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2 **Town of Richmond ARPA Committee**
3 **Minutes for the meeting of August 16, 2023**
4 **Town Center and Via Zoom**
5

6 **Members Present:** Josh Arneson, Jeff Forward, Cara LaBounty, Molly Dugan, Denise Barnard, Mary
7 Houle

8
9 **Members Absent:**

10
11 **Others Present:** Bruce LaBounty, Jessie Heiser, Lisa Miller

12
13 **Call or Order:** 7:00pm

14
15 **Welcome by Forward.**

16
17
18 **Review minutes of the 5/10/23 and 6/21/23 meetings**
19

20
21 Houle moved to approve the minutes of May 10, 2023 LaBounty seconded. Arneson, Forward,
22 LaBounty, Dugan, Barnard, Houle in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

23
24 Houle moved to approve the minutes of June 21, 2023 LaBounty seconded. Arneson, Forward,
25 LaBounty, Dugan, Barnard, Houle in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

26
27 **Discuss process for review of Volunteers' Green plan**
28

29 Houle: There was a large public outreach by the ARPA Committee initially. After this we were
30 supposed to move forward with recommendations of the plans. I feel at this point the Committee's
31 work is to make recommendations to the Selectboard.

32
33 Forward: We made those recommendations but this Committee did not vote on the Volunteers' Green
34 plan so it was not presented to the Selectboard.

35
36 Discussion that the playground and the park is now open after the flood and repairs have been
37 completed. Cleaning still needs to be completed for the concession stand.

38
39 Forward: I think doing anything with Volunteers' Green is more than just money. There are a lot of
40 comments on Volunteers' Green by the public. Anything that is done with Volunteers' Green needs a
41 very robust public outreach process. That is not within the charge of this committee. I think the
42 Selectboard should appoint a special committee to conduct public outreach on this topic.

43
44 LaBounty: I think there are some things that are non-controversial that we can use ARPA money for.
45 The baseball fields at Volunteers' Green and Browns Court need to be renovated. This is not a re-
46 design of the park. The other structure that needs repair work is the bandshell. There is a plan to do the
47 other half of the roof and make it more accessible.

48
49 Barnard: I agree. As a parent and grandparent. It is time that we invest in the fields. They have been
50 neglected for too many years. There are great bands in the bandshell and it could be so much nicer.
51 Adding temporary bleachers would be nice. The benches need to be improved and more need to be
52 added.
53
54

55 Dugan: I also think that recommending that some of the remaining funds be used for maintenance and
56 improvements makes sense. I don't feel comfortable singling out which specific items need
57 maintenance, but I do think we can recommend that the Selectboard spend some ARPA money on
58 maintenance. I just don't think we can specify which areas need maintenance.
59

60 LaBounty: I agree. This needs to be decided at the Selectboard level. I'd like to a lot a certain dollar
61 amount and prioritize maintenance. But these are not new things so they probably would not need a lot
62 of public discussion.
63

64 Forward: I agree with everything you have said on maintenance. But the maintenance projects do not
65 fit the criteria we have set for the use of ARPA money. We have set that as capital improvements.
66

67 LaBounty: I disagree. I think these projects fit.
68

69 Forward: I think we have \$447,000 left, and this is after \$249,000 that was earmarked for Volunteers'
70 Green.
71

72 Bruce LaBounty: The ARPA money was used for repairs at the Library. That is similar to repairing the
73 bandshell.
74

75 Forward: I am not opposed to spending money on recreation. But it may be hard without a dollar
76 amount.
77

78 Heiser: The July flooding had an impact on the playground. I would urge action on repairs to the
79 bandshell and repair and replacement of the play structure that were recommended by the Recreation
80 Committee. Do not further delay this proposal to combine it with other changes that may not have
81 community support. These projects support the main categories of ARPA.
82

83 Barnard: If I could make a motion that does not drain the ARPA fund and it went to the Selectboard do
84 you think the Selectboard members would set up a special committee to get the RFP's out there and
85 get quotes? Do you think you would have enough time to do this project?
86

87 Forward: My preference would be to set up a committee.
88

89 LaBounty: Should the maintenance be done with a committee?
90

91 Forward: We don't need a committee for maintenance and I don't think it should come out of ARPA.
92 The Recreation Committee should be involved.
93

94 LaBounty: The Recreation Committee will not send out the RFP. That will be town staff.
95

96 Barnard: I have concerns hearing the Recreation Committee did not use all their funds.
97

98 Miller: If ARPA fund are used to create something can other ARPA funds be used to set up a
99 maintenance fund
100

101 LaBounty: No. There is a time limit on ARPA funds. We would have to budget for future
102 maintenance.
103

104 Bruce LaBounty: The maintenance is great, but I am still stuck on not doing something new in the
105 park. We spent a half a million dollars to buy the Andrews Forest and we are still arguing about what
106 to do with it. We need some people to just decide what we are doing and move forward. We need to
107 reach out to all of the youth and not just the kids on the playground. A basketball court would go a
108 long ways to the community as would a walking trail. We have to stop thinking we are going to please
109 everyone. You are not going to please everyone.
110

111 Forward: Of the issues people comment on, Volunteers' Green is one of the most commented on to the
112 Selectboard. There was not consensus on a plan for Volunteers' Green. I need more consensus in the
113 community of what to do.

