



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### Reading Arpa Advisory Committee

Date: 2022-04-12

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Open Session

Version: Final

#### Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chair Marianne Downing, Vice Chair Mark Dockser, Joe McDonagh, Tom Wise, Geoffrey Coram, Chris Haley, Shawn Brandt

#### **Members - Not Present:**

Andrew Grimes

#### **Others Present:**

Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Town Accountant Sharon Angstrom (remote), Assistant Town Manager Jean Delios (remote), Community Services Director Kevin Bohmiller (remote), Recreation Administrator Jenna Fiorente, Recreation Coordinator Shannon Fratto (remote), Stephen Crisafulli - Activitas (remote), Chuck Robinson, Karen Herrick, Angela Binda, John Douglass - Rotary, Tim Kelley, Bob Holmes, Emily Sisson, Michael Lee, Josh Graciela, Bruce Ayer, Richard Abate, William McDaniel

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Jacquelyn LaVerde

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#### **Topics of Discussion:**

This meeting was held in-person at the Town Hall Select Board Meeting Room and remotely via Zoom.

Chair Marianne Downing called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and reviewed the evening's agenda.

Select Board Chair Karen Gately Herrick called the Select Board to order at 7:03 pm.

#### **Public Comment:**

Tim Kelley of the Rotary Club, joined by John Douglass, Club President, requested that the RAAC consider the Fall Street Faire as a recipient of some ARPA funds. Ms. Downing asked Mr. Kelley to submit a memo to the Committee, with more details and a dollar amount, for discussion at the next meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

Rich Abate of the Reading Police, joined by other first responders, noted that the group read a joint statement in September at the Financial Forum, requesting to allocate some of the ARPA funds for first responders. He made the request again to the Select Board at their March 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, and is again making the request to the RAAC for consideration. Ms. Downing noted that first responders are included in the discussion, and requested a memo with a percent or an amount to guide the Committee's discussion at a future meeting.

**PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION: Reading Recreation to address RAAC re: REC category uses for ARPA funding, including any time sensitive uses:**

Recreation Administrator Jenna Fiorente thanked the Committee for considering Recreation for ARPA funding, and noted that a significant impact of COVID showed the need for people to get outside and have passive spaces to safely gather. After looking over documents, conducting surveys, and interviewing stakeholders, priorities included passive recreation, restrooms, concessions and lighting for safety. Ms. Fiorente and Stephen Crisafulli, Landscape Architect for Activitas, presented the conceptual design of the Birch Meadow Master Plan and highlighted projects that would benefit from ARPA funds:

- Central Spine with walkway, restrooms, and pavilion for an estimated \$700,000-\$900,000
- Lacrosse Wall for an estimated \$125,000-\$175,000
- Parking and wetland restoration of the former Imagination Station for an estimated \$550,000-\$650,000

The walkway will be ADA compliant. The parking lot will also feature electric vehicle parking.

The Committee discussed concerns regarding the loss of parking spaces at the Imagination Station parking lot, as parking is already an issue, especially on Saturdays when sport seasons are in full swing, and improvements to the area will make it an even more desirable destination. Ms. Fiorente stated that in the overall Birch Meadow Master Plan, additional parking will be added across from Castine Field. She stated that she would provide the Committee with the current parking statistics and the total spaces to be gained.

**PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION - Reading Elder Services to address RAAC re: possible Elder Services uses for ARPA funding:**

Mr. Dockser stated that he asked the Council on Aging (COA) to come up with proposals last week, but the COA requested to defer their presentation to the next RAAC meeting. Community Services Director Kevin Bohmiller noted that the Council will send their requests to him for him to present at the next meeting.

**CONTINUED GROUP WORKING LIST DISCUSSION - Go over master list of ARPA funding items and Draft set of classifications into buckets - to further sub classify and/or rank from 1 to 5 (1-lowest, 5-highest) based on:**

- 1. Time sensitivity**
- 2. Is plan for use specific (e.g., ready to go or start, or purchase/spend) or general**
- 3. Cost - can we fund all or part**
- 4. Is this one hit wonder/quick win/low hanging fruit that can get done completely and quickly with a portion of ARPA?**
- 5. Does this spend save us money in future?**
- 6. Priorities within buckets**

Ms. Downing shared the "bucket list" of requests to date, with proposed dollar figures where available, which so far adds up to a little over \$15 million. She suggested the group try to apply some sort of ranking criteria. The Committee discussed the many different items listed at length, and suggested criteria considerations for ranking projects including: being "shovel-ready", unable to be done without ARPA funds, percent of residents that would benefit, costs, responsibility for implementing, additional hiring needed to complete the work, how long it will take to complete, easy to do, whether there are challenges such as supply chain delays, long-term budget savings, whether there are alternate sources of funding such as grants, pandemic impact, and whether sustainable when ARPA funds are gone.

**CONTINUED SURVEY DISCUSSION:**

- 1. Follow up costs from various providers, timing**
- 2. Decide on survey questions and type of survey - decide how much of working list to include**
- 3. Goal to have survey ready for release after 5/11 meeting.**

Mr. Dockser stated that he contacted Flash Vote, the company that conducted Sudbury's ARPA survey. The company can do a one-time polling survey, or a six-survey package. The

price for either is \$10,000. Ms. Downing noted that the Committee should be capable of coming up with something using the less costly Survey Monkey or Google Polls.

Mr. Maltez stated that he would work with Business Administrator Jayne Wellman to help craft a survey. The Committee agreed that the format should be available both electronically and hard paper copy for those without computer access. The Committee also agreed the content of the survey should be brief and include: basic demographics such as age, and whether a resident, business owner, or employee/visitor in Reading; a ranking of the proposed project "buckets"; the question of how the respondent would divide \$100 among proposed projects; and an open ended question such as what the respondent feels are Reading's strengths.

**Discuss future agenda items:**

Ms. Downing recapped future agenda topics including: Schools, Elder and Human Services, and asking Business Administrator Jayne Wellman to advise on the survey. The next meeting is scheduled for May 11<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Brandt suggested having a vote for preliminary recommendations for time sensitive requests on the next agenda.

**Review/Approve minutes from 3/29/2022 meeting:**

**On a motion by Mark Dockser, and seconded by Tom Wise, the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee voted 7-0-0 to approve the meeting minutes of March 29, 2022 as presented.**

**On a motion by Mark Dockser, and seconded by Chris Haley, the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee voted 7-0-0 to adjourn at 9:29 pm.**

**On a motion by Karen Gately Herrick, and seconded by Chris Haley, the Select Board voted 3-0-0 to adjourn at 9:30 pm.**