

**Town of Richmond ARPA Committee**  
**Minutes for the meeting of February 22, 2023**  
**Town Center and Via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Josh Arneson, Jeff Forward, Rachel Lohia, Thomas Lyle, Jay Furr, Cara LaBounty, Mary Houle,

**Members Absent:** Molly Dugan, Eric Svensson

**Others Present:**

**Call or Order:** 7:00pm

**Welcome by Furr**

**Review minutes of the 2/8/23 meeting**

Houle moved to approve the 2/8/23 minutes. Seconded by Forward. Roll Call Vote: Arneson, Furr, Forward, Lohia, and Lyle approve. Houle and LaBounty abstain. Motion carried.

**Discussion of projects to recommend to the Selectboard for funding**

Furr: Reviewed process to date. There is a list of suggestions though we have not taken a vote. We are not under obligation to spend all of the money. There may be two new members on the Selectboard soon and they may need more time to consider ARPA. We have discussed using any leftover money for the Town Center.

LaBounty: I arranged for a UVM student to present a park design to the Recreation Committee. The Recreation Committee was under the impression that they could not amend their recommendation on how to spend ARPA funds on recreation.

Furr: I don't see any reason why they can't amend their recommendation if they have new thoughts.

Forward: Transportation Committee came to us with two proposals. Once to cover a match for a grant for the southern portion of the Bridge St. sidewalk, and a second time to ask to fully fund the northern section of the Bridge St. project. They will not know if they get the grant until at least May. The Library may come forward to ask for a match for a grant in the future. We also still have not heard from the Town Center Committee. I bring this up to show this is still in process.

Furr: We don't have to spend this all at once. The Committee could still recommend Library projects over a recreation project.

Furr: The Library is looking at restoration of the exterior shell of the building. If they can get a grant ARPA may be a good match for that.

Houle: I wanted to appreciate that the new Selectboard should and will review the ARPA feedback.

Forward: I think we should advocate for use of ARPA for digitizing land records. The Parade and Fireworks Committee needs some assistance. The Town has agreed to pay for the fireworks. The Committee is authorized to do two coin drops and these typically raise about \$4,000 per coin drop. The bandshell faces the wrong way and this limits audience size. This years parade theme is going to be "Music! Music! Music!" and will involve multiple groups and a karaoke competition. We need a portable stage with canopy, steps, and a ramp and we could rent one for \$2,700 or we could buy one \$25,000.

Lohia: The bandshell is set up to face east so the sun is not in the eyes of the performers at sunset.

LaBounty: I want to reconfirm that the UVM student should help to rewrite the recommendation list for ARPA funding.

Furr: Yes.

LaBounty: Then we may want to wait on discussing recreation items until we get an updated list. My instinct on the Fourth of July is to really look at what equipment they currently own and what should be sold before we purchase more equipment.

Furr: The only item that I think is an automatic is digitizing the Town Records. I compiled a list of top suggestions and it totals \$667,509. This includes a match for the southern portion of the Bridge St. Sidewalk. If we don't get the grant then that number increases from \$64,000 to \$320,000 to cover the full cost.

Lyle: Can you expand on the digitization of the land records?

Furr: It would take the paper records and make electronic copies to be posted online.

LaBounty: Electronic copies were very important during COVID while the offices were closed. We could also extend this to digitizing the zoning files.

Arneson: That would be a good project to explore.

Forward: We do have a records restoration reserve fund.

LaBounty: Linda may want to use some of that money for records digitizing records. It would be good to know if this can be used to digitize records, as well as how much it would take to digitize the remaining records and what it would cost to digitize the zoning records.

Forward: It would be great if we could make it easily obtainable online.

LaBounty: I can follow up with Linda on the cost and see if the same company would also digitize zoning records.

Forward: If we do this we need to have a plan to do this and we'd have to put it out to bid.

Furr: This could also make us more disaster proof.

Forward: You may want to extend digitization to some of the Historical Society documents.

LaBounty: There are many aspects to digitizing land records. They can be accessed in the office and online. I can do more research on this and include the zoning records.

Furr: Making the digitized records searchable is a large project. To get back to the list we are waiting on the sidewalk grant and we are waiting on more information from the Recreation Committee.

Furr: A lot of the recreation items don't meet the criteria as far as being long lasting.

LaBounty: The idea for the park redesign was to open the mind to what the park could be for the next 50 – 100 years. The little pieces are part of the overall larger picture to improve the park. We need to leave the items on the list and they need to be paid for by either ARPA money or other means.

Furr: Parks are shown to increase people's happiness. This would be an opportunity to really improve the park.

Lyle: I am still perplexed on how the stage meets the criteria.

Furr: It would be available for years to come and could be used for many things.

Lyle: There is a lot of talk on Front Porch Forum about Cochran Rd.

Furr: There are a number of things on Cochran Rd. that we can't do until there are studies completed. We just picked sites for radar speed feedback signs. We are going to be trying locations for temporary speed tables. If everything that we have in the Cochran Rd. study gets implemented it will make the road significantly safer.

Forward: The bike and pedestrian plan has a lot of ideas for Cochran Rd. including a recreation path.

Forward: The Transportation Committee added priorities to the plan and the Bridge St. sidewalk rose to the top.

LaBounty: Part of the park redesign has a paved recreation path around the entire parcel along with a dirt path. The paved path is the size of the sidewalks and Pete can plow it and keep it clear year round. This could help take some pedestrian traffic from Cochran Rd.

Forward: Maybe we skip a meeting so we can wait to receive more feedback.

LaBounty: That would give me some time to work on the land records and the park plan.

Forward: It might be more productive to meet for an hour and a half once a month if we have something more to review.

Furr: I will send out an email to discuss the date and time for the next meeting.

Forward: We do have time for a decision on the money.

LaBounty: But if a good project comes up we can make a recommendation to fund that project.

Forward moved a adjourn. Seconded by Lyle. Roll Call Vote: Arneson, Furr, Forward, Lohia, Lyle, Houle, and LaBounty in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.