

ARPA Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2023 - DRAFT

The meeting was brought to order at 6:35 PM. All members were present with Andy and Mary participating remotely via Zoom.

Committee members agreed that a final posting should be made to Front Porch Forum regarding the deadline for suggestions and made required edits to the pre-prepared draft using screen share. Motion made by Andy Iwaskiewicz to accept the posting draft, with edits made, for posting ASAP on Front Porch Forum. Motion was seconded by Kathy Marchant and passed unanimously. **Mary** to post for Friday's issue.

Kathy informed the members that 12 responses had been received at the Town office from the Direct Mailing. A brief discussion took place about members remaining neutral about all submissions until they have been reviewed.

Kathy mentioned an approaching deadline, believed to be May 31, 2023, having to do with potential matching funds that are available through the State if local ARPA funds are committed to broadband development. Mary questioned whether these funds had to be specifically committed to the CUD, but this was not known. There was also a brief mention of the recent Lamoille Fiber Update announcing the departure of Val Davis. Committee members agreed that there was not enough information available to consider committing funds at this time. Andy suggested that our time was better spent focusing on the task at hand of reviewing the responses. The members agreed.

Responses were opened and read by the members present at Town Hall and then briefly summarized for the other members. These summaries are as follows:

1. Pave Morgan Bridge Road down to the bridge
2. Convert the unused elementary school to an activity center
3. Cell towers, internet, road upgrades/repairs, convert part of unused elementary school to Town office
4. Community space for children, upgrade playground equipment at BCC field, General store with a bar
5. Convert the old schoolhouse into a retail space for craft producers
6. Beautification of town, enforcement/creation of junk car ordinance, financial aid for removal of eyesores
7. Weatherize/insulate crawl space at existing Town Office, digitize land records, encourage re-opening of Tallman's store, purchase property adjacent to Town Office for additional parking

8. Purchase unused elementary school and use for Town Office and community resilience, create Town Forest with multi-use trail network, upgrade playground equipment at BCC field, public access to field associated with gravel pit, townwide classes for CPR and/or babysitting
9. Assist BCC with lost revenue, renovate Town Office, replenish emergency supplies at the unused elementary school, assist with broadband and cell service, renovate/repair old schoolhouse, use land behind the unused elementary school for a picnic area/park, fueling service at Tallman's store
10. BCC support, renovations at the old schoolhouse
11. BCC field upgrades
12. New tax maps

Each number represents one resident's suggestion(s). BCC stands for Belvidere Community Club.

- **Fran** is to prepare a spreadsheet for easy comparison of suggestions. Copies of the responses were made for Fran's use.
- Original responses will be kept at the Town Office
- **Kathy** will invite Alec from the LCPC to the next meeting to review the spreadsheet and provide advice on which projects are suitable for ARPA fund usage and which projects might be leveraged into additional matching funds from the State

Kathy reviewed costs of the outreach program, to date:

- Postage \$283.50 (91 stamps remain)
- News & Citizen Announcement - \$105.00
- Letters (200 - \$1.54)
- Return Address Labels - N/C
- Envelopes - Recycled mistake N/C
- Resident Labels - TBD (believed N/C)
- Purchase cost of gift cards - \$30

Fran suggested alternative methods of payment for the future to avoid the high cost of purchasing gift cards. Andy pointed out that there is an ARPA budget of \$750 for Town Meeting. All agreed that this would be a solution and will wait for the outcome.

Kathy to check with LCPC to determine if there was a cost associated with their production of the two sets of resident address labels.

Members briefly discussed potential procedures for evaluating suggestions beginning with the use of Fran's spreadsheet followed by preliminary evaluation at our next meeting by Alec from the LCPC. Mary suggested using ongoing costs that may add to the future tax burden as an evaluation item. Fran mentioned that the ARPA rules discuss this specifically as a criteria.

There was discussion as to whether or not the Town had elected to take the "Standard Allowance" which would be the basis for matching broadband funds from the State. Kathy will check with Cathy Mander-Adams and the SB while Mary will check SB meeting minutes.

Mary will confirm that, provided with receipts for our expenditures, Cathy Mander-Adams will prepare the necessary ARPA report that is coming due in April.

Fran cautioned against using "Reply All" in e-mail discussions involving any kind of policy or discussion. Although slight edits to letters, etc. that do not change the "intent" are probably acceptable, all members were in agreement that caution should be exercised.

Motion was made by Jack to accept the minutes of the January 26, 2023 meeting, as written. Motion was seconded by Fran and passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Mary to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Kathy and passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:57 PM. Next meeting is March 30, 2023.