

Stafford ARPA Commission
Regular Meeting
September 7, 2023
9:00am

Warren Memorial Town Hall
Veterans Meeting Room

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TOWN CLERK

Members Present: Chairman Richard Hartenstein, David Bachiochi, Steve Geryk, Karen Troiano, Cathy Cannon, Amber Wakley-Whaley, Sal Titus, James Desso, Trooper Joe Strogoff

Members Absent: None

Guests Present: Devin Cowpertwaithe, Alex Moore, Jennifer Palazzo and Caroline Bill from Woodland Springs, Bill Morrison, Lynn Nenni, Theresa Cramer

Chairman Richard Hartenstein called the meeting to order at 9:01am. 9 of 9 members present constitute a quorum with 9 active members. All on board!

1. Approve July 6, 2023 Minutes

On a **MOTION** by Cathy, seconded by James the minutes for the July 6 meeting were approved unanimously with Dave abstaining.

2. Public Comment

All guests are invited to comment on any of the project items listed or to submit their own project suggestions.. Anything moved to our Removed list can be resurrected for Commission consideration if accompanied by a revised implementation plan. None raised today.

3. AED Training Update

Cathy reported that she is looking to plan the next CPR/AED and Stop the Bleed training around the first week in December. It seems prudent to extend each session to 2 hours and to offer two sessions back to back within a 4-hour timeframe. A mid-day mid-week window at the Stafford Community Center is the suggested target (so maybe December 7) and the commission supports this proposal. Cathy and Amber will finalize logistics and promotion of the event.

Alex reported that Staffordville Lake, Kealy Field and Olympic Field have new AED's.

4. Woodland Springs Funding Update

Jennifer Palazzo and Caroline Bill presented two proposals. One proposal requested \$600 for shipping for the Woodland Springs Phase II furniture project. After some discussion, this request was put on hold until the estimate can be refined.

The second proposal requested a total of \$50,828.14 (excluding shipping) for a patio, gazebo, additional outdoor furniture