

**Instructions:**

1. The ARPA Committee has reviewed the Phase I project application submitted by you or your organization and has approved the project for Phase II.
2. The ARPA Committee asks that your organization work closely with the assigned ARPA Committee facilitator.
3. Please provide answers to all of the following questions in a separate document. These answers and any additional information may be included as either an electronic copy, ex. PDF format, or as a hard copy.
4. Please submit the Phase II application and all supporting documents to your ARPA Committee Facilitator.
5. The ARPA Committee will assess this project and funding request using a rubric. More information on the rubric can be found on the town website; <https://westfordvt.us/arpa-american-rescue-plan-act-information/>
6. The ARPA Committee will forward this request with supporting documentation and rubric score to the Selectboard for review and final determination.
7. The ARPA Committee and Selectboard reserve the right to ask for more information at any time in the process.

**Date:** September 27, 2022**Name of Organization:** Town of Westford**Project Sponsor/Owner:** George Lamphere, Nanette Rogers**Project Address:** 1713 VT Route 128, Westford, VT**Phone:** 802-878-4587**Email:** townadmin@westfordvt.us**ARPA Committee Facilitator:** Martha Heath**Email:** mpheathvt@gmail.com **Phone:** 802-893-1291

Provide as much detail as possible when completing.

**1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed project.**

The Town Office Feasibility Study is crucial in determining what, if anything, can be done to renovate the existing building or build a new building to meet current and future needs of town staff, town officials, and the Westford community at large. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was released to obtain cost estimates for the study and a site visit was held on August 23, 2022. The firm that will conduct the study will be selected by the Selectboard.

The selected firm will become familiar with existing conditions and environs, including the septic system location and capacity, review all applicable ordinances and regulations, identify all necessary permits, identify ADA compliance requirements, meet with town office staff and other representatives to develop and refine programmatic needs and space requirements, assess the feasibility of renovating the existing building, assist with evaluating options and selecting which option to develop, provide conceptual design with site plans, provide estimated cost of architectural work, draft a timeline of major milestones for construction, provide an estimated timeline of construction, and identify options for the temporary relocation of town office. The Selectboard will be able to use this information to move forward whether it be renovation, new build or finding an alternative location for a new town office.

**2. How does this project provide resiliency for the community?**

COVID-19 highlighted deficiencies in all aspects of business, the Town of Westford included. The Westford community relies heavily on the services provided by town office staff. After the Governor's Stay at Home Order was lifted, it was difficult for town staff to work in the confined space. Most offices have at least two people working in them, making the six-foot distance requirement at that time difficult to achieve. Staff staggered shifts or worked from home to do their best to provide necessary services and to minimize exposure to other staff. If the town office had adequate office space to accommodate staff, it would have been much easier to social distance. Public visiting the office was also at risk due to the current layout. Although staff did what they could to provide services electronically, there were times when it was necessary for residents to physically come to the office. The area at the front counter where citizens are greeted, is tight to say the least. Maintaining a six-foot distance is impossible. Meetings of town officials were and are still difficult to hold given the limited space available. If another

pandemic were to occur, the health and well-being of town staff and the community will be compromised more than necessary unless changes are made to the building, or a new office is constructed to provide adequate office/meeting space. Regardless of a pandemic, town office staff need adequate space to fulfill their responsibilities and the Town needs adequate storage space to meet retention requirements of records, some of which must be kept for eternity.

**3. What strategic value does this bring to the town? Is the project transformative?**

While this is just the first step in what will be a longer process, beginning to plan for a renovated or new town office space is extremely important to the community. The present town office space is clearly inadequate in many ways including but not limited to sufficient space for present staffing needs, need for additional vault space, lack of storage, insufficient private and public meeting space, and a need for revised parking plans. The town office is the hub of the community providing services as varied as tax collection and election oversight. The eventual creation of renovated or new space will transform the ability of the employees to provide all the necessary services to the members of our community.

**4. How does this project align with the Town Plan and the stated vision, goals, and priorities in the Town Plan?**

Review and evaluation of the town office is in total alignment with the Town Plan, stated vision, goals and priorities. Page two of the Town Plan lists *review and evaluation of the town offices as a top implementation priority*. The town office fills a critical need in the community and is a cornerstone to the town center.