114
115 Miller: There are many opinions on what to do at Volunteers' Green. I think what we need to do is
116 look at the things that are presented and decide what is the most useful. Specialty things are only going
117 to find use from a few people. Pickleball courts have been suggested but there are noise concerns and
118 it may not get used as much as a basketball court. The Selectboard needs a list with some detail and
119 the we can decide from that list.

120
121 Forward: My question is if the APRA Committee is the right committee to do that work?

122
123 LaBounty: The biggest request we saw was recreation.

124
125 Barnard: I'd like to make a motion to earmark \$450,000 of ARPA money for Volunteers' Green and
126 Browns Court. I would like the Selectboard to then have a committee formed with members
127 representing all forms of recreation and restaurants and the Farmers Market to get all the ideas
128 together. We could come up with many groups that use the park.

129
130 LaBounty: I second that motion. I would like to know the time period in which the committee will
131 work so it is done in a timely manner. Perhaps 6 months.

132
133 Houle: Designating this amount of money be set aside and that it is spend within the timeframe of
134 ARPA. I think this is reasonable and doable.

135
136 Miller: If the list of things to do that comes from the ARPA committee is as specific as possible that
137 would be helpful.

138
139 LaBounty: We have a list that was presented with the park redesign.

140
141 Barnard: Who submitted that list?

142
143 Forward: The whole Recreation Committee submitted the list. What would be different about this
144 recommendation is that it would not be specific.

145
146 LaBounty: That is by your request that the ARPA Committee not do it.

147
148 Barnard: This is just to set aside the money to reserve the money while a list can be made. I want to
149 see representatives from each organization that uses the park.

150
151 Forward: I want to clarify that the proposal for the park was not approved by the ARPA Committee
152 and that list and cost was not approved by the committee.

153
154 Barnard: This would take the original \$249,000 set aside for recreation would go toward the \$450,000
155 total for park improvements with input from the Recreation Committee and other stakeholders.

156
157 Barnard moved to use \$450,000 of ARPA funds, which will replace the \$249,000 originally set aside
158 for recreation, to be set aside for improvements to Volunteers' Green and Browns Court with specific
159 projects to be decided by a committee consisting of Richmond resident representatives from baseball,
160 band, community senior center, soccer, gardening committee, restaurants, Farmers Market, and youth
161 ages 12 – 18, and members at large appointed by the Selectboard which will have six months to make
162 recommendations. With priority given to maintenance projects. Seconded by Labounty. Roll Call Vote
163 Houle, Dugan, Barnard, LaBounty and Arneson in favor. Forward opposed. Motion passed.

164
165
166

167 **Discuss future of ARPA Committee**

168 Forward: It seems to me we have done what we are asked to do. We have made recommendations to
169 the Selectboard.

170
171 Bruce LaBounty: I don't think you should disband the Committee until the Selectboard accepts this
172 motion for recreation.

173
174 Forward: Even if they reject this, we have done the work to put forward recommendations to the
175 Selectboard. I would like to hear from the Committee. I think the remaining decisions should be made
176 by the Selectboard.

177
178 Houle: I think we need to continue until we have heard back from the full Selectboard.

179
180 Dugan: I agree with Jeff that we have met the requirements. With this last motion passing we have
181 done the lion's share of the work. I am comfortable with the Committee being done.

182
183 Barnard: If this is presented to the Selectboard and they say no then the Selectboard makes the final
184 decisions?

185
186 Forward: The Selectboard makes all final decisions. They were waiting on us to make
187 recommendations. We expect cost estimates from the Town Center committee soon. I don't think that
188 project needs to come before this committee.

189
190 Arneson: Does the Selectboard have what they need for direction for use of the remaining \$250,000?

191
192 Barnard: I hope we don't have to spend the full \$450,000. Maybe we should stay together and meet as
193 needed in the future.

194
195 Forward: I would like more direction from the Selectboard on if we still need to meet as a committee

196
197 LaBounty: I am hearing him say he does not need feedback from this committee anymore.

198
199 Forward: I think we have fulfilled what we need to do.

200
201 LaBounty: I don't feel like we are done yet.

202
203 Barnard: Are there any other projects that came forward that wanted money that a second look can be
204 taken?

205
206 Forward: I don't believe so.

207
208 Dugan: We also set a deadline of when we wanted proposals in. I do hear the concern that we would
209 not be recommending anything specific for the use of the \$250,000. But I do feel we have given them
210 a lot of information.

211
212 Forward: We can provide the Selectboard with the criteria we came up with. I don't see a need for
213 another meeting at this time and we can reconvene as needed.

214
215 Barnard: Maybe we stay as a committee but don't have meetings unless needed.

216
217 LaBounty: We can be a committee that is on call.

218
219 Arneson: I like staying together and meeting as needed.

220
221 The consensus is to keep the committee together and meet as needed.

222

223
224 Labounty moved to adjourn Arneson, Forward, LaBounty, Dugan, Barnard, Houle in favor. None
225 opposed. Motion passed.
226
227 **Chat File**
228
229 00:33:45 Lisa Miller: Cannot tell who is speaking
230
231 00:38:59 Lisa Miller: an ARPA funds be used to set up a "permanent" fund for maintenance of any
232 improvements made with ARPA funds?
233
234 00:39:10 Lisa Miller: Can....
235
236