

**Town of Richmond ARPA Committee  
Minutes for the meeting of May 10, 2023  
Town Center and Via Zoom**

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

**Members Absent:** Eric Svensson

**Others Present:** Heidi Bormann, Cathy DesRoches' Fourth Grade Class

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

**Welcome by Furr**

**Review minutes of the 4/12/23 meeting**

LaBounty moved to approve the 4/12/23 minutes. Seconded by Houle. Roll Call Vote: Furr, Forward, Lohia, LaBounty and Houle approve. Arneson abstains. Motion carried.

**Presentation from Richmond Elementary School fourth grade class**

Presentation from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class on their project to ask the community about their interest in a community center. The students did a great job collecting survey data and presenting it to the committee.

**Discussion of proposal from the Richmond Cemetery Commissioners**

Bormann: Shared photos of what a fence would look like around the cemetery. We want to add beautification to the cemetery, and we are also concerned about vandalism and disrespectful uses of the cemetery. We have a survey of the surrounding area to show the property lines. We have a local fencing company that can build the fence. We are also working on straightening the cemetery stones and cleaning up the cemetery.

Furr: Most cemeteries in Vermont have fences. The total cost is \$22,353.25

LaBounty: I support this, but my concern is has anybody looked at the tree line between the library and cemetery to see if any need to be removed prior to setting up a fence so it will not fall on the fence.

Arneson: We could look into the condition of the trees. Perhaps the tree warden could look at this first.

Bormann: I can call the tree warden.

LaBounty moved. to recommend to the Selectboard to repair headstones, erect a fence and gate for a total cost \$22,353.25 to be matched by the Cemetery Commission. Houle seconded. Vote occurs after discussion.

Lyle: I would like to wait to vote on this until we looked at all the projects.

Furr: Because we have some items that have reached consensus we should vote on those items. This will not exhaust the funds.

Criteria list was reviewed in relation to the cemetery proposal. The cemetery met several of the criteria.

Lyle: If we set a date to vote on all items I would be more comfortable with that as a process.

Furr: That date was tonight.

Furr shared a list which has been discussed by the Committee in previous meetings.

Dugan: I do remember it as Jay said, that these are the items that we said we would make decisions on.

Dugan: I understand that this is an important project, but as I reviewed the criteria I don't think it meets the spirit of the criteria. I will vote against recommending it.

LaBounty: I have an opposite opinion. I think it would benefit the community.

Forward: I am reading the minutes and the quote is that Jay said he is comfortable waiting to vote until the end of May.

LaBounty: I thought the idea was for the rest of the money by the end of May.

Furr: Why do we need to wait?

Lyle: We have seen some new proposals and we don't know what projects are coming next.

Furr: We have a good idea of what is coming next because we have the list. We are not voting on all the money. This process leaves most of the money still unspoken for.

Bormann: We are not asking for a lot of money for this project.

Furr: The project list shows some projects that have already been allocated and projects we are considering. If we look at the grand totals it comes to \$752K but we have also said the \$249 for recreation may be removed which would leave us with more money to still allocate. We have agreed multiple times that the sidewalks are a good project to vote on, I don't see the benefit in waiting.

Houle: I don't see a benefit in waiting.

Furr: I'd like to start voting on some items. We have a motion o

The question was called with LaBounty, Houle, Forward, Aneson and Furr in favor. Lyle, Dugan and Lohia opposed. Motion carried 5-3

### **Discussion of finalizing recommendation to Selectboard**

Furr: MMCTV has asked for a reimbursement of \$10,000 to cover costs to set up the hybrid meeting room. Their budget is being cut.

LaBounty: I would like this to come out of unassigned funds. I don't want to use ARPA funds as a reimbursement.

Furr: I want to see MMCTV get paid back and would be fine with this coming from unassigned funds. With no motion being made we can put this on the Selectboard agenda for consideration of use of unassigned funds. For transparency I am president of the MMCTV board and also Treasurer.

Furr: Lets move on to the sidewalks.

Forward moved to combine the Bridge St. Complete Streets, Municipal Oversight, and Bridge St. East Sidewalk as one recommendation for purpose of a later vote. Second by Dugan. Houle, Forward, Aneson, Lyle, Dugan, Lohia, and Furr in favor. LaBounty, opposed. Motion carried 7-1

Forward moved to recommend up to \$318,509 for the Bridge Street side walk projects. Arneson seconded.  
Vote occurred after discussion.

Furr: As far as the cemetery goes the plan is to do a study to ensure there are no remains where the sidewalk would be built.

The question was called with Lohia, Forward, Dugan, Arneson and Furr in favor. Houle, LaBounty, and Lyle opposed. The motion carried 5-3

Furr: I don't have an estimate for the digitization of land records.

Forward: Linda has a lot of things that she is doing and I think it is a worthy project. I suggest we table this item. It could be a recommendation that we support the concept.

LaBounty: We should put an RFP out to get quotes on this project. There is also the land records money that we can use.

Furr: The recreation committee came to us with a request for \$249K. Grace would like to come to present to us on the recreation project. Reviewed the itemized list. I have heard from residents in town that there is a desire for more public input.

LaBounty: Are we going to recommend that the Selectboard do more public outreach?

Furr: We know recreation is a huge area of interest to the Town. I just don't feel comfortable moving this item tonight. I want to get this done right and not fast.

Dugan: Will what Grace is coming up with have gone through the Recreation Committee?

LaBounty: She presented to the Recreation Committee and then met with a few hurdles. At this point in time no one but the Recreation Committee has seen this proposal. The Recreation Committee did not take a vote.

Dugan: I would like to see what the Recreation Committee thinks of the proposal before we review it.

LaBounty: One concern is that the Recreation Committee is not made up of all Richmond residents. I think we need to see the presentation and then move it forward for more comment from the Town.

Furr: I think we may end up saying to the Selectboard that recreation is a popular topic as a use for the ARPA funds.

LaBounty: I want her to present and hear questions from you but suggest we hold the vote until another meeting. Then we have public input after we review the plans.

Lyle: I feel we should set predetermined dates for meetings where we vote on specific projects.

LaBounty: I want to hear presentations and vote later.

Furr: There are two items left on the working list. The Town Center and Recreation are the only two items left on the list. We need more information on the Town Center.

Forward: We have gone through quite a bit of work determining we can renovate this building and we are considering using ARPA money for energy items. My estimate is hundreds of thousands of dollars. Solar may be an option and we would need about \$300K for this project. Mechanical equipment would add to this total. To get to Net Zero may be \$500K. But our process is not completed so we have not

had a formal request ready. It is similar to recreation where the final design is not ready yet. I would not be adverse to allocating money to recreation.

Bormann: Do you think you'll be able to get numbers by the end of 2024?

Forward: Yes.

Furr: After the allocations we have recommended so far we have \$706,137.75 left to be used for Recreation and Town Center.

Forward: Volunteers Green project is going to require a lot of public feedback. I think we should set up a committee to explore this to evaluate proposals and come to the Selectboard with a recommendation. I would like to see the presentation on Volunteers Green.

Furr: I agree that a committee on parks spending would be helpful. I am hearing we want detailed public input on parks. We want the Town Center Committee to have public input. We now have gotten to a point where we have a pot of money and two expected uses of that money. I agree we should set a hard date for new projects and if nothing else comes forward then we dive up the money between recreation and Town Center.

Next meeting set for June 7 in the hybrid conference room.

LaBounty move to adjourn. Seconded by Forward. Forward, Dugan, Arneson, Furr, Houle, LaBounty, and Lyle in favor. The motion carried 7-0.