

**ARPA Committee Meeting  
Town of St Johnsbury  
February 10, 2023**

Committee members in attendance: Chad Whitehead, Gillian Sewake, Frank Empsall, Jody Fried, Joe Kasprzak, Adam Kane, Jenna O'Farrell, Bob Joly, Patrick Shattuck, Nick Anzalone

Members of the public in attendance: Peter Van Straten, Stacy Jewell

**Meeting Minutes**

- **Open Meeting/Public Comment:** Meeting opened 10:03am.

Question from Peter regarding the report generated from the public input meeting. Chad provided an overview of all of the outreach conducted by the consultants, including the public meeting, and clarified that the report is still in progress.

- **Finalize Types of Grants and Ask of Select Board**

Chad provided an overview of the memo of suggested grants and the ask to be made of the selectboard at Monday's meeting.

Stacy raised the issue of administration of the programs, and that the Town's accounting system would need to be adjusted to support grant disbursement. Chad replied that some of the request to the selectboard is to support an administrative position to support the work load. He, Joe, Stacy, and Leslie will connect about the workload and accounting processes, and review accounting options.

Patrick identified that housing was not on the list of eligible sectors under micro-grants, and should be added in.

Discussion of the length of the grant period. Committee's suggestion is 12 months.

Chad made a motion to propose to the selectboard the micro-grants and reimbursement grants as proposed in the memo, in the amount of \$300,000 of ARPA funds. Unanimous approval.

Chad made a motion to propose to the selectboard that \$200,000 be made available of ARPA funds for the rental housing improvement grants, as proposed in the memo. Unanimous approval.

Chad made a motion to propose that \$104,000 be made available of ARPA funds to contract with a federal procurement specialist and provide for grant management for assistance with administration of ARPA funds, as proposed in the memo. Unanimous approval.

Chad suggested that only a portion of the funds requested would be deployed in the first phase, and roughly half will be reserved for future stages, to help folks prepare their applications for a timeline that works for them rather than rushing for the first round.

Discussion of the future use of funds for larger "transformational projects". These will be key projects that will leverage funds, and serve as a catalyst for growth and development in the town.

- **Finalize Preliminary Report**

Chad will reach out to HCH to ask for an executive summary in a fashion that can be presented to the selectboard.

- **Purpose and Need Statement**

Ideas: Discussion of the term “revitalizing” in the title. Visionary - looking forward. Community vitality, health and wellbeing are important, as well as economic growth and vitality. Vibrancy, sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity. Gillian will help shape the wording of the proposal statement to send to the committee for review.

Chad made a motion to propose that the program be called the “St. Johnsbury Revitalization Fund Grants”, as proposed in the memo. Unanimous approval.

- **Scoring Process and Team**

Discussion of proposed scoring criteria. There will be different criteria and levels of oversight for the different types of grant program. The sub-committee will begin drafting a document for the larger committee to review. The selectboard will need to approve the grant application process, with a target to get that ready to present at the next meeting after the one on Monday.

Discussion of who would be appropriate to serve on the scoring committee. Many of the ARPA committee members will likely be submitting applications, which will present a conflict for them in scoring it. This will be raised at a future meeting.

Joe will likely resign from the committee in the future, to have separation from scoring and voting as he begins to review and support bigger transformational projects and the rental housing program.

- **Appoint Applicant Coaches**

At a future meeting, Chad will be asking members of the committee to assist with applicant questions and coaching.

- **Approve Matching Requirements:**

Confirmed that the suggestion is 10% match for micro-grants and 20% match for reimbursement grants.

- **Other Business:**

Adam asked if the ARPA funds received could be put into a mutual fund, so that it could accrue interest while the funds are waiting to be deployed. Chad will explore this with VLCT.

- **Adjourned: 10:57am**

Respectfully submitted,  
Gillian Sewake, Committee Member