Town Plan, section 9.3 General Land Use Goals and Objectives, numbers 1-5 highlight the significance and importance of having and maintaining an adequate, capable and accessible space for town staff and the community. The Town Plan Implementation Plan tasks the Town of Westford with planning for the expansion of the town office and land records vault. This feasibility study will allow town officials to assess, plan for and communicate to the residents the anticipated needs of the community.

**5. How has the community expressed interest in this project? Provide specific examples, i.e. survey results, community meetings, forums, other mediums.**

In the fall of 2019, the community came together to engage residents in review of town assets, addressing challenges and advancing key priorities for the future. The output of this effort led to the release of Westford Future Report and Action Plan. Future priorities outlined in the plan will at best be successful with an adequately functional and accessible town office.

Based on the results from a 2019 survey, the top responses to critical issues facing Westford are affordability, amenities, and services along with infrastructure. Comments from residents specifically called out preserving our town core and municipal buildings.

The town office, the services it provides to residents and for town operations have been discussed during many public meetings, forums, and community events. Commissioning a feasibility study is the first step in a multi-phased process that will help the Town identify requirements and assess fiscal objectives.

**6. What percentage of the community will be served or benefit from this project? Will this project primarily benefit a particular group, organization, or underserved population?**

This project is the first step in a process intended to lead to a renovated or new town office space. It will benefit everyone in the community to one degree or another.

**7. Does this project require permitting, community engagement, or professional design plans?**

This project would pay for the preliminary conceptual design plans. It is the first step in a larger endeavor. To move that endeavor forward, final engineering and permitting will be required along with extensive community engagement. Engagement in this planning phase will be focused on those who work in the town office space and those who use it for meetings or other services on a regular basis.

**8. Project executability - please identify any risks or unknowns within the project.**

There are no known risks to the study phase of this project. Completion of the feasibility study will identify potential future implementation risks such as potable water and wastewater, land to expand, and stormwater management. Traffic flow and ROW between the town office and library will also require resolution prior to future action.

Based on responses from the RFP and engineering firms, there is ample interest and competition in the project. Timelines and level of effort are commensurate with funding levels and timeframe within which the feasibility study shall be completed.

**9. Sustainability - is the project self-sustaining? Will additional funding be needed? What are the ongoing operational and maintenance (O&M) costs? How will O&M be paid?**

Since the project itself is just to pay for planning, these questions will become more important when moving from the planning phase to the implementation phase. If the Town chooses to implement the plans that would be paid for in this phase, then the project would certainly be sustainable for a number of years. Implementation will require substantial funds and approval of the voters, likely through a bond vote. The ongoing operational and maintenance costs shouldn't be much different from what is being paid now especially considering that maintenance shouldn't be an issue initially and it is likely that the building, renovated or new, will be far more energy efficient than the present one.

**10. Does the project provide economic benefit to the community? Will it generate town revenue, benefit local businesses, increase the grand list, or reduce taxes?**

This project provides significant economic benefit to the community. Creation of a modern, fully functional adequately spaced and staffed workplace will likely lead to increased town operations and retention of town staff for decades to come. As previously mentioned, the community relies heavily on the services provided by the Town. Adequate space for meeting with residents, holding public meetings, etc. will enhance the services provided. This project is expected to indirectly generate revenue and/or increase the Grand List. If a bond vote is necessary to renovate or construct a new office, it would likely increase taxes.

**11. Project duration, provide a detailed schedule showing weeks after receiving approval from the Selectboard. Include key project tasks and milestones.**

Depending on which firm the Selectboard chooses, the project can take anywhere from 12 weeks to 1 year. Please see attached spreadsheet for more information.

**12. Implementation cost and funding schedule. What is the total project cost? Provide a detailed spending plan with funding amounts tied to project milestones.**

Based on the responses from the RFP, we are requesting up to \$62,000 for this project. Please see attached spreadsheet for more information.

