

**Town of Richmond ARPA Committee  
Minutes for the meeting of March 9, 2022  
Town Center Meeting Room and via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Josh Arneson, Rebecca Starks, Jay Furr, Jeff Forward, Linda Donovan, Ellen Kane

**Members Absent:** Molly Dugan, Connie Bona

**Others Present:** Kendall Chamberlin Water and Wastewater Superintendent,

**Call or Order:** 4:00pm

**Welcome by Furr.**

**Discussion of Committee membership**

Furr: Jeff has been elected to the Selectboard and that gave us a quorum of the Selectboard on the Committee. June has decided to step down from this committee. We now need to fill another spot on the committee reserved for a member of the community.

Arneson: This will be added to the current outreach for committee members on other committees.

Furr: Having a teenager on the Committee would be interesting.

Forward: How long with the Committee last?

Donovan: I was thinking for about two years.

Forward: The challenge with a teenager is trying to get someone who is not going to graduate high school and leave town and the committee.

Furr: Perhaps they would leave, but it would be great to have the input of a teenager on the Committee.

Donovan: Annie Lajoie is looking into having a community center and she has many other big ideas. I have commercial and industrial property but I told her I'd allow a community center to be built there. The kids have lost a lot due to COVID and this would be a good resource for them. I'll talk to Annie to see if she has interest in the Committee.

Kane: I think we do need a young person. I know as a Committee we are supposed to be listening to the community. We have people just out of high school who are still living in town who may be good fits for the Committee.

Furr: I want to encourage everyone to reach out to people they know and encourage them to apply for the Committee.

Kane: It is important to note that the Committee is here to listen to the full community.

## **Review and discussion of updated ARPA survey**

Starks: I read through the rule and I feel that without examples the categories are hard to understand. I think we should give some examples. I know we were concerned about including our own slant if we provided examples, but I think they are helpful and I took the examples from the rule. I would not have thought of some of these things without having examples.

Kane: I agree but also let people know to look back at the full list.

Furr: I would agree.

Donovan: I agree, examples are the best.

Forward: The original draft of the survey came from the draft rule. What we have learned since then is that the categories don't really matter because we can claim it as revenue loss.

Furr: We talked about that and the consensus is that we should follow the rules even if we can claim it as revenue loss.

Forward: Fairly soon we should be making that recommendation to the Selectboard.

Furr: Do we have to fill out a form that we claim this as revenue loss?

Arneson: I don't know and I'll check on it.

Kane: Was a portion going to sever immediate Town needs and then a portion would go to the survey ideas based on community input?

Furr: I hear what you are saying, and this subject came up last meeting with a request to spend some funds on broadband. The Committee said no to that request until the process is completed.

Forward: An agenda item should be our timeline for when we want to hit certain milestones in regards to the survey and when we make decisions.

Furr: We will discuss the outline for community engagement later in this agenda. The question before us is are examples on the survey a good idea and it seemed that there is consensus that it would be.

Starks: Should we create an email for the survey?

Furr: An email address would be good.

Kane: Are we using survey monkey? I think we should use an electronic collection source. Having people email broadly not related to the survey could create challenges.

Starks: I think we should strike non-profits from number three as it is included above.

Forward: A large portion of the intent of this rule was for social services of some sort for people who were hit hard by the pandemic in some way. It feels like we have gotten through the pandemic and a lot of what they mention as needs have been addressed in other ways. This now seems like a once in a lifetime opportunity and there is a difference between relieve and legacy.

Furr: I agree, but something to consider is that we are asking about putting money toward relief and we may find some really good project ideas in that category.

Starks: People might still be struggling so money could go to that. This is also to be able to help us adapt to a future pandemic by having things such as good ventilation in public buildings.

Forward: This document is heavily weighted toward services and relief.

Kane: I don't think people are on the other side of this. A lot of times the female in the household gave up their job to take care of the kids. People are still suffering. But, I hear what Jeff is saying and I also want to find ways to strengthen the safety net. We need to be clear that we can do both. We also need to be serious about doing ideas that people provide.

