**Windham ARPA Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Minutes ~ June 13, 2022**

**Via Zoom**

Kermit Blackburn

Bridget Colby

George Dutton

Bill Dunkle

Cathy Fales

David Lewis

Mary McCoy

Ellen McDuffy

Michael Simonds

Jan Wyman

**Introductions** Mary McCoy (Mac) called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM. The meeting was run informally, beginning with committee members introducing themselves.

Mac reviewed the basics about ARPA. Windham will receive $118,380. The money is to be used to help the town through the pandemic with focuses on:

* responding to the negative impact of Covid on public health and the local economy,
* keeping and supporting essential workers, including paying premium wage,
* making up for governmental funds that were lost due to the pandemic, and
* investing in water, sewer and broadband.

George pointed out that there is some flexibility within the guidelines.

**Ideas**

Each committee member offered ideas for the use of the funds.

Bridget – conduct grant-writing classes; create affordable housing; provide relief from the high taxes caused by all of the homes that were sold here beyond their assessed value.

Cathy – survey town residents to rank suggested ideas; pursue ways to benefit the town tied to pandemic recovery; establish a loan fund for residents in financial need (Mac noted that such a fund for loans already exists).

Kermit – make improvements to the Meeting House, especially library and kitchen; plant trees that will beautiful the town and commemorate the pandemic.

Bill – upgrade Meeting House for weddings and other events, improve the Meeting House ventilation and heating, weatherize building for year-round use, make Meeting House a community center.

Ellen – upgrade the Town Office air exchange system and insulation the office to make it safer and warmer, index our land records to make them available online and by computer search in the office, buy a copier that can reproduce large surveys.

David – improve internet service. (It was noted that another group is working on this.)

Jan – provide funds for WCO to help those in financial need (Ellen noted that the WCO does not have requests for the funds it already has); help Fire Co. make up for the loss of income due to their not holding their August fund-raising event; finance improvements to the fire house and provide gear for two new firefighters (at $5,000 each).

Michael – pay for improved power lines on Old Cheney Rd so that residents can install small solar fields there, which would help make Windham carbon-neutral by 2025.

David – address the influx of cars on W. Windham Rd due to Hamilton Falls’ visitors. (George noted that the town has done all it can about this problem.)

Kermit – fund ways so that elderly people do not feel isolated and forgotten.

Michael – support a bus that would transport people from Jamaica St. Park to Hamilton Falls, so they wouldn’t drive from to the falls in numerous cars.

David said it seemed like support for our public buildings, especially our historical Meeting House, was a dominate idea.

**Assignments**

Each person will explore their idea and find out associated costs.

Ellen will contact David Cherry about the existing effort for broadband in the southern half of Windham (the northern half does not have a problem with VTel as their provider).

George will find out about the grant-writing training conducted in Townshend.

Bill will run all the ideas by Kathy Buckley, the VLCT point person on ARPA, to see what best meets the ARPA guidelines.

Jan will get cost figures for the Fire Company’s needs, including weatherization.

Kermit will explore costs for a home-school curriculum for the town library and for upgrades to the Meeting House kitchen, and he will find out about the prices of perennial plantings.

Michael will find out the cost for the power lines up Old Cheney.

Cathy will research what other towns have done with their ARPA funds.

Bridget will get financial info on the updates needed at the elementary school.

Mac will process the info from the meeting and the sharing of further information.

**Next Meeting**

After some discussion as to the best time of evening for the meeting and how often to meet, the group agreed: **July 11 at 5:30 PM by Zoom.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary McCoy, selectboard clerk

Approved July 11,2022