMOBILE**

Dave explained that the Conservation Commission is requesting \$16,000 to purchase a new snowmobile. The scoring for the request was tied with other applications and falls within the 7-10 range out of 14 applications. Dave stated that the importance of the trail system in Westford is recognized through town, and especially so during the pandemic. The trail system provided a necessary physical and mental health benefit to residents. It was noted that this

has been a long-standing request from the Conservation Commission, even prior to ARPA, but had not previously been granted due to the constraints of the Town budget which makes this an excellent use of ARPA funds.

Joe thanked the ARPA Committee. He advised that due to supply chain problems the purchase, if approved, won't happen until next year. The dealer is requiring a deposit by February for the machine. The machine would be delivered in the fall. Nanette asked what happens if the machine costs more than \$16,000. Joel advised that the quote has some contingencies built in. If there is a significant price increase, the Conservation Commission would take funds from their budget and/or sell the old machine.

Bill asked the Commission if a less expensive machine that could do the job was considered. Joel advised that due to the size of the groomer this is the recommended machine, and the track is wider so it will work better in deeper snow. The new machine will also be more efficient, which will reduce maintenance and gas expenses.

Lee highlighted the importance of the Conservation Commission's work, as well as the need for adequate equipment to do their jobs properly. They have a record of taking care of their machinery. He thinks the Town should invest in a quality item.

Dave Baczewski made a motion to approve the Conservation Commission \$16,000 funding request to purchase a snowmobile, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

#### **CONSERVATION COMMISSION – STORAGE SHED**

The Conservation Commission submitted a second application for \$6,000 to construct a storage shed on Misty Meadows to store the new snowmobile, the groomer, and some recreation equipment in a centralized location. The shed would be secured. Permits for the shed have been discussed with Planning and Zoning. This application was also tied with other applications and falls within the 7-10 range out of 14 applications. The Committee's sentiments were similar to those for the snowmobile; trails are important and so is the maintenance of the trails.

Lee thought this was a good application and the utility to broad population of the town is clear. His only concern is whether \$6,000 would be enough based on increased material prices.

Bill Cleary made a motion to approve the Conservation Commission's application for \$6,000 to construct a storage shed, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

#### **LIBRARY**

Dave explained the Library is requesting \$8,500 for gutters, covers and preservation work for the Library building. This project scored 1 out of 14 applications. There was overwhelming support for the Library, what they do on a day-to-day basis, and the work they did during the pandemic. The building is historical to town. This is an excellent opportunity to help preserve the building and its functions.

Pat Hechmer, Library Trustee, added that when they submitted the Phase I application, they had a firm estimate from the company doing the work. Since then, the Library was told the fascia needs to be straightened before the gutters can be installed. This was unanticipated. They have a contractor for the work, but the contractor needs to collaborate with the gutter

company before he can provide his estimate for the work. The Phase II application includes an estimate for the fascia work.

Lee sees why this came in so highly scored. It fits all the ARPA criteria and its important from a Town perspective. Lee McClenny made a motion to approve the Library's \$8,500 request for gutters and other maintenance work, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed 3-0. Pat thanked the Board.

### **TOWN WEBSITE**

Dave explained that this is a request in the amount of \$11,500 to create a new, modern town website to replace the existing, outdated website created in 2014. This project was tied for second and third out of 14. There was one recusal (Nanette). The Committee strongly supported the application.

Nanette explained that the current website is outdated, not ADA compliant, and not user friendly amongst other things. Nanette advised that she contacted several developers for quotes for the application process. The main criteria were for town staff to be able to easily update the website, be ADA compliant, be user friendly including mobile devices, include a mechanism for Rec program registrations and payments. Dave added that the website was an important asset during the pandemic and continues to be important in accessing information remotely. During the pandemic, the Town increased services available online. A new website would better serve these uses. The maintenance of the website is already budgeted therefore this is a neutral item for the Town budget. Dave Baczewski made a motion to approve \$11,500 to fund the creation of a new town website, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

### **FY'24 BUDGET WORKSHOP**

Nanette provided the Board with a very preliminary FY'24 draft budget. She noted there are a lot of line items that still need to be filled in. The Board discussed how challenging this budget will be, including funding non-profit organizations. Although these organizations do excellent work, the Town may not be able to fund them all because it must do what is best for the residents. It was pointed out that it will be hard to hold the line on increases because costs have increased everywhere.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Town has been notified that the distribution meter box located on the utility pole on the common needs to be replaced soon. GMP wants the box relocated due to its current proximity to the road. It is their belief that road salt affects the meter. It is unclear if GMP realizes this is a dirt road with very minimal salt used. The Town will reach out to GMP to discuss the location of the meter box.

Lori Johnson sent an email regarding testing done in 2019 of the well water that serves the town office and library. The test found the water to be potable. Barb Peck stated that it appears there is conflicting information from the Vermont Dept of Health and what the Planning Commission has been saying. It was proposed to have the well water tested again. The Board was in favor of having the testing done and using ARPA Funds to pay for them. The Health Officers will be contacted to ask which tests should be done and for them to do the collections for testing.

Sheila Franz mentioned that when the Planning Commission (PC) received the Franz's letter about traffic the PC deemed part of their letter a moot point and the Franz's weren't allowed to discuss it at the PC meeting.

**WHITE CHURCH LANE CLOSURE**

A request was submitted to partially close White Church Lane on February 18, 2023 from 10am to 6pm during the Westford Winter Festival & Concert. All the property owners on White Church Lane have agreed to the partial closure. Lee McClenny made a motion to approve the partial closure of White Church Lane for the Winter Festival, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0.

**COMMUNICATION**

Bree is going to put out a communication about ARPA Committee's wrap up.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee McClenny, Chair  
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy  
Minute Clerk

**GUEST LIST**

- Elisabeth Smith
- Lori Johnson
- Sheila Franz
- Joe Franz
- Barb Peck
- Ben Bornstein
- Ira Allen
- Joel Fay
- Pat Hechmer