

**Town of Richmond
Town Center and Library Committee
Minutes February 16, 2023**

Present: Josh Arneson, Jeff Forward, Laurie Dana, Jake Marin

Guests: Peter Erlich, Diane Meyerhoff

I. Welcome & Public Comment -

Peter Erlich addressed the committee as a representative of the Zero % Club working on climate action. He provided some background on the status of Vermont's 2020 Warming Solutions Act and its target dates. He stated that Vermont is not on target to reach its climate goals and feels it is important that Richmond's renovated Town Center that has a long life and a small energy footprint. He encouraged the Town to use some of its ARPA funding to ensure that the renovated Town Center is a net zero building. The committee members thanked him for his input.

II. Additions or Deletions to Agenda

Laurie will be attending a webinar on February 28 on the Vermont Department of Libraries Capital Funds projects grants and will report back at our March 2 meeting.

III. Items for Presentation or Discussion

a) Discussion of Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) grant with Diane Meyerhoff

Jeff briefly reviewed the REDI grant program of the VHCP. The program is designed to support hiring a consultant for grant research and writing assistance in small towns that do not have dedicated staff for this. The funding goes directly from VHCP to the consultant. Richmond has been approved for this grant and our consultant is Diane Meyerhoff. She will submit a work plan to REDI for final approval following this meeting.

Diane introduced herself as having been working in the grants area for 20 years. She does a lot of work for nonprofits and much of her work is on Federal grants as they are usually the larger pots of money.

Jeff and the committee provided some background to Diane about the Town Center renovation project and about our work with Black River Design. We touched on the flood plain issues that might affect grant eligibility. Laurie spoke about the Historic Preservation grants that we have applied for and received.

Diane asked for a brief historical description of the history of the Town Center building which Laurie will draft and send.

There was a lot of discussion around grant programs that Diane and committee members are aware of including USDA, CDBG, the Bruhn grant program and a large number of energy efficiency grants. There is also a lot of federal funding right now through the Infrastructure Bill and others for projects devoted to climate change. Diane is aware of many of these and will start researching requirements and timing.

Diane mentioned that most federal funding requires an Environmental Review and some other qualifying steps which can sometimes take time. She recommended thinking about starting that process soon if we intend to apply for federal funds.

Laurie mentioned that Ben Doyle, Executive Director of Preservation Trust of Vermont and a Richmond resident, has offered to coordinate a "funder's conference" with staff from all of the larger granting agencies at one meeting to look at both the Town Center and Library projects. Laurie will pursue this and Diane would like to be involved.

b) Discuss American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee request for a proposal from Town Center Committee

Tabled as a quorum was not present.

c) Approval of February 2 minutes

Tabled as a quorum was not present.

d) Other business – None

e) Items for Next Agenda

- Black River presentation of draft design plans
- Diane Meyerhoff to present on grants and phasing of work.
- Laurie review of Library Capital Projects Grants
- Request for funding a small summer Library project
- Discussion of ARPA funding request for Town Center Building
- Approval of minutes from Feb. 2 & 13 meetings

The next meeting of the Committee will be March 2 6:30 p.m. start time