

MEETING OF THE WESTMINSTER ARPA COMMITTEE – Minutes

Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

Institute - Westminster, VT and by Zoom Conferencing

Members Present: Jason Perry (SB), Russell Hodgkins (Clerk/TM), Jim Matteau (Village Chair), Chuck Lawrence (Road Foreman), Cole Streeter (Fire Chief), and Linda Fawcett

Attending remotely: John Jones .

- 1.) **Call to Order:** Being 5:33 PM, the Clerk called the meeting to order in the absence of a Chair and the Vice Chair not available for the meeting.
- 2.) **Re-Organization of the Committee:** The Clerk explained that the Chair resigned and that this Committee needed to reorganize and approve new members. Russell Hodgkins made a motion to accept Paul Banik as a new member with Jim Matteau seconding. The motion passed. Russell Hodgkins then made a motion to accept Linda Fawcett as a new member with Jason Perry seconding. The motion passed. With no interest from previous Committee Members, Russell Hodgkins made a motion to elect Paul Banik as Chair with Chuck Lawrence seconding. Hearing no other nominations, the motion was called to a vote and passed with Paul being the new Chair. The previous positions will remain intact which was as follows: Bobbi Kilburn remaining Vice Chair and Russell Hodgkins as the Recording Clerk.
- 3.) **Adjustments to the Agenda:** None
- 4.) **Approval of Minutes (Nov. 30, 2021):** Paul Banik asked if anyone had any additions or subtractions to the minutes presented. Jim Matteau asked to strike the wording about Fire & Safety under Item #5. He meant to express his feelings toward hiring an independent company vs. Fire & Safety. Jim Matteau then made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected with Chuck Lawrence seconding. The minutes passed.
- 5.) **Communications & Public Comment:** None
- 6.) **Unfinished Business:**
 - A. **Approved Funding – Update:** Russell Hodgkins told the Committee that the Town Clerk has started the process in the online land records with NEMRC. Russ estimated that the process was approximately ½ completed. Chuck Lawrence reported that the Highway’s tablets arrived today and they have started the down loading of the road inventory data base that Windham Regional is supplying to all Town’s using this new technology. Russell Hodgkins told the Committee that the Meeting enhancement gear is slowly trickling in. He has received the “OWL” camera and two travel cases along with the network of needed cabling.
 - B. **Projects Submitted, not yet approved:** Russell Hodgkins told the meeting that in their packets was a clarification of the Fire Department’s need for a new generator for the Fire House. Cole Streeter explained that the total cost shown was the installed price at a total of \$28,545.64. With a continued brief discussion, Jason Perry made a motion to recommend this project to the Selectboard for ARPA Funding. John Jones seconded, and the motion passed

with Cole Streeter abstaining. Russell Hodgkins told the Committee that the Institute, Grout Ave. and the Selectboard Tablets are on hold until further information can be obtained.

- C. **ARPA Committee Guidelines: Example from Richmond, VT by John Jones:** Paul Banik asked John Jones to speak on the issue. John expressed his opinion that this subject should be tabled until the US Treasury makes a firm decision and determination of what projects this money can be used for. He continued with the new information that Cynthia Stoddard revealed. She explained that understanding about 50% of the total concept of this final rule, she thinks Towns could place this allocation into their General Fund” if they are under the allowance of \$10,000,000 for using ARPA monies under the loss revenue category. This would allow the Towns Selectboard to spend it on general fund expenses that it deems appropriate. Cynthia warned that more information should be sought before acting and that VLCT is a great resource to fall back on.
- D. **Public Forum – Update:** The Committee all agreed that this item again would need to be tabled until firm decisions are made on the usage of the funds. Jason Perry expressed that all of the rules need to be very clear before the public gets involved.
- E. **Committee Response – Funding Moved to General Fund:** Paul Banik told the meeting that this had already been discussed and all agreed to table until the rules are clear.

7.) **New Business:**

- A. **New WCECD Committee – Possible overlap & Collaboration:** John Jones spoke about this new Committee and recommended that the two Committees possibly meeting in a joint session to make sure all are on the same page and that collaboration will be key for future success. John will look into this and report back.
- B. **New Projects – if any:** None to report

8.) **Committee Members Report – If any:** Russ Hodgkins told the meeting that he had placed this on the agenda to make sure any and all of the members of this Committee had a chance to speak if needed. No one had any comments to share at this point.

9.) **Other Business:** Paul Banik told the meeting that he would write an article for the Gazette about this Committee and what it’s been and will be doing so that the public is aware of the progress. All agreed that this would be a great idea. John Jones asked the Committee if he should ask Katie Buckley from VLCT to speak at the next meeting and all agreed that this would be a great idea.

10.) **Date of Next Meeting:** March 22, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at the Institute & Zoom. New time was requested by the new Chair. All agreed.

11.) **Adjournment:** John Jones made a motion to adjourn with Chuck Lawrence seconding at 6:45 PM. Paul Banik called the vote, and the meeting was adjourned.



Russell R. Hodgkins - Clerk