

Craftsbury ARPA Committee Meeting Minutes May 4, 2022

Attending: Members Lise Erickson, Chair; Alan Turnbull Co-Chair; Rudy Chase, Stark Biddle, Heidi Krantz, Phil Lovely

Others: Select Board Members Jim Jones, Susan Houston, Bruce Urie, Town Clerk Michelle Warren

1. Minutes were approved and Agenda confirmed.
2. ARPA reporting update: Lise stated that the annual filing process was very long and overly complicated. As a result of their filing this report, Craftsbury is now able to use these funds in any way that the town wishes. Lise and Michelle have carefully documented the process for next year. Heidi gave thanks to Lise and Michelle from the group for completing this task.
3. Select Board (SB) Update: The Board attended tonight's meeting to share their thoughts about use of ARPA funds. They want the funds to benefit as many people in Craftsbury as possible. They believe their ideas would benefit the entire community. They then shared examples:

The town could set aside \$100,000 for new bridge construction on the South Craftsbury Road. The set aside would keep the town from having to raise through taxes this money when/if the bridge was financed.

\$35,000 could be used by the Craftsbury Fire Department to fund 3 projects including

- 1): Purchasing and installing a gear washer at the Station rather than going to Hardwick for this task, 2): Replace several sets of gear (\$3,000 set) which are at their expiration for safe use, 3): With the VSP discontinuing their dispatch services, the CFD will need to update their radios to continue to communicate.
- 3): Install a generator at Craftsbury Academy which, because the Academy is the designated emergency shelter for the town, would provide continuous service in a crisis. The Select Board has an offer of \$32,000 for this project.

The Select Board asked the ARPA group their reaction to these ideas. The group expressed their need to know what the SB saw as its priorities before they could roll out information to the community. Susan noted that the money needs to be obligated by 2024, if not it would go back to ARPA.

4. Lise asked how we roll this program out to the community. Rudy preferred prefacing rollout by giving the background to the town noting that the SB's suggestions were "catch up" to remedy issues that otherwise would require tax revenue. Stark expressed need to know how much money is available, also that in the criteria for grant selection money should not fund a project that can be funded by another source. It is difficult to accomplish

“transformative” with half the money expected. Alan recommended that the SB’s proposals should go through the same process as any applicant. Susan stated that the SB’s recommendations are suggestions only, not commitments. Bruce stated that they would need to set aside \$32,000 for the generator soon as the bid accepted for it will expire in 30 days.

5. Communication Plan discussion:

Heidi asked how we want to present this to the public: what methods of informing. Michelle concerned that as much as 10% of residents do not have internet. A post card or mailing would be appropriate. She has investigated the cost of such a mailing, and it appears that for about \$200, it could be done. Heidi asked if money from the grant might be set aside to pay for such costs. Alan asked the SB how they would like to be kept informed of process of informing community.

Susan suggested that \$100,000 be set aside and the other two SB proposals be put “in the basket” with proposals from the community.

Stark suggested that we start with offer of \$341,000 available and reference the SB’s proposals. Lise stated that we should start with \$341,000 and mention the three projects raised by the SB, state the total amount available and let folks know what’s been suggested so far. Rudy stated that this is not a free for all, that there will be a selection process and this needs to be communicated up front. Group needs to develop a framework for a Letter of Interest. Alan stated that the SB has asked us to set up a simple, fair, standard way to apply for a grant. Challenge for group (Stark) is to set up a system that will encourage imagination. Anything we can do to get people with different ideas to work together is good. Lise stated that the group is ready to engage the community and start the dialog. Next tasks include putting on paper the words, paragraphs, narrative that can be used on Front Porch Forum, Facebook, mailings that would tell the community what we are. Criteria should include extra credit for multi-group collaboration (Heidi).

Next steps: Lise asks that we move to a monthly meeting format with next meeting set for June 1st. May should be used for sub-committee work by both Communications and Criteria work groups. We should plan to come to that June meeting ready to go forward and develop plan for roll out.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 1, 7pm at the Town Hall

