

Minutes of the ARPA Funds Working Group (Filed Subject for Approval)

May 12th, 2022, by Zoom

Attending: Mary Campbell, Karen Gifford, Wes Higgins, Mary Dale Lancaster, Ward Mazzucco, Chris Parkin, James Sanders, Julia Pemberton

The meeting was called to order at 5.02 pm by Chair Higgins.

The minutes of the April 28th, 2022 meeting were reviewed.

Motion to adopt minutes (W. Mazzucco, K. Gifford) Adopted by unanimous vote 7-0

A presentation led by Ann Taylor, Executive Director of New Pond Farm and Bruce Ward, a consulting geologist, explained the damage and impact of recent storms upon the habitat of the pond and marsh on the property of the farm. The proposed project is intended to change the location of the marsh and install an engineered dam to ensure that there is adequate water for the marsh, storm protection for the pond, and shade restored to the marsh to promote biodiversity. The restoration will allow the resumption of highly popular programs for children. Some of the necessary regulatory approvals have already been obtained and more will be required. The request is for ARPA funding of up to \$200,000 as part of an overall estimated \$450,000 to complete the project. New Pond Farm suffered lost revenue as a result of the Covid restrictions placed on their programs and their normal fundraising events.

Discussion then turned to the Town's request for funding of the Police camera equipment as required by new State legislation. Chris Parkin voiced two concerns – that there existed alternative sources of funding and that he understood the Town would seek ARPA funds only if the recent referendum on this project failed to pass. Julia replied that ARPA funding was the preferred source of the Board of Selectmen for the project. She also noted that ARPA funding was always included as a possible choice and was noted on the referendum ballot as an option.

Motion: To recommend to the Board of Selectmen the use of ARPA funding of up to \$113,000 for the requested Police equipment and software as permitted under section 6.1 of the ARPA legislation.

In favor (Mary Campbell, Karen Gifford, Wes Higgins, Mary Dale Lancaster, Ward Mazzucco,

James Sanders) Opposed (Chris Parkin) Motion carried 6-1

Chair Higgins updated the working group on a draft of a set of terms and conditions that would accompany all ARPA grants to nongovernmental organization. It would include rules for payment, reporting, and other terms. The document is with Town counsel pending review.

The working group then discussed their views regarding the John Read PTA project

Motion: To recommend to the Board of Selectmen the use of ARPA funding of up to \$35,000 for the JRMS PTA amphitheater project as permitted under section 6.1 of the ARPA legislation, with such terms and conditions as the Board of Selectmen may specify.

In favor (Mary Campbell, Karen Gifford, Wes Higgins, Mary Dale Lancaster, Ward Mazzucco, James Sanders) abstained (Chris Parkin) motion carried 6-0

Mary Dale expressed her concern that two projects have been approved recently while the Heritage project to install a divider door is awaiting a vote. The Working Group discussed with Julia the plans for future reviews of projects and the timetable with Board of Selectmen meetings and Special Town meetings. Julia indicated that if the Working Group voted by the end of June for projects the Board of Selectmen and the Town special meeting could occur before the end of July.

Adjourned 6.12 pm **(W. Mazzucco, M. Lancaster)**

Submitted by Wes Higgins