

Chester ARPA Committee Meeting

Minutes for Tuesday, June 14, 2022, 7pm, ZOOM

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM by Bill Bernhart

Seating of Committee Members

Committee members present were Bill Bernhart, Allison Abramson, Michael Cressman, Steve Cline, Kris Pollock, Mike Jordan, Susan Wright, Kim Megrath, Mike Jordan.

Others - Rick Nygard (BoF) John O'Hare (BoF), Jenny Kitsen (Chester Land Trust)

Not attending - Charlene Janacek, Andrew Gardner, Jon Joslow.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from 5/09/2022

Motion to approve by Mike Cressman, seconded by Steve Cline, Approved. Kim abstained - did not attend.

Proposal status summary

Kris will update with changes discussed at meeting.

Sub-Committee Reports

- **Social Services Sub-Committee**
 - No update
- **Proposal Process Sub-Committee**
 - A draft of revised administrative process and form were presented. It was agreed to remove factor considerations bullets - Accountability of Proposer, Return on Investment, Sustainability - as they are difficult to measure and implement and are inconsistent with the nature of the current process. Bill will post the new form and process on the website.

Discussion and Committee disposition of ARPA Proposal Submissions

- **ARPA Committee Administrative Expenses**

- The Board of Selectmen approved \$3,250 of \$5,250 of the Committee Administrative Expenses, deciding not to approve the \$2,000 for Communications. There was general concern and disappointment expressed by the Committee that this was not fact based and reflected a lack of support for the Committee's efforts and successes to date. Susan Wright affirmed that post card mailings have been effective in past initiatives to get engagement. Bill will seek approval for the cost of one single-message postcard mailing to support engagement in an ARPA Informational Meeting - \$700.
- **Full Service Generator for Town Hall**
 - Revised proposal currently with Board of Finance. Changes are minor so we will defer to Board of Finance.
- **Chester Land Trust Preservation Project**
 - Current mitigation is done by volunteers and so is at risk if someone is disabled. Other CLT tasks are not being completed and there is a backlog. Open space visitation increased significantly during COVID. Visitors to Chester food establishments were referred to the Carini Preserve. It is a part of the core of Chester Center.
 - Jenny Kitsen - Carini Preserve is a great opportunity to educate the community to learn how to control on other properties.
 - Long term maintenance vision for CLT – Success will be determined by the intensity, duration and specific methods of eradication efforts.
 - Focus is on maintaining public access to the preserve, education and supporting the organization's efforts.
 - Motion to move forward – Bill Bernhart, second – Mike Jordan. Motion passed
- **Town of Chester Website Overhaul**
 - Proposal is for initial \$11,500 for preparation and launch of new website,. Subsequent 5 years contract costs will be in Operating Budget.
 - Motion to move forward – Michael, second – Allison, Susan Wright abstained, motion passed.
- **Road Inventory and Maintenance Schedule (\$30,000)**
 - The goal of the proposal received general support. Sustainable planning!
 - According to procurement policy this may have to be competitively bid. However, Nathan Jacobsen Associates are the town engineers and likely have a significant amount of data and experience invested in this function. They would have to be involved in the implementation. It was not clear how this would proceed if a competitive bidding process

was required.

- Motion to move proposal forward with the conditions that it not exceed \$30,000, and that the proposal will be processed by Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen in accordance with town Procurement Policy – motion made by Mike Jordan, Seconded by Kim Megrath, Passed.

- **War Memorial Upgrade (\$25,000)**

- Bill talked to Meredith Devanney , Veterans Advocate for Chester. She feels this proposal is supported by the veterans of Chester (American Legion Post 97). Veterans organizations have been explicitly included as eligible non-profits (501 C(19)) by the Treasury Final Rule.
- John O'Hare would like to see recognition of “cold war warrior” veterans, who served during non-war periods. Perhaps clarification of the criteria for inclusion on the monument is needed.
- Mike Jordan commented that it may not align with the intent of COVID funding. To be determined.
- We will put this aside to allow research into what other American Legion Posts/VFWs are doing, and to compare to future proposal receipts. Motion by Bill Bernhart, second by Mike Jordan, passed.

- **Online Permitting System Solution (\$20,000)**

- Mike Jordan feels this would be a valuable improvement/modernization to current town permitting operations. It is proposed as a joint effort with Deep River as we share personnel in some functions. It would be partially supported by revenue stream from fees.
- The contract or contracts need to be looked at from procurement and financial perspectives.
- This should be looked at as one part of a strategic plan to improve town operations. The scale of Chester's population may require some systems investments that may be necessary in the big picture.
- Need to understand how this would operate between the two towns and with any other town involved in hosting.
- Michael Cressman is asking what the value payback is, considering future operating expenses.
- Many details need to be firmed up. Bill will invite submitter John Guskowski (Zoning Enforcement Officer, Chester) to our next meeting to discuss.
- Susan Wright described some citizen/contractor feedback regarding how difficult it is to obtain required permits given staffing vacancies and varied office hours.

- **Informational Meeting Planning**
 - No discussion.

Audience of Citizens - There was no audience nor comment.

Adjournment - Motion made by Michael Cressman, seconded by Mike Jordan, Approved. Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Submitted by Bill Bernhart, Chester ARPA Committee Chair