



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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2022 OCT 13 AM 8:15

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Reading Arpa Advisory Committee

Date: 2022-09-06

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chair Marianne Downing, Vice Chair Mark Dockser, Shawn Brandt (remote),
Geoffrey Coram, Andrew Grimes, Chris Haley, Joe McDonagh, Tom Wise

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Karen Pinette (remote), Kit Lonergan Trinity
Church (remote). John Feudo, Chris Kovalesky, Kevin Briere

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Jacquelyn LaVerde

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.

Public Comment:

There was no comment from the public.

Approval of minutes:

On a motion by Mark Dockser, and seconded by Tom Wise, the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee voted 8-0-0 to approve the meeting minutes of August 31, 2022 as presented.

Roll call vote: Geoffrey Coram – Yes, Joe McDonagh – Yes, Andrew Grimes – Yes, Tom Wise – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Shawn Brandt – Yes, Mark Dockser – Yes, Marianne Downing – Yes.

Premium Pay Formula Discussion:

Tom Wise reviewed minor updates to the spreadsheet for premium pay calculations. The formulas have not changed, but additional data was refined and added. Union contracts were reviewed to determine where pay bands might make sense. The federal poverty level is \$55,500, which was set as the low bar. Anyone making over \$97,125 was placed in the high category. The calculations are based on base rates, with no overtime or stipends included, and are adjusted for full time or part time salary. All of the data needs to be validated, but works as a model conceptually. Human resources staff will need to assist with determining which employees fit into which category.

Burbank YMCA – Follow up to Presentation:

John Feudo of the Burbank YMCA was present to answer questions from the Committee on how the YMCA plans to implement the programs as proposed with giving priority to Reading residents. The YMCA would like to do 144 adaptive swim lessons over three years, but can do it over a year and a half. There are 45-50 spots per year that they would like to hand out for free. They can add a caveat that the classes are only open to Reading residents, or have a registration period only for Reading residents, with a wait list for out-of-town residents to fill vacant spots. But Mr. Feudo stated that he feels strongly that the classes will sell out or be filled by Reading residents. The target date to implement the programs is January 2023 in order to give the YMCA time to staff and administer the program. The Committee discussed at length the other portions of the YMCA proposal, program implementation, and distribution of the funds.

Chris Kovalesky of Grove Street spoke in support of the program and noted that the families would be willing to pay a nominal fee for a sustainable program. Kevin Briere of Graystone Way echoed Mr. Kovalevsky's support for the programs, and the nominal fees.

Premium Pay Formula Discussion (Continued):

The Committee continued their discussion on how to determine how to compensate employees who worked during the pandemic, and the many challenges of what factors to consider. Regardless of the model, the Committee needs to determine how much of the ARPA funds the Committee suggests dividing among employees.

Continued Allocation Recommendation Discussion:

To date, based on RAAC recommendations, the Select Board has voted to allocate \$3,996,620 of ARPA funds, which leaves \$3,595,614 of ARPA funds remaining. RAAC members reviewed and discussed the remaining requests.

The RAAC members agreed to support the Burbank YMCA proposal, but requested that the Recreation Division be the supervising entity in the distribution of the funds.

On a motion by Marianne Downing, and seconded by Geoffrey Coram, the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend to the Select Board to allocate \$96,100 to support the Burbank Y proposal to be administered by Reading Recreation as discussed on July 9, 2022 and as further refined on September 6, 2022.

Roll call vote: Geoffrey Coram – Yes, Andrew Grimes – Yes, Tom Wise – Yes, Mark Dockser – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Joe McDonagh – Yes, Shawn Brandt – Yes, Marianne Downing – Yes.

RAAC members agreed to support the Birch Meadow Phase I request, but still noted their concerns regarding the parking area.

On a motion by Marianne Downing, and seconded by Tom Wise, the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend to the Select Board to allocate \$1,500,000 for Phase I of the Birch Meadow proposal.

Roll call vote: Shawn Brandt – Yes, Joe McDonagh – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Mark Dockser – Yes, Tom Wise – Yes, Andrew Grimes – Yes, Geoffrey Coram – Yes, Marianne Downing – Yes.

Committee members agreed to support the request of the Historical Commission, as it seems like a small amount of money for projects that might never get done otherwise. Mr. Wise noted that this subject did not appear on the survey at all, and did not fit into any of the ARPA guidelines.

On a motion by Andrew Grimes, and seconded by Chris Haley, the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee voted 7-1-0 to recommend to the Select Board to allocate \$13,500 for the Reading Historical Commission proposal.

Roll call vote: Shawn Brandt – Yes, Joe McDonagh – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Mark Dockser – Yes, Tom Wise – No, Andrew Grimes – Yes, Geoffrey Coram – Yes, Marianne Downing – Yes.

The Committee discussed the request of the Conservation Commission.

Andrew Grimes moved to recommend \$22,500 to Conservation, seconded by Mark Dockser.

Chris Haley noted that \$2,500 for a bike rack at Mattera Cabin seemed high, and that he has not seen many bikes there.

Tom Wise moved to amend the motion to recommend \$20,000 for Conservation, which was seconded by Chris Haley, but failed by a vote of 6-2.

Roll call vote: Shawn Brandt – No, Joe McDonagh – No, Mark Dockser – No, Chris Haley – Yes, Tom Wise – Yes, Andrew Grimes – No, Geoffrey Coram – No, Marianne Downing – No.

On the original motion by Andrew Grimes, and seconded by Mark Dockser, the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend to the Select Board to allocate \$22,500 of ARPA funds to the Conservation Commission.

Roll call vote: Shawn Brandt – Yes, Joe McDonagh – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Mark Dockser – Yes, Tom Wise – Yes, Andrew Grimes – Yes, Geoffrey Coram – Yes, Marianne Downing – Yes.

The RAAC had previously recommended, and the Select Board voted to allocate \$100,000 to the Town Forest Committee for Phase 3 of their tree removal project. The Town Forest Committee's original request was for \$200,000 for both phases 3 and 4 of the tree removal project. Members agreed the other \$100,000 could be pushed to Town Meeting for funding, as it is for a later phase of the project.

The Committee discussed the Reading Food Pantry's request for three years of gift cards, two refrigerators, and a space consultant. Mr. Wise suggested recommending \$31,200 for one year of gift cards at \$1,600 per month, and both freezers at \$6,000 each.

Andrew Grimes moved to recommend \$31,200 for Food Pantry requests, seconded by Tom Wise.

Mark Dockser stated that he was inclined to recommend their full revised request of \$84,600, which includes three years of gift cards, both refrigerators, and \$15,000 for a space consultant. Shawn Brandt agreed and noted that the Food Pantry was responsive to the Committee's feedback, and that identifying space needs will help generate more fundraising initiatives. Mr. Wise stated that he could support the space consultant, but gift cards could be funded year over year. Mr. Haley stated that he is against the space consultant, but supports at minimum one year of gift cards and refrigerators.

Mark Dockser moved to amend the recommendation to \$84,600, which was seconded by Shawn Brandt, but failed by a vote of 5-3.

Roll call vote: Shawn Brandt – Yes, Joe McDonagh – Yes, Chris Haley – No, Mark Dockser – Yes, Tom Wise – No, Andrew Grimes – No, Geoffrey Coram – No, Marianne Downing – No.

Shawn Brandt moved to amend the recommendation to \$46,200 for both refrigerators, space consultant, and one year of gift cards. The RAAC accepted the amendment by a vote of 6-2.

Roll call vote: Shawn Brandt – Yes, Joe McDonagh – Yes, Chris Haley – No, Mark Dockser – Yes, Tom Wise – Yes, Andrew Grimes – Yes, Geoffrey Coram – Yes, Marianne Downing – No.

On an amended motion by Andrew Grimes, and seconded by Tom Wise, the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend to the Select Board to allocate \$46,200 of ARPA funds for the Reading Food Pantry which provides \$19,200 for one year of gift cards, \$12,000 for two refrigerators, and \$15,000 for a space consultant.

Roll call vote: Shawn Brandt – Yes, Joe McDonagh – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Mark Dockser – Yes, Tom Wise – Yes, Andrew Grimes – Yes, Geoffrey Coram – Yes, Marianne Downing – Yes.

The Committee also discussed, but did not come to consensus on other topics including water projects, food truck and activities for the senior center, and affordable housing.

Smaller private requests can be discussed at the end after the two big items (water and premium pay) have been recommended.

Future Agenda Items:

At the next meeting scheduled for October 12th, the RAAC will discuss the remaining allocations, and continue the discussion on water and premium pay.

On a motion by Tom Wise, and seconded by Mark Dockser, the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee voted 8-0-0 to adjourn at 10:29 pm.

Roll call vote: Shawn Brandt – Yes, Joe McDonagh – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Mark Dockser – Yes, Tom Wise – Yes, Andrew Grimes – Yes, Geoffrey Coram – Yes, Marianne Downing – Yes.