

**Town of Richmond ARPA Committee
Minutes for the meeting of October 12, 2022
Via Zoom**

Members Present: Josh Arneson, Jay Furr, Thomas Lyle, Cara LaBounty, Rebecca Starks,

Members Absent: Jeff Forward, Molly Dugan

Others Present: Shannon Dufro-Martinez

Call or Order: 7:00pm

Welcome by Furr.

Public Comment:

Shannon Dufro-Martinez introduced herself as a member of the Richmond Food Shelf looking to learn more about ARPA.

Review minutes of the 8-10-22 Meeting

Arneson Moved to approve the minutes of August 10, 2022. Seconded by Lyle. Roll Call Vote: Arneson aye, Lyle aye, Furr, aye, Starks aye, LaBounty Abstained. Motion passed.

Review minutes of the 8-24-22 Meeting

Arneson Moved to approve the minutes of August 10, 2022. Seconded by Lyle. Roll Call Vote: Arneson aye, Lyle aye, Furr, aye, Starks aye, LaBounty Abstained. Motion passed.

Recap of public forums and discussion of if more are needed

Furr: I was at the CHMS forum and we had a good attendance via Zoom with lots of suggestions. I hear Riverview Commons and Volunteers' Green went well.

LaBounty: Was CHMS recorded?

Furr: Yes.

Starks: Do we have a total number of people who came to all three meetings and total of people who have sent in cards?

Furr: We have a spreadsheet of feedback gathered so far and currently there are 141 suggestions.

LaBounty: This does not include the cards because they have not been collected. They will be collected on Saturday, Oct. 15.

Furr: I have had a chance to review them and so far there is a lot of interest in pedestrian and road safety, recreational space, and expanding meeting space in town.

LaBounty: I thought the forums were to collect all kinds of ideas and to ensure we don't miss a brilliant idea. Then the Committee would do more of an analysis of the ideas we have considered and then make a recommendation to the Selectboard.

Furr: Absolutely. That is why I say it is not ready for prime time, because we have not done any of that yet.

LaBounty: Is this still the plan?

Starks: I understand this would not be put to the committee as a vote, but I thought there would be some sense of how many people asked for certain items.

LaBounty: The more we ask for community feedback the more we set the expectation that this is a vote. This is a decision of the Selectboard based on community feedback, but it is not a vote.

Furr: Do we want to reach out to any groups in the community that we may have missed, such as the senior center? We do need to look at suggestions to see if there are any quick wins. There may be some amazing ideas that are too expensive, but there may be less expensive ideas that we could do more of. There could be an idea that one person suggests that is amazing.

Lyle: I understand not wanting to set the community up for the expectation that this is a vote. But, I don't think I have the information to know if we need another forum because I don't have a sense of the nature of the feedback. I think we need to do a preliminary assessment of the suggestions to see if there are groups that we have not heard from.

LaBounty: I agree. We need to get the cards in too. Then do more data analysis. We have made people aware of the feedback as much as we can. If we try to target a group like non-profits we would have to have a process in place to receive requests from non-profits. The question is when we look at the data have we heard from enough people that we feel we need to hear from.

Furr: Non-profits have heard about this like everyone else, but we did discuss this group in the spring. But I am hearing we should do more analysis and then see if we need more outreach. It is not too late for non-profits to submit ideas. We can claim the full amount of the ARPA money as revenue loss and we did this, so the restrictions are less per the APRA rules.

Dufour-Martinez: We typically have some funds to distribute to people in need. We are not in a position to administer a lot due to limited staff. But, if we expanded what we are doing without expanding the need to staff is something we would be happy to do.

Furr: There is not an application to fill out for ARPA money. The main thing I'd like to see is the current program including how much you are issuing to get a sense of what a contribution to that program would do.

LaBounty: I am a 100% supporter of the Food Shelf. We could recommend that the Selectboard use a certain amount of money for non-profits and then the Selectboard can choose among requests from non-profits.

