

**Windham ARAP Advisory Committee  
Regular Meeting ~ September 14, 2022**

**Via Zoom**

Kermit Blackwood  
George Dutton  
Cathy Fales  
Mary McCoy (Mac), clerk  
Michael Simonds  
Jan Wyman  
Tom Widger

**1. Call to Order**

Mac called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM, and the recording was started.

**2. Minute Approval**

There were no changes to the minutes of August 17, 2022. Michael moved to approve them, and everyone agreed.

**3. Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**4. Public Comments**

Tom said that he is putting together a list of recommendation for us from the Town Meeting House Committee and that Pete Newton is also putting together a list from the Friends of the Meeting House.

**5. Check In**

Each of us commented on what was good about Windham in the autumn, with the fall colors being acknowledged by everyone.

**6. Oaths**

Mac reminded everyone that they need to be sworn in by Ellen at the Town Office.

**7. Funds Available**

Mac reported that the selectboard wants the committee to consider how to spend all \$118,380.18 available from the ARPA funds. Funds for the Town Office renovation and air-exchange system are in the budget, so we don't need to consider those. Funds for digitizing the town records' index have been earmarked in the amount of \$1,200, but Ellen says that may not be enough.

**8. Cathy's Research**

Cathy talked to Tom and Pete to see if there had been past grant funding for the Meeting House, which there has been. She sent them the list of grants currently available for historic buildings. It looks like insulating the Meeting House will cost around \$27,000. The Friends had an accessibility study to see about making the building compliant as a public building, but have received no results yet. They want a detailed plan to present to the town and will probably need to hire a planning firm to do everything correctly. As yet, there are no firm financial figures available.

Cathy also talked to Katie at the VLCT about how other towns have involved the public in their ARPA decision-making. Newfane did a Monkey Survey, asking people how they would divide \$100 between possible projects. Cathy suggested we could use the November election to have people vote for their favorite ideas. We might also encourage people to participate in a survey by conducting a raffle, using as the prize some ARPA funds or some sort of donated labor. We need to know what things cost so when we talk to people about what's possible, we won't give false expectations.

Katie said everything now on our list for possible funding is OK by ARPA guidelines.

## 9. Financial Costs

- AV Equipment – George said he will talk with Becky Eliastam about what equipment is needed in addition to what her company donated. Possibilities are a document camera, a smart board, and a different projector.
- Broadband Lines – David was not present with a report on the funds needed to get fiber optics lines to resident's homes.
- Fire-fighters Gear – Jan will get actual figures for our next meeting.
- Grant-writing – VLCT's Katie advised Cathy that we look at the grants we're most interested in, and she will give referrals for grant writers. They should be paid for their work done, whether we get the grant or not. Grant writing is a lot of work, so we need to look at paying a professional.
- Meeting House -- Tom said the town has set aside \$5,000 per year to support the Meeting House. The Friends have additional money. People said they'd like to write grants for Meeting House improvements, but no one has done it. Much work has been done already in terms of repairs and exploring additional work. Grant money is out there, and we can use the town money to match. The building needs to be painted, insulated, and the heating system replaced. Heating water on demand would be better than a constant water heater. Others added that best route for heating is a cold climate heat pump with an air-exchange system. We can't keep using fossil fuels. Cathy will continue to talk with Tom and Pete to get cost estimates.
- Solar Array – Michael said instead of ARPA funding for the solar arrays on the Town Office roof, he will pursue the Act 172 funds. He suggested dropping this from our ARPA list, but having funds for a grant writer who could help secure the Act 172 grant. George said he'd like to retain this as an ARPA concern until we see what's available for this through Act 172. Mac said the RFP for the 172 funds is not yet available, but there is \$500,000 for Vermont municipalities. We might need matching funds. It was agreed to leave this on our list.
- Kermit's Ideas – Kermit explained his absence from the committee due to health issues. He is doing research on additional library's offerings, and he is talking to gardening centers about buying perennials. This would not be expensive, and he will write up a report on these two projects. George and others agreed to return this back to the list.
- Town Office – Although there's \$19,000 in budget to cover insulation and maybe an air-exchange system, George said we also need to address the heating system. It could be kicked down the road until next year's budget, but ARPA could help get a cold climate heat pump.

## **10. Public Involvement**

Mac brought up again the idea of Survey Monkey or other ways to get public input. We could do it by email. Or the WN&N. After we know the costs, we could ask people about their priorities. Cathy would volunteer to figure this out, or the whole committee could.

We discussed whether or not to survey second-home owners or just voters? Katie said we can do either. Kermit thinks we should only ask voters. Michael said we could ask people to their opinions on election day. We could also mail a survey using the check list. Cathy said all her neighbors are active in community, and they are all part-timers. She wonders if the Windham community includes part-timers. Jan said that when the Fire Company sends out requests of support, part-timers do a lot. The Fire Company uses the grand list for their mailing.

George said we could refine our list of projects by deciding right now to dedicate funds for the fire gear. Then we could focus on the money that is left. Cathy said if we do that, then we need to tell the public that they have nothing to say about it. George said getting public input is OK, but we're here to make recommendations. The sooner we can do that, the better.

George asked Jan if the Fire Company needs the total amount or if they can pay part of it. Jan said the company just held their big fund-raiser and did well, but she would have to ask other members. George said we should table this. Jan said the new equipment has to be in use before the old gear is outdated. If that happened and someone was hurt, insurance wouldn't cover it. Four or five sets of gear will be needed, but none immediately.

George wants to start making decisions. Cathy will get figures on grant-writing. George will get numbers on AV. Meeting house folks will give us figures soon.

There was more discussion on grant writing. George said we can get funds without hiring anyone. Michael thinks it's a mistake to count on volunteers for grant writing. George says we could do what we can and see if there is anything left for grant writing. Michael disagreed. Cathy said that there are many grants available for the Meeting House, and our best chance of getting the money is with a pro grant writer. This discussion will be revisited at the next meeting.

## **11. Next Meeting**

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, October 12 at 5:30 PM by Zoom.

## **12. Adjournment**

Michael moved to adjourn the meeting, and all agreed. The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 PM and the recording was stopped.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary McCoy, selectboard clerk  
*Approved October 12, 2022*