## TOWN OFFICE FEASIBILITY STUDY RFP RESPONSES

**September 2022**

<u>Firm</u>	<u>Sub Consultants</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Rates/hr</u>	<u>Grant application experience</u>	<u>Estimated Schedule</u>
Cross Consulting Engineers		based on rates	65-150		
Black River Design	Yes - 4	\$30,970 - \$77,860	55-165	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start-up: 2 weeks notification</li> <li>• Phase 1 (Existing site feasibility): 4 months</li> <li>• Phase 2 (Assumed unnecessary): 2-12 months or more</li> <li>• Phase 3 (Schematic design plans and outline specification): 2 months</li> <li>• Phase 3 (Detailed estimate preparation, review, and revision): 2 months</li> </ul>
AES Northeast	Yes - 2	\$34,200	55-177	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April 3, 2023 - Anticipated start date</li> <li>• May 12, 2023 - Feasibility study including a written summary of proposed design options presented to the Selectboard project committee for review</li> <li>• June 30, 2023 - A draft conceptual design package provided to the project committee for review</li> <li>• August 18, 2023 - Final deliverables including conceptual design drawings, preliminary construction schedule and cost estimate</li> </ul>
Wiemann Lamphere Architects	Yes - 2	\$24,480	60-148	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 13-31, 2023: Pre-Design "Move'in/Understand" Phase - gathering techniquet to fully understand and define the operations and goals</li> <li>• April 3-14, 2023: Schematic Design "Create" Phase - commence the Conceptual Design process that consists of a continued analysis of the program and the developement of design alternatives based on requirements</li> <li>• April 17-28, 2023: Create a hybrid concept design based on feedback from the inegrated design meeting</li> <li>• May 1-8, 2023: WLA will work with Austin Hill Estimating to prepare Schematic Design cost estimates</li> <li>• May 15-26, 2023: WLA will present the final options to the applicable boards for the Town of Westford</li> </ul>

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SHKS Architects	Yes - 4	\$47,583	100-150	Yes	<p>(Assumes property survey and deed review are completed by the Town of Westford prior to commencement of feasibility study.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2, 2023: Kickoff meeting - Introductions, review preliminary program, schedule (current and subsequent project phase schedules including permitting, design and construction), budget</li> <li>• March 10, 2023: Research and Field work - Existing site and building evaluations, building occupant/end user interviews re programming complete</li> <li>• March 21, 2023: Meeting 1 - Review programming, zoning findings, preliminary site/building concepts review, preliminary grant opportunities and process</li> <li>• April 4, 2023: Comments - Stakeholder comments due</li> <li>• April 18, 2023: Meeting 2 - Review revised program, site/building schemes (assumes 2 schemes for each concept: renovate/expand (e) building, new building (4 schemes total)), grant application schedule</li> <li>• May 2, 2023: Comments - Stakeholder comments due, select preferred scheme for each concept (2 schemes total)</li> <li>• May 11, 2023: Meeting 3 - Incorporate comments, review preferred schemes</li> <li>• May 18, 2023: Draft study - Incorporate final comments, compile draft feasibility study, send to Estimator</li> <li>• May 25, 2023: Estimate, Edit - Review estimates, Draft Study redlines to design team</li> <li>• June 2, 2023: Final Study - Deliver Feasibility Study to project committee, Selectboard</li> </ul>

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Vermont Integrated Architecture	Yes - 2	\$39,711	40-175	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• December 2022: Project kick-off establish - define project vision and goals</li> <li>• December 2022: Meet with municipal staff to establish project program</li> <li>• December 2022: Assess existing conditins - assemble building and site information</li> <li>• January 2023: Prepare preliminary code and regularatory review</li> <li>• January 2023: Develop preliminary conceptual design options (3)</li> <li>• Early February 2023: Review concepts with project stakeholders</li> <li>• Mid-February 2023: Review concepts per stakeholder feedback</li> <li>• Feburary/March 2023: Prepare scope narrative</li> <li>• February/March 2023: Prepare cost estimate, total project, proposed project schedule</li> <li>• April 2023: Assist Town in evaluating options and selecting.a direction forward</li> <li>• April 2023: Present final feasibility study to Selectboard</li> <li>• As needed: Assist with community outreach efforts</li> </ul>