

**Town of Richmond  
Town Center and Library Committee  
Minutes – March 18, 2021**

**Present:** Committee Members: Josh Arneson, Christine Werneke, Laurie Dana, Jeff Forward, Dave Healy; guest Martha Nye

**Welcome & Public Comment:** The committee thanked Richmond voters for their overwhelming support of Articles 4 & 5 which will allow the work of the committee to move forward.

**Additions or Deletions to Agenda:** Laurie asked to place discussion of grant opportunities to the agenda.

**Items for Presentation or Discussion:**

**a) Committee Membership – Recruitment**

Need to clarify the status of roles/membership of the committee and how many openings there are. A commitment to continue has been received from Laurie, Jeff and Dave. Marie Thomas has resigned. Before the next meeting:

- Josh will talk with chair of the Planning Commission to fill that seat—Brian Tellstone was the appointee but has stopped attending meetings.
- Committee would like Linda Parent to continue and feels that there should be a town staff member on the committee.
- Jake Marin and Eveline Killian have specific interests in HVAC and may want to work as “volunteers” rather than as ongoing members of the committee.
- Martha is not able to serve but will ask if there is a Senior Center member who would be interested in serving.
- Josh would like to fold recruitment of new members into the existing town process for all appointees—there is an application on line which is due in April and the Selectboard will then appoint members to all committees in May.
- Christine will draft a public ask for new members, including some specific skills sought such as communication/PR, contracting, building, etc. Those interested will be directed to apply as above.

**b) Status of Library HVAC and Next Steps**

No work has been done on the library HVAC project. In January, New England Air toured the building and stated that they thought that they could complete the whole project (heating, AC & moisture) for less than their initial bid. That would reduce the cost from around \$120,000 to around \$82,000. Eveline was at that meeting and concurred with the changes that New England Air proposed. Josh has given the information to JJ from Breadloaf to review since they evaluated & recommended the New England Air bid. JJ will be invited to the next meeting to give his opinion.

Christine feels that we should also revisit funds to use to pay for this work in light of budget issues and the passage of the articles in the vote. The Selectboard had originally approved \$40,000 from unassigned funds and \$10,000 from the Library reserve for this project. The Committee should consider and make a recommendation on funding when we go to the Selectboard to finalize.

The Committee feels that this project should go ahead as quickly as possible as the Library is still closed and the work would not be as disruptive as it might be in the summer. Josh will check with New England Air regarding possible timing.

c) **Grants**

Laurie reviewed several potential grant sources that might be appropriate for the Committee to consider:

**Community Development Block Grants:**

- Accessibility Modification Grants (\$5,000-\$100,000) – to bring municipally-owned buildings and libraries into compliance with state and federal accessibility requirements.
- Planning Grants (\$3,000-\$60,000) – to conduct feasibility studies and marketing plans, produce architectural and engineering plans, etc.

**Vermont State Historic Preservation Grants** – revitalization of municipal buildings including town halls and libraries. (August open, due October 2021).

**USDA Rural Development – Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program** – Grants or low-interest loans for “essential community facilities.”

Jeff mentioned the **Northern Board Regional Commission** grants and Christine & Josh feel that we should also consider an application to the **Richmond Conservation Fund** (currently around \$307,000) since this is funded by the taxpayers of Richmond.

Laurie will research these further and send Committee members a list with links to the various resources.

d) **Project Identification and Prioritization**

The committee feels that the next step is to take the list of projects for Library and Town Center building which are included in the category #1 and #3 list which has been developed and group them by related work. Items #1 and #3 includes items to repair or stabilize the buildings and the code violations identified by Breadloaf assessment. Dave and Laurie will get together to create this grouping.

Next steps would be to:

- Identify scope of work for the projects
- Prepare bids/estimates (following town purchasing guidelines)
- Analyze bids and select contractor(s)
- Hire and manage the contractor(s)

The committee feels that all of this work needs to be done by someone other than town employees who do not have the time or expertise to do this. There was discussion of hiring an Independent Owner’s Representative. There was also discussion around hiring Breadloaf to do this work and whether it could be done under the existing contract or whether a new round of bids would need to be sought. Christine and Josh will explore this question.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.