

MEETING OF THE WESTMINSTER ARPA COMMITTEE – Unofficial Minutes

Tuesday, November 30, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Institute - Westminster, VT and by Zoom Conferencing

Members Present: Jason Perry (SB), Russell Hodgkins (TM), Pauline Blake O'Brien (Town Clerk), Jim Matteau (Village Chair), Cynthia Stoddard, Bobbi Kilburn, John Jones, Lou Blanchard, and Linda Fawcett

Attending remotely: Nancy Dalzell (Village Treas.) and Toby Young (SB)

- 1. Call to Order:** Being 5:33 PM, Russell Hodgkins called the meeting to order.
- 2. Unofficial Minutes:** Russell Hodgkins asked if anyone had any additions or subtractions to the meeting notes of November 4, 2021's meeting. Hearing none, Russell moved the meeting along to New Business.
- 3. New Business:** John Jones recommended that this Committee create a more formal appearance with a Chair, V. Chair, etc.. Cynthia Stoddard agreed to this and added that presence on the Town's website should be created so that the public is aware of the Committees progress. Toby Young made a motion to elect Jim Matteau as the Committee Chair as he has great experience and skills that would help this very important task. Jim thanked Toby but declined the nomination. John Jones made a nomination for Cynthia Stoddard to be Chair. Toby Young seconded the motion and hearing no other nominations, Russell Hodgkins put it to a vote and it was unanimously accepted. Cynthia then took over the meeting and asked for Nominations for Vice Chair. Cynthia made a motion to elect Bobbi Kilburn as the Vice Chair with John Jones seconding. The motion passed. John Jones made a motion to have Russell Hodgkins be the Clerk of the Committee and Pauline Blake O'Brien seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting resumed.

Cynthia Stoddard told the meeting that she felt that the ARPA Committee (AC) needs to establish immediate demands for funding and long-term needs. She continued, she thinks that two items which are immediate are the digitized records for the Town Clerk and a hybrid meeting space. Both items have been discussed and the need is prevalent to the criteria of the ARPA guidelines. Cynthia said that in her opinion, these two items do not need to be scored or scrutinized any longer as they are an immediate need if the pandemic comes back in force and person to person contact is limited. Lou Blanchard told the meeting that he thought the same was true for water within the Village. Jim Matteau commented that the Institute was the only sensible meeting space that was big enough and available to the Town, but to make it viable, it needs ventilation and acoustic enhancements to the gym area as it does have a severe echo within the area. John Jones asked if the Institute would allow flat screen TV's to be mounted on the walls as this would give the viewing audience a complete picture of the meeting and they would not feel as if they were not an important part of the meeting. Bobbi Kilburn said that this Committee needs to think bigger and bolder. Many additional funding opportunities are being discussed at the State and Federal levels. A scoring system will be a must and should be created sooner than later. Town capital projects should be placed in a list of probables with a priority score attached. After a brief discussion, Jim Matteau told the Committee that an Engineer should be contacted to discuss the issues of the gym area and mentioned that this building also has been identified by FEMA as the Emergency Evacuation center and would help with the scoring for the project. Cynthia Stoddard said that the Committee has the money and these two items should not wait. If the pandemic kicked in tomorrow the Town would be shutdown without total services available. She continued that each Department Head in the Town should be asked what they would

need if the Town shutdown again and work was mandated to run offsite. Jim Matteau said that he thought the Committee should cost out the town department needs and the meeting space renovations so that it will be done in a timely fashion and brought to the Selectboard as soon as possible. He continued that the Selectboard should also agree to the Institute being the official meeting space before all this effort is done. The Town Manager will ask the Board at their next meeting to weigh in on this possibility.

Bobbi Kilburn stated that any payments over \$10,000 will have Federal regulations attached. Procurement, recording, and payments will all be part of this mandated process. Russell Hodgkins asked about the administrative recording demands that will happen every year? Bobbi responded that this is part of this process.

Cynthia Stoddard asked the meeting, are we all in favor of getting the Costs/Request from the Town Clerk for the digitalization of land records to the Selectboard for formal approval of this expense? After a brief discussion, Bobbi Kilburn made a motion to have Pauline Blake O'Brien bring her information/costs to the Selectboard for formal approval of the disbursement of the ARPA funds. John Jones seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Cynthia thanked the Committee and asked Russell Hodgkins to identify any and all the Department Heads needs and create a cost that would cover these expenses. She continued that Jim Matteau and herself will start the process of determining what's needed to get the Institute ready to become the major meeting space for the Town. Cynthia also stated that she would start gathering a list of business's/Farmers/Non-Profits etc.. so that in possibly February a Town Forum can be created for the public to weigh in on the remaining funds available.

Other Business: None

Date of Next Meeting: January 18, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at the Institute & Zoom.

Adjournment: John Jones made a motion to adjourn with Pauline Blake O'Brien seconding at 6:45 PM. Cynthia Stoddard called the vote, and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes composed by Russell Hodgkins 12/6/2021