

**Town of Richmond ARPA Committee
Minutes for the meeting of November 9, 2022
Town Center and Via Zoom**

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

Members Absent:, Molly Dugan,

Others Present: Gina Cochiaro

Call or Order: 7:00pm

Welcome by Furr:

Members introduced themselves as there were new members present.

Public Comment:

Cochiaro: I am a Richmond resident and my husband and I operate a small catering service. We deliver 80 prepared meals to our Lady of the Holy Rosary every Thursday in partnership with Everyone Eats. This is in response to the pandemic's affect on people's ability to feed themselves. Funding is coming to an end for the program. We want to continue to provide meals despite the end of funding. We need \$1,000 per week to provide 80 meals each week. We would like 6 months operating costs to allow us to figure out how to make this a more permanent fixture.

Furr: We appreciate this information. One of the recommended uses of ARPA money is to work with non-profits to assist people in the community. The ARPA Committee cannot provide funding so quickly. This could be a request to the Selectboard.

LaBounty: Is this need based or could people who can afford to pay but just can't make their meals pay for the meals?

Cochiaro: People have not had to certify need but a percentage of the people have said they cannot pay for meals.

Forward: I think we would need to warn this item. I suggest we put this on the agenda for next meeting and vote on a recommendation to the Selectboard.

LaBounty: I recommend that at the next meeting we talk about charities in general before we talk about specific charities

Forward: I agree with that process, and we could have a recommendation to Selectboard on charities to support.

Houle: If you could put this into a narrative form and submit it this would be easier for the Committee to understand.

Furr: I agree we need something in writing and then we can discuss.

LaBounty: Let's skip the Welcome to New Member and Review of Minutes.

All agreed.

Discussion of creating categories to sort feedback

Furr: We would like to review categories to sort feedback into.

LaBounty: I think we could talk about categories and if there is a big group of things that are a no-go then those can be eliminated. For instance, one category I have is Town Center. Then town staff can label feedback by category. I had current and new recreation as categories.

Forward: There were a number of items under recreation. Trails could be included here. We may need to go to other committees for their feedback.

LaBounty: I saw that as recreation current and then we can create subcategories under each main category such as tennis, pool, etc. Then we can look at no-go.

Furr: I grouped all feedback into categories but did not break into subcategories with the exception of tennis which had a lot of suggestions.

LaBounty: Could you combine pickleball with tennis?

Houle: If you do tennis in Volunteer's green with a pervious surface you could build it in the flood plain.

LaBounty: I would not group basketball with tennis as they are different uses.

Furr: Transportation was different than cyclist safety and is improvements like shuttles. This includes connecting roads. Energy efficiency was a category. Community meeting space is separate from Town Center improvements, but Town Center could include meeting space.

LaBounty: I like keeping them separate for now.

Furr: Services for low-income residents is another category.

LaBounty: Could we have a charity category that is not service driven?

Houle: I would like to not see someone create a non-profit just to take advantage of the ARPA money.

Furr: That is a good point as there have been examples of some people creating non-profits that are not real just to get the money.

Houle: I want to make sure that if money goes to nonprofits, the money goes to valid, exiting nonprofits.

Forward: Next meeting we'll talk about criteria for these kinds of things. Maybe we should ask those on Zoom if there is anything they want to add.

Lyle: Jay's spreadsheet looks good. I approached it similarly but with fewer categories. I had primary categories with secondary categories within the primary categories. But some secondary categories fall under two primary categories. I was thinking of this in terms of how to present this to the Town Selectboard. How do we narrow down priorities. There were 300 or so individual inputs with a lot of repeats. If we narrow to 50 it is still hard to prioritize. As you go through the scoring process things will start to bubble up in the primary categories, which allows the Committee to steer the Selectboard toward those identified priorities.

Furr: I appreciate the subcategories. I did not go to that level. I was thinking once we have categories established, we discuss items in each category in more detail.

LaBounty: I like the secondary categories which allow me to see items that are "no gos" right away. Part of what we want to do is identify the no-gos and your subcategories can help us do that tonight. We are not going to make a recommendation with a hundred things to pick. We are charged with creating a plan based on the feedback from residents.

