

**Windham ARPA Advisors Committee
Meeting Minutes ~ October 12, 2022**

Via Zoom

Vance Bell, observer	Mary McCoy (Mac), clerk
Kermit Blackburn	Michael Simonds
David Lewis	Tom Widger
Ellen McDuffie	Jan Wyman

1. Call to Order

Mac called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.

2. Minute Approval

There were no changes to the minutes of September 14, 2002. Michael moved to approve the minutes, and Jan seconded. The minutes were approved by everyone.

3. Changes to the Agenda

Mac said she wanted to make a slight change in the Check-in question if no one disagreed, and no one did.

4. Public Comments

Vance was the only non-committee member present, and he had no comments.

5. Reminder

Mac asked anyone who has not been sworn in to go to the office and take care of that.

6. Check in

Mac revised the question that asked *if* we should get input from our fellow town's people, and instead she asked *why* it would be a good idea to do so. She explained that she has information to share that says we need to get input from others. David said asking others is the right thing to do. Jan said we need to make sure the town's people are happy with our recommendations. Tom said it is a good way to include more people. Michael said it is a good idea, but he wants to get more input in a way that doesn't slow us down or cost too much. Kermit said it might slow things down, but it is the whole town's money. Mac said Cathy told her this was a way to get the town's people more involved and connected.

Mac shared the description of the committee, which says "Public participation and involvement in the Committee's work is a high priority ... [including] presenting ideas and receiving feedback through public forums and educational sessions...." Also, the funds available through Act 172 require "community engagement and education." So the government wants us to get as much public input as possible for the ARPA funds and other grants the town might apply for. Mac also noted that we have till the end of 2024 to decide how to spend the money.

7. Public Input

Mac reminded the committee that Townshend conducted a Survey Monkey to see how their town's people wanted to spend their funds. Cathy has volunteered to set this up for Windham. Mac said we could say, "Here's our list of things to fund. You have 15 votes. How would you

distribute these to best express your preferences. You can distribute your votes however you want to weight your priorities or leave any item that doesn't matter to you without any votes." We can announce this in the News and Notes and make a poster for it. We can explain why we think each item is important. This would help address the need for public information.

We discussed whether or not to involve part-timers? Ellen said they own more than half the homes in Windham, and Jan said many part-timers donate to the Fire Company.

There was discussion on the best way to get others involved. Ellen estimated that about half of part-timers get the N&N and about a quarter of them are on the N&N email list. It would be hard to separate out the part-timers. As town clerk, she is trying to get email addresses for everyone. There's also the idea of a mass mailing, perhaps using the WCO bulk permit. That would save a lot of money on a mailing. Using the Grand List would let us reach every house, but we don't know how many people there are in each household.

We discussed how to make sure we have one vote per person. David said if use an online survey, they prohibit people from voting more than once. Ellen said there are about 200 on the N&N email list. David suggested we could reach others and tell them to go to the town website where there would be a link to the survey.

Another idea from the VCLT was to tell people that if they participate, their name will go into a pool to possibly win \$50. This idea was dismissed by the committee as unnecessary.

Jan suggested we set a deadline, and everyone agreed that was important. We discussed timing.

Mac moved that we conduct an online survey, put an announcement in the N&N and send it to the N&N email list, have a link to the survey on the town website, and put a poster about it in various locations, including at the P.O. and at the polls on election day. The deadline would be set for two weeks after the N&N is out and the survey is operable. Michael seconded the motion. All were in favor.

8. Distribution Amount

We discussed whether to include the entire \$118,000 in our information to the town for the survey or to agree before the survey to recommend payment for some items, like the Fire Company's gear. Jan said she thinks we should get input from the entire town for the entire amount. There was no disagreement about that.

There was brief discussion about removing the AV equipment from the list, but Vance said the donated equipment we received is old and we don't know how long it will work. Better equipment could be needed. The committee agreed to leave AV equipment on the list.

9. Updates on Projects of Interest

- AV Equipment – Vance said better equipment would cost around \$1600.
- Beautify Windham – Kermit said this would be about \$2000, and he clarified that the plantings would be located on town properties. He suggested they be planted in commemoration of town's people or events.
- Broadband Lines – David referred to David Cherry's presentation at the selectboard meeting, and encouraged everyone to watch it. There is a grant available to help that we

need to look into. Costs for the line extensions is still being determined. It was recorded at the August 15th selectboard meeting.

- Fire Company Gear – Jan said the prices have gone up. Fire gear is \$3,098 per person, and two are needed. Also needed are five SCBA masks at \$500 apiece. Total is \$8,896.
- Meeting House – Tom said the heating system is the most important matter to address, including the water heater. Another matter is a generator (about \$15,000) to be able to use the Meeting House as an emergency facility. A couple of showers would also be good for emergencies. Currently, the building is not up to fire code. Doors need to swing out not in, etc. Insulation cost would be around \$27,000. There is an interest in getting a cold climate heat pump.
- Solar Array – Michael has a phone meeting 10/13 with Southern Vermont Solar to explore putting a solar array on town office roof. That could pay for the power used in all town buildings. Using garage roof may also be possible. Mac said the Request for Proposals for the Act 172 funds are still not available, but we know from the VLCT they want public education and support, and the installation must be done by a state approved contractor.
- Town Office Equipment – Ellen is getting quotes for digitizing our town's land records. She has looked at other town's systems and has asked other town clerks what vendor they used. The more records we have online that have a good index the better it will be for the public, and there will be less traffic in the town office. She has learned that other towns charge as much as \$2.50 to download and print a page from the town records. (The payment can be made with a credit card.) We currently only charged \$1.00, so this could be increased income for the town. The other thing that needs funding is a copier, and the selectboard is considering that now.
- Note: We unintentionally omitted an update on Grant Writing.

10. Next Meeting

We don't want conflict with the Planning Commission which meets on the second Wednesday of the month. We agreed that our next meeting will be **November 16, 2022 at 5:30 PM.**

11. Adjournment

Jan moved to adjourn the meeting, Ellen seconded it, and we all agreed.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy, selectboard clerk
and ARPA Committee clerk
Minutes were approved November 15, 2022