

**Town of Richmond ARPA Committee  
Minutes for the meeting of December 14, 2022  
Town Center and Via Zoom**

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

**Members Absent:** Eric Svensson

**Others Present:** None

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

**Welcome by Furr**

Furr: Transportation Committee would like to attend the January meeting to provide feedback.

All concurred.

**Review minutes of the 11/30/22 Meeting**

Houle moved to approve the 11/30/22 minutes. Seconded by LaBounty.

LaBounty: We did not discuss allocating ARPA funds to water and sewer at the last meeting. Correct?

Furr: Correct, we did not discuss allocating ARPA funds to water and sewer at the last meeting

Roll Call Vote: Arneson, Furr, Houle, LaBounty, Lyle, Lohia, Dugan, Forward approve. Motion Carried

**Review and discussion of summary spreadsheet**

Furr: On the summary spreadsheet we moved stricken items to a second tab.

Forward: The work on organizing this sheet is very helpful. I think the next step should be talking about what our criteria should be to evaluate these items.

Arneson: I added a column to the spreadsheet for notes on if an item was included in the budget or in the capital plan. I added dollar figures where I could. Also, just because it is in the capital plan does not mean it is fully funded.

Furr reviewed items that were noted as being in the capital plan and town budget.

Arneson: Clarified that there is about \$15,000 in the budget over the current mowing contract to address general landscaping upkeep in FY24.

Discussion that Jericho Road Sidewalk is estimated to be \$1M, but is several years away.

Suggestion to note in the capital and budget column where there will be grants to aid in the cost of projects, like the Bridge St. sidewalk.

Arneson: We have \$10K in the budget for traffic calming measures and the full cost of traffic calming measures could far exceed \$10K.

Furr: We need to determine if we should spend ARPA funds on projects that are already in the budget or capital plan.

Forward: Just because it is in the capital plan does not mean we have authorized to do it. This is just a plan.

LaBounty: I understand that the capital plan items are not guaranteed. Remove items that are beyond the ARPA timeline.

Furr: Rachel has spent time putting in comments and questions on many items in the summary. Others can reply to these comments.

LaBounty: We need to be careful about having a discussion in the comments as that violates open meeting.

Furr: Correct. Please only add your own comments independent of previous comments. We would like to hear from everyone as you all have different background and can add unique perspective to some items.

LaBounty: I don't think we can use the comments in a google doc as this quickly becomes a discussion.

Furr: To avoid violating open meeting law people should make their own notes offline and bring this to the meeting. Josh has some good feedback on Little League.

Forward: Could we add in the notes on the shared document that a certain person has a thought on a topic but not the actual comment?

Furr: Yes, then we can filter through the document to see who has comments on specific topics.

LaBounty: We should continue to review the no-gos to narrow down the list.

Furr: Let's start at the top and go down the list to strike items.

Dugan: I feel like the better process is to name the criteria so we have guidelines for striking items.

Furr: The two criteria we have so far are 1) Is too expensive for ARPA and 2) does it have ongoing cost.

Forward: Another one would be timing, to see if it exceeds timeframe.

Arneson: Some items are too small

LaBounty: Should we include items to reduce the taxes raised in FY24 budget?

Forward: I might say we don't spend money on the item if it is in the budget.

Dugan: I don't see that as a criteria, but it is something good to know. I wonder about criteria that we want to see in ideas. For instance, ideas that are widely accessible are attractive.

LaBounty: There are criteria to trigger a no and criteria to trigger a yes.

Forward: A yes criteria is longevity of the project. Will it be here in 20 – 50 years? If it does have ongoing cost have, we identified a funding source?

LaBounty: I hear you say longevity is important but that could also bring ongoing cost.

Houle: Long term repaving of a court may be acceptable.

Furr: Landscaping may look nice for a few years but would disappear if not maintained every year.

Forward: These items may be included if a funding source can be found to maintain them. If we put in new sidewalks they do need to be maintained over a period of time but may be able to be absorbed into the general budget.

Houle: Everything requires maintenance. But we don't want it to be a large annual expense.

