

**Town of Richmond ARPA Committee  
Minutes for the meeting of June 22, 2022  
Town Center Meeting Room and via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Josh Arneson, Jay Furr, Connie Bona, Molly Dugan, Cara LaBounty

**Members Absent:** Rebecca Starks, Sacha Mailloux, Jeff Forward, Linda Donovan,

**Others Present:** Kendall Chamberlin

**Call or Order:** 5:00pm

**Welcome by Furr.**

**Postcard mailing to Town Residents**

LaBounty: I have completed work on the infographic. There will be a descriptive sentence at the top of the message with a link to the infographic. There will be a list of ways to provide feedback. We will need an email address [ARPA@Richmondvt.gov](mailto:ARPA@Richmondvt.gov) I can watch these emails and consolidate them. Many people can have access.

Furr: We need to be careful that we are not deleting anything in the email account. We can have the email auto forward all messages to everyone who wants to be copied. Josh said it will cost \$8 per month to have the email address.

Arneson: I will reach out to set up the email address with simpleroute.

LaBounty: There will be a link to go online to fill our a Google form to provide feedback. I want to hear from the Committee on if I should set up the Google form. There will be a suggestion card included in the mailing for people to provide feedback on this form. We will provide drop off locations at the Town Center, Richmond Market, Lucky Spot and Jonesville Post Office. Are we asking for feedback from Richmond residents or people beyond Richmond.

Furr: I had intended to document where people live so we know where the feedback is coming from.

LaBounty: The feedback form will also include a place for people to provide their address. I think we should only have Richmond residents provide feedback.

Dugan: Can't we say we want only Richmond residents to provide feedback?

Bona: What about land owners and business owners who do not live in Richmond?

Furr: Ask for Richmond residential or business address.

LaBounty: There will be links at the bottom of the form for more information. The Final Rule says we can use ARPA funds as matching money.

Bona: Josh emailed to confirm that VLCT said that ARPA money can be used for matching funds. But we need to check with each individual grant to ensure they accept ARPA money as a match.

LaBounty: Correct, but it was one of those things that we didn't think we could use at all. On the VLCT website it talks about added guidance on ideas on how to spend the money. We should provide the link to this page. I would also like to link to potential future projects that may not already be in the capital plan. For instance there may be a need for new digital radios for police.

Bona: We just adopted a capital plan that will be updated in September and items like radios will be included in the update.

LaBounty: If we plan to use ARPA money for items on the capital plan it would reduce what we need to raise in taxes.

Furr: I don't want to constrain people's thinking by providing them with what we already have planned.

LaBounty: It just helps to inform people of what future purchases are. We do not have to provide this link but we need to know as committee members as a potential way to help keep the tax rate down.

Bona: It will be good to have in mind so we can use it to spur conversation if a meeting lags.

### **Further discussion of schedule and forums for soliciting input**

LaBounty: We need to have some dates already selected for meetings.

Furr: We started to discuss populations we want to reach out to. Such as the seniors, the general public, and Riverview Commons.

LaBounty: Linda and I don't think we should have a meeting at the park. I think we should advertise with a poster at the park and encourage them to complete the mailings. Some outreach from Linda and I to get more park participation. We have both had meetings at the park before and it is not the way to go. They can come to one of the open meetings. We had attended meetings regarding the water and sewer expansion right at the park outdoors.

Furr: We want all opinions. I am sensitive to the park because we heard at the water and sewer district expansion meeting that residents of the park do not feel included. I want to ensure they feel included.

Bona: What was the negative experience in the park?

LaBounty: It became more of what they want the park to do for them.

Furr: The Richmond Town Center Meeting room is not really well suited for 30 person gatherings. Should we reserve the Library?

LaBounty: The majority of the people in the park would go to the school. We should do something at Camel's Hump Middle School.

Dugan: The school would be a nice neutral spot and most people have been there. We should also do one at the Library.

LaBounty: When do we want to schedule these meetings?

Bona: I want to stretch it out because we have until December of 2023 to commit it and until December of 2024 to use it. We have a lot of time left to gather information. We need to be sure we have enough time for people to provide feedback in different seasons.

LaBounty: I would like to wrap this up by October so the Selectboard has input by the next budget cycle.

Furr: If we are going to send out the mailing I don't think we want to wait very long to start holding forums. The first meeting should be about a month after the mailing is delivered. I think the mailing should go out on August 1 and we should have a meeting on the week after Labor Day. We should do 3 meetings at the Town Center and one at the school.

Bona: I don't see how we will have time to tie this to the budget. This is not necessarily intended to offset the budget.

LaBounty: I am not saying we have all the money in the budget for FY24. But I would like to have recommendations to the Selectboard in October. If we don't have a larger turnout we need to go with what feedback we have.

Bona: We would need to do more outreach. I don't want this to go to the vocal minority. The Town Center project will take longer than October.

LaBounty: I'm saying once we have the community input there is going to be a time where we would turn to a survey. But if you look at the Jericho Survey, not all the questions are answered. I want us to work toward a goal rather than just keep talking about it.

Furr: We can be cognizant of what capital projects we have but I think the Selectboard will want to evaluate all ideas before making a decision. I think my timeline that I outlined makes sense. I don't want to be locked into the FY24 budget.

Bona: I view this money as things above our operational needs.

LaBounty: But this goes to affordability to live in Richmond. We need to keep the re-appraisal in mind and future budget increases. If tax dollars are going to go up the we as a committee have to be aware of that. One of the requests of the Richmond tax payers is to have lower taxes.

Furr: Last year taxes went down.

Bona: We drafted a capital plan to stabilize expenses on capital projects.

LaBounty: All I am trying to say is that there might be needs out there that we are unaware of. We need to be aware of them so we don't say "I don't know" when asked questions.

Bona: But there will be things we don't know. There is plenty of time to figure this out. There will be new items that come up and this may be good for those expenses.

Furr: I think we need to hold meetings on different days to ensure more people can attend. It might be that we gather a lot of input from the form alone.

Dugan: If that is the case then I think we schedule a meeting pretty close to when the mailing hits. Then maybe you have another one in late October and then based on the input decide if we need a third meeting.

Furr: If we aimed for August 1 is that a reasonable target for the mailing.

LaBounty: Can we do the mailing on July 15?

Dugan: I was thinking that too.

Furr: If you can have this ready by July 1 then we can have it printed and sent out.

LaBounty: Josh and I will pick a date for the Library schedule and the Town Center schedule. Then we can get this on the mailing as well. What time should the meetings start?

Furr: We've tried various times and none are perfect for everyone.

LaBounty: Do we do one at 7 and one at 6?

Furr: Maybe we just do 7pm for both.

LaBounty: Can we include Zoom?

Arneson: Zoom is hard outside of the Town Center.

LaBounty: Then we hold one at the Town Center. The mailing will be pretty much ready to go. We should use the Town of Richmond envelopes and include the letter and the infographic. These can go through the regular meter in the Town Office.