Forward: It seems like 80% of the document is relief and we may end up closer to 50/50. Maybe we could spend a few more minutes discussing our impressions of it and think about how we want to use it.

Starks: Questions 5 and 6 do allow for broader responses so maybe that balances it out.

Forward: Very little of the ranking is for infrastructure. I wonder how we deal with that.

Kane: The description in the beginning can assist in clarifying that. We can say there is a percentage we want to direct toward improving the safety net. But I'm not sure if we want to put out percentages.

Furr: I would start off by saying we are interested in two categories 1) long lasting improvements to the town and 2) projects that help those most affected by the pandemic. We are not committing to the actual percentages but we are laying out two broad categories.

Starks: Other people in the Town may also feel that way and there are opportunities to respond that way in the survey. But an opening statement would be helpful.

Kane: There are people in the town that are very knowledgeable about certain things that need to be done and the general resident may not be as aware of those projects. Infrastructure items can be very necessary but complicated. I agree that the statement at the beginning is helpful.

Starks: Do we want to keep the 1-5 ranking or the how do you spend \$100 version?

Furr: I think the ranking is simpler.

Kane: I think what is most important will rise to the top in a 1-5 ranking per item.

Furr: I think we can go forward with the 1-5.

Starks: Should we have some data about Richmond included to show what has changed in Richmond in the past couple of years.

Kane: I love that idea. We have talked about gathering that type of information. We could provide an overview which includes that information.

Furr: The information is available but it is on a website with over 400 documents. We would need to sort it out.

Forward: I tried to ask the regional planning commission about this, and they did not find much that was very specific.

Kane: We can look at general information and use statewide data that addresses changes in the past two years.

Furr: I like that idea because it then helps to educate people.

Kane: Maybe we can do it in simple bullet points.

Furr: Some of those things can be found on the Census site. If everyone could think about what statistics would be most helpful, we can then review them at the next meeting. But we can't get bogged down on this.

Kane: I agree. We need to find statistics that we can clearly present.

Furr: I recommend that Rebecca could make a close to final draft that we could look at in the next meeting.

It was agreed that Jeff, Ellen, and Linda would work with Rebecca on the draft prior to the next meeting.

### **Create outline for community engagement**

Furr: Do people feel ready to brainstorm an approximate schedule? We need to allocate by end of 2024 and spend by end of 2026.

Kane: I kind of like the idea of taking a year to do the focus groups and look at data around spring of next year.

Furr: I'd like to do focus groups in the summer when the weather is nice.

Forward: I was thinking of completing the outreach by the end of 2022. Getting the document completed may take a couple more meetings anyway.

Furr: Since the timeline is long, we can probably take time on the survey. We have not discussed specifically where we want to have focus groups other than Riverview Commons.

Kane: We talked about a consultant; do we not need one now?

Furr: Because it is being claimed as revenue loss a lot of the complications are removed so we don't need a consultant.

Kane: We probably want to reach out to elderly, school, businesses and more. We can have some targeted groups and then some that are general. I see this happening over the summer and into the fall.

Forward: We can also probably learn from what other communities have done. There may be good ideas out there.

Furr: Next meetings we are going to reach out to people who we think should be on the Committee. We will review an updated survey. We will look at groups to reach out to.

Kane: I can create a paragraph about the data.

Furr: That is a good fourth agenda item to discuss which statistics we want to get.

Starks: There is a link in the chat about what other communities are considering.

Forward: We may want to understand where the overlap is from other sources. Many of the things we are talking about are addressed by other programs.

Kane: Let's invite regional planning to a future agenda to see if they can help to identify that overlap.

Furr: It would be important to talk to regional planning because they may be able to pull some things together with other towns.

Forward: Let's see if they can join us in May.

Kane: I'd like to show them what we are thinking and what our timeline is and they can help us see if there is money for items from other sources.

Chat From Zoom:

00:59:45 Rebecca Starks: <https://www.vlct.org/resource/arpacs1frf-final-rule-summary-and-analysis>

00:59:59 Rebecca Starks: If you scroll down there's a list of what other VT towns are doing