Furr: Beyond my broad categories I had a lot of categories which do not have many suggestions in them. I did come up with a list of feedback that was not feasible. Mine include: Fence around Maple Wind Farm. Paying down Town debt. Pool. Underwriting a bike shop. Building a car wash. Purchasing Riverview Commons. Sending the money back. An ice rink. I looked at things we can't do or things that are too expensive.

LaBounty: I agree with Jay's list of no-gos

Houle: I would like to add dog park to the no-gos. People with dogs don't always pick up after their dogs.

Furr: I don't know if we should eliminate a dog park at this stage. It may not be too expensive. A dog park has a lot of public support. Another category which I don't think we should eliminate is supporting a new startup business. I can envision a time where we could discuss helping to start a business.

LaBounty: There are a few key things we should not get into, and financing is one of them. We do not want to look into applications from individuals for money. I question getting into funding of anything. We are not going to buy the mobile home park or help the residents buy the mobile home park. I am opposed to helping fund startups.

Lyle: I agree that we should not be entertaining for-profit start up financing but I question on if we should draw a bright line on not providing start up money for a non-profit that has meaningful impact on the community.

Houle: I don't think anyone from the Town can do the work necessary to research a new nonprofit. We should stick to only supporting existing nonprofits as someone else has done the work to establish the nonprofit.

Forward: We don't have enough money to purchase the mobile home park, but there may be value if the residents wanted to purchase the park we may be able to help pay for facilitation.

LaBounty: I represented the park owner when they were talking about water and sewer expansion, and he had no desire to sell the park. I think this would be a waste of time for the Committee. I think this should be on the no-go list.

Rachel: I have not reviewed the list but I will have more input next time. I agree it would be hard to give money to start ups.

Eric: I second what Rachel said.

LaBounty: Spa and sauna, recreational center were on the no-go list. Basically anything with large buildings. Anything with indoor recreational facilities are not doable. I am not in support of water and sewer expansion. They have their own reserve funds and their own users. I want this to be a town wide goal and not just water and sewer.

Furr: I agree with what Cara said. We have been trying to find ways to fund expansion into the Gateway and this money would not help.

LaBounty: I think we should remove COVID bonuses.

Lyle: If there is a large general space that could be used year-round it may be good for a farmers' market.

Furr: My list did include community meeting space.

Forward: I think one of the next steps is developing criteria. The challenge with building any new building is determining where. We don't currently own land unless we use Brown's Court. Also, we have said early on we do not want to spend money on something that will have ongoing budget impacts, and a building would have large ongoing costs. That was one of the reasons a swimming pool was knocked off the list.

Furr: Connecting roads should be off the table along with the roundabout at the light. I think the sense is no to: large buildings, wastewater and water, COVID bonuses.

Furr: Homework is for people to read through the list and list the no-gos I think we could finalize a list of no-gos at the next meeting.

Forward: For the agenda at the next meeting we should review the no-gos

LaBounty: We should drill down on defining the true categories. If Tom and Jay can send their lists to everyone that would be helpful. I want to group things and then be able to eliminate things. The path from the Village to the Park and Ride and the Cochran Rd. path are too expensive. The transportation items for me seem to cost too much. Next meeting we wont have time to talk about charity items and those with an immediate need should go directly to the Selectboard.

LaBounty: Thank you to all the new members.

Chat:

00:19:34 Rachel Lohia (she/her): can you send us info on how to join with you in making meals? We'd love to offer Indian too if that's helpful!

00:24:46 Gina Cocchiaro: Thank you!

00:29:05 Rachel Lohia (she/her): we can't hear you

00:31:57 Eric Svensson- CQL: we cannot hear anyone in conference room other than Jay

00:33:35 Thomas Lyle: cant hear you

00:34:32 Eric Svensson- CQL: WITHOUT A MULTI DIRECTIONAL MIC WE CAN ONLY HEAR
JAY IN CON ROOM