

ARPA Funding Advisory Committee

Monday, November 7, 5:30 PM

Holley Hall and Remote

Present: Kris Perlee, Alison DaBica, Mike Dash, Porter Knight, Elizabeth Blair, Helen Young (CC), Robert Rooker (PC); Valerie Capels (Town Administrator)

Public Participants: Jessica Teets and students, Tasha Ball

Meeting Notes

1. Review of October 17 meeting minutes

Helen Young asked to update the minutes from the last meeting to include Turning Point in her list.

2. Public Forum

Tasha Ball, for Willowell/Wren's Nest, requested an update about the status of the process. Porter outlined the focus groups, town hall meetings, and surveys that have given the committee over 500 ideas. Currently the committee is trying to rank these ideas and are also reaching out to other towns and agencies (Addison County Regional Planning, etc). Porter will draft a FPF post to let the community know where we are in the process, as others are inquiring as well.

3. Other Business

- Kris talked to Adam Lougee – the Planning Commission is revamping housing regulations with grant funds. It is possible that they may need an additional \$10-12,000 to wrap up the work; studies on wastewater will also happen and may benefit from ARPA funding.
- Porter and Jessica will reach out to Patrick, Catrina, and Mandy to talk about how the schools plan to spend the ESSR funding and if there is overlap on our project lists.

4. “Big issues” vs. “Smaller projects” - discussion about whether or how to resolve discrepancy between the fact that the “Big issues” identified by the public are about housing and childcare but most of the ideas submitted are about smaller projects addressing other topics.

- a. Betsey - maybe better to completely fund something (have concrete, tangible project complete) especially because many people feel disillusioned with government always “studying” and not “doing”. Could we completely fund the BFC expansion and the Willowell/Wren's Nest proposals?
- b. Kris said that he thinks the committee should be classifying projects by long term vs short term.
- c. Ali – like idea of funding several projects, especially childcare and recreation
- d. Betsey reminded us that we should share all of the ideas that do not get funded and advocate for other sources of funding for them.
- e. Mike pointed out that housing and childcare are the biggest needs in Bristol, and though perhaps we can't “solve” these problems we can still invest to make a sizable dent in child care needs with the existing proposals
- f. Kris responded that both Willowell/Wren's Nest and BFC requests would amount to \$300,000, only 1/3 of the total funding - a good investment still leaving funds for other projects.
- g. Alison will seek data regarding number of childcare slots needed in Bristol, so we know how big a dent funding the BFC and Willowell proposals will make in the existing need.

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- h. Porter likes the ideas on VLCT's handout about using funds to impact housing affordability.
- i. Kris and Rob cautioned against seeking more ideas and encouraged focus on narrowing down the list.
- j. Helen asked how we can proceed with projects that might have other funding, like EV charging stations as part of state grants. **Committee asked if Valerie can help us understand the amount and likelihood of receiving the any of the alternative fundings on the spreadsheet, and also whether matching funds are required..**
- k. Betsey cautioned the committee about not forgetting the demographics being served, like the elderly, children, etc. Kris agreed and wants the committee to reach as many people as possible. **Committee asked if the spreadsheet can also add a column to indicate demographic served.**

Consensus is that we are comfortable moving forward with the list of ideas that we have (including some addressing childcare availability), and we are satisfied that no additional research is necessary or appropriate on the committee's part to seek out or develop ideas related to affordable housing. We will proceed with the existing input we have from the community, and will advocate for ways (other than direct ARPA funding) that the town can support and work toward affordable housing.

5. **Homework: before next meeting** on 12/5 at 7pm

- Committee members will look at our "tier 2" list and highlight any they'd like to advocate to move to the first page.
- Also, Porter and Jessica will prepare a survey for the committee to use to rank each idea according to the principles we've stated:
 - Serve broadest # of residents/serve neediest residents
 - Invest (not on-going expense)
 - Not already in budget/no other funding source narrow down the list of items they
 - Leverage/attract additional funds to Bristol

AGENDA for the next meeting on 12/5 at 7pm (**NOTE:** normally meetings are scheduled 7-8:30. I anticipate the December may be a bit longer since we'll be hearing from the students. I hope people will be prepared for and comfortable staying a bit later at the December meeting?)

- Discuss ideas each of us moved to "tier 1"
- Review results of ranking survey– does that change the way tier 1 is prioritized?
- Develop plan to add any information needed to the ideas (details, costs)
- Hear from Jessica's class regarding what other ARPA committees are doing
- Tentative timeline for the rest of the process:
 - January: Review ideas with additional details added; Compile draft list of top recommendations, Plan a community survey to rank order these remaining ideas
 - February: Collect survey data and finalize list of recommendations to SB; Begin strategizing about best way to present ideas that are not being put forward for ARPA funding

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- March: Present to the Selectboard and more widely (transfer ideas); Advocate for funding for ideas not part of ARPA recommendations
- April: Wrap up and any final steps

5. **Adjourn.** Betsy motioned to adjourn.