Furr: I do not want to duplicate the appropriations process, but a general idea from non-profits would be good.

LaBounty: I do want non profits to get some of the money to provide additional services. But I think this is in the hands of the Selectboard to distribute.

Discussion of collating information received

Furr: I am open to suggestions as to how we should proceed on organizing the information.

LaBounty: I think we need to wait for the data to see if categories emerge.

Furr: I would like to share the sheet with members of the Committee before the next meeting.

LaBounty: I agree.

Lyle: I agree that we need to collate the data more. We can put items into categories fairly easy, but if we want to score items, what is the criteria?

Furr: The Bike Pedestrian Study looks at every proposal and it has a scoring system based on items such as impact and cost. I think we could create a similar system for scoring. We can take time to look through the suggestions and then look at a scoring system.

Lyle: We'll need to look at several factors for scoring from using it for a town building or coupling it with a grant.

LaBounty: I think we are looking to get the data, but the other part is to look at future purchases that are already in the capital plan. One concern is that if we build something with the ARPA money it will need to be maintained and we need to consider future costs. I agree we should look at matching grants.

Furr: I think we may see some trends once we look at the feedback.

LaBounty: Is there anyone that can enter the feedback from the cards?

Arneson: Duncan could enter the card info.

Furr: I could enter some as well.

Lyle: I could enter some as well.

Discussion of committee membership

Furr: We have two open seats and Rebecca will likely leave the committee soon. We do not appoint our members but we do review the applications. Did people look at the one submission?

Starks: Yes, Chris Granda's application looks good to me.

Furr: I agree, I think he would be great.

Arneson and Lyle agree he would be good.

LaBounty: Is he a partner with Jeff Forward in a business?

Lyle: According to his application yes.

LaBounty: That's a conflict. Because they are business partners it's a conflict to have two business partners, it's like having two spouses on the same committee, it becomes a conflict. That's my own personal opinion, I don't have my husband on this committee for a reason.

Starks: Is it because you can have two votes instead of one?

LaBounty: Yes.

Furr: From a standpoint of best practice it may be best to not have two people on the same committee.

LaBounty: I don't want the community to think we are weighting this in a certain way.

Furr: I agree with what you are saying. The optics are important. If we pay no attention to those we delegitimize the work we are doing. However, if we say based on that we don't think Chris should be on the Committee, does anyone know of anyone who would submit an application to serve on the committee?

LaBounty: Maybe we reduce the size of the Committee?

Lyle: I can ask around.

Furr: I have a theory that when we give a general outline of what the committee does it is not that interesting to people, but when we get to the point of reviewing the suggestions people may think that sounds fun. On the other hand, I feel a little worried that somebody may jump on the committee going "I need to keep those people honest they are going to pick their own pet projects and not do mine." I don't want people to think this is a chance to jump on the committee to game the system either.

LaBounty: I agree with you there because its great to bring on new people with new ideas but were at the point where we are just trying to go through the ideas and narrow them down. I don't want someone to try to jump on at the last minute and trying to get their agenda accomplished.

Furr: I agree with Cara that we should make the recommendation to the Selectboard that we drop the seats by two, that we say thank you but we will decline Chris' application and that we should then try as hard as we can to find our seventh member.

LaBounty: You mean our fifth. Are we going from 9 to 7 or 7 to 5?

Furr: I thought we were going from 9 to 7

LaBounty: Could be because we are lucky if we get 5 going to a meeting so that is why I am confused.

Furr: I would say we stick at 7.

LaBounty: Let's stick at 7, that's my error. Let's go from 9 to 7.

LaBounty: Reduce it by the two resident seats and keep the business owner seat but if we do not have a business owner, fill it with a resident.

Arneson: I will have Duncan target business owners specifically.

Agenda items for next time:

- Look at the Data

LaBounty moved to adjourn. Seconded by Lyle. Arneson aye, Lyle aye, Furr, aye, Starks aye, LaBounty Aye. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:53pm.