Dugan: Another yes criteria is if it improves safety, health, and wellbeing. I think that is the origin of the COVID funds.

LaBounty: Tax reduction and stabilization of spending also helps people and this has come across in some of the feedback.

Forward: I don't know if I agree with that because it could be an ongoing expense.

Lyle: I would flip it around to ask if there is an investment that we could make that would generate more tax revenue into Town.

LaBounty: The tax stabilization could be something we recommend that has no ongoing cost. It would mean we don't increase taxes next year.

Lyle: Legacy projects would be good to include. Items that may be on the Town's wish list but are just too expensive. Could we leverage funds from an additional pot of money?

LaBounty: Can we use ARPA funds as a match.

Forward: Yes they can be used as a match.

LaBounty: Then let's include ability to leverage funds. There may already be something planned in the budget that we could use the funds for.

Furr: If we could use ARPA money for heavy equipment that would help.

LaBounty: It could be used in conjunction with grants for public safety.

Forward: Would it be worth hiring a grant writer to research grants. I think we could get a grant writer for under \$10,000.

Houle: Isn't that part of the Town Planner's job? Cathleen Gent found grants for a rain garden.

Forward: There are a lot of grants that could be secured.

Furr: There are lots of websites that send lists of available grants.

Forward: There is a lot of stuff coming from the Feds.

Houle: Marie Thomas was good at researching grants.

Furr: I have known other organizations that have hired grant writing professionals and they have been helpful. Clever matching would be great.

Dugan: If we do get a lot of grants they need to be managed and they take a lot of staff time. There are some things to consider with grants.

LaBounty: It is more realistic to leverage funds for grants we are already seeking in the next couple of years.

Furr: This has been a good brainstorming session. I will email out the items.

Lohia: A reason to strike would be something that is already in existence. For instance, the elementary school is already putting in a brand new playground. This may make a Volunteer's Green Playground not a necessity.

LaBounty: People still use both parks and can't use the school when school is in session.

Furr: This may be applicable to the Gaga pit as the school already has one or two.

Houle: I don't consider improving the Volunteers' Green Playground to be a duplication. There are a lot of people who don't go up to the school, home schooled children for instance.

### **Discussion of Community Recovery and Revitalization Program (CRRP)**

Furr: Rachel asked if we could talk the Community Recovery and Revitalization Program.

Lahia: It looks like something that can be combined with other grants. I was interested to see if this is something that could be combined with something else. Perhaps for land purchase for affordable housing.

Houle: Land purchases would involve a Town wide vote.

Furr: They are trying to find smaller residential areas. They have a priority in the program for BIPOC related projects. This would be a good time to get a grant application in.

Forward: An idea that my wife Patty came up with is that the Town already owns Browns' Court. What if that was developed into affordable housing?

Houle: I think that sounds like a great idea but the neighbors in that area may be opposed. If it went forward there would need to be deed restrictions to ensure they stay affordable perpetually.

Furr: Would providing money help with affordable housing?

Dugan: Yes. The money would help with pre-development planning.

LaBounty: My only concern is if we put money into planning it may not happen.

Dugan: That is a potential outcome of planning.

LaBounty: The money may be better used on something that will actually be built.

Furr: This would be a worthwhile grant to follow up on. Jeff or myself could call VLCT to see if other towns are leveraging this money for affordable housing. For those people who are interested in affordable housing, do your research and see what you can find out the options are.

Dugan: The housing committee could also look into this.

Forward: we could invite the Housing Committee to provide insight into this.

LaBounty: I like to look into organizations that are proven in the affordable housing field.

Furr: I will send out the criteria list to everyone. Everyone should also review the list of feedback and come with thoughts. We will meet again on January 11.

LaBounty: Our criteria are not set yet, correct? I think we should think about the criteria and try to finalize it later.

Forward: A future agenda item would be to clarify the list, another is to meet with committees, another is a timeline.

Forward moved to adjourn. Seconded by Houle. Roll Call Vote Arneson, Furr, Houle, LaBounty, Lyle, Lohia, Dugan, Forward approve. Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned.