

TOWN OF TUNBRIDGE ARPA TOWN MEETING

Wednesday, September 21, 2022 7:00pm, Town Hall and Via Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm

Present: Sarah Wraight, Elaine Howe, Mariah Cilley, Judy Tucker, Margaret Rogers, Darlene Miller, Sarah Rogers, Charles Stone, Amy Frost, Nan Frost, Michael Sacca, John O'Brien, Mike McPhetres, Kay Jorgenson, Rudi Ruddell, Todd Tyson, Simon Bradford, Brenda Field, Maryann Caron, Lisa Kippen, Matt Frost, Elaine Howe, Margaret Rogers, Liz York, Helen O'Donnell, Becky Hoyt, Gary Mullen, Janet Wells, Anissa Morrison, Betsy Gaiser, Jenna Lapachinski

John O'Brien begins the meeting by stating that there are "no dumb questions" and that there are "no bad ideas" on how to spend the money. Even if we get a list of 100 ideas, we need to determine the criteria to help the Selectboard decide what to ultimately spend the money on.

Sarah Wraight is introduced and begins the meeting discussing her background regarding ARPA. Wraight discusses the process, rules and determination on how the ARPA money is spent. Wraight will help us determine the criteria for selecting the projects we will spend the ARPA money on as well as creating an excel spreadsheet of all the ideas to send to the Selectboard after this morning.

Wraight gives an overview of what ARPA is and lets us know that the allocation for Tunbridge is just shy of \$400,000. Funds need to be obligated by the end of calendar year 2024. All of the funds need to be spent by the end of calendar year 2026. There are four main categories you can spend your ARPA dollars on. Surplus is discussed and Becky Hoyt states that we can have surplus but we have to vote on what to do with the remainder of the surplus. Wraight states that it is not state law to have to get it voted on at Town Meeting. Matt Frost asks if we do our best to spend all of our dollars on our projects, but the projects are not going to be done by 2026 due to contractors not being able to finish the project in time, we could transfer the remainder of that money over to salary and benefits. Wraight agrees. Liz York asks if we can provide tax relief and use this money to not tax ourselves and Wraight states that we can.

Wraight leads the townspeople in determining criteria. The list of criteria that are decided upon are future financial impacts, long lasting impact*, ability to leverage match/support other projects, comports with the town plan, benefits a large number of people, improves equitable outcomes for community, wants versus need, and recognizes climate change and resiliency.

The State of Vermont also received a large ARPA fund as well. The state is still trying to determine how to spend that money. Much of Vermont's money went to community water and wastewater systems, broadband and housing. The state wanted to make large amounts available to give to towns to upgrade their town municipal buildings but right now that has stalled, and we are unable if that money will become available at the town level.

If we are going to use the local ARPA dollars as a match to other grants we need to make sure that we are allowed to. Many people are using ARPA dollars as match for wastewater updates or VTrans grants as well.

Project List: See attached list.

Michael Sacca asks what comes next? John O'Brien states that we will narrow down our rubric and start going through the list with more detail and budget numbers and then have another meeting to go through the more fine-tuned list. How can we get more people involved? Website, survey, etc. Michael Sacca suggests a committee. Brenda Field believes it should stay in the hands of the Selectboard, Grants Manager and Treasurer.

Gary Mullen ends the meeting by stating that this is just the beginning of the process and there will be other meetings in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47pm.

Gary Mullen, Chair

Mike McPhetres, Vice Chair

John O'Brien, Clerk