

**ARPA Committee Meeting
Town of St Johnsbury
May 16, 2022**

Committee members in attendance: Chad Whitehead, David Reynolds, Jenna O'Farrell, Jody Fried, Adam Kane, Ken Hammer, Frank Empsall, Gillian Sewake, Scott Beck, Scott Campbell, Joe Kasprzak

Members of the public: Stacy Jewell

Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

- **Open Meeting/Agenda Amendments**

Meeting opened at 12:00pm.

No agenda amendments.

- **Public Comment**

None.

- **Housing Study and Grant Program**

Joe presented an overview of the current state of St. J's housing study, and the rental housing improvement grant program offered through the Town of St. J. He will be requesting funding from this committee to support this program in the future, likely in the vicinity of \$100,000, as well as \$15,000 for an update of the housing study.

Clarification of process: the selectboard has authorized \$500,000 in immediate funding that can be used for time-sensitive projects that submit applications for ARPA funds.

Discussion of the ideal balance of community housing at a variety of income levels. The proposed update to the housing study will explore this. Rural Edge is working on a regional housing study.

Discussion of working regionally, possibly through the NEK Collaborative, to explore regional solutions to housing.

- **Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Connection and NBRC/CDS Award**

Chad presented an overview of the LVRT trail connection project and various grant-funded projects working to advance it, as well as the funding gap to purchase and remediate property for a trailhead parking area. He will be seeking ARPA funds to support a project manager and purchase/mitigate the property, in the vicinity of \$210,000.

- **Facilitator Proposals**

Chad described the review process for public engagement facilitator proposals. The review group provided a scoring rubric (sent ahead) and identified the firm HCH as having the highest scored facilitator proposal.

Gillian moved to recommend to the selectboard that they accept the review group's proposal to contract with HCH as the facilitator for the ARPA funding public engagement process utilizing ARPA funding for the contract. Seconded by Ken Hammer. The motion passed, with one abstention.

- **Town Clerk's Office Scanning Project Application**

Stacy presented an overview of the Town Clerk office's proposal for ARPA funding to support digitization of municipal land records (proposal sent ahead), tentatively starting at \$45,000, up to a maximum of \$100,000. Extensive discussion ensued regarding whether the proposal met the criteria for the time-sensitive set aside, or whether it should go through the public process.

Discussion of whether the group makes decisions via consensus (a super-majority), or other process. Jody moves that we define consensus as a super-majority (66%) of the present group members for decision making. Joe seconds. 8 in favor. 3 against. Motion passes.

Frank moves to propose that the selectboard approve \$50,000 for the town clerk's office to digitize the land records. Joe seconds. 6 in favor. 3 opposed. Motion passes.

This proposal will be presented to the selectboard at Monday's meeting.

- **Other Business**

The warming shelter proposal will go before the selectboard at the meeting after next.

- **Adjourned: 1:22**

Respectfully submitted,
Gillian Sewake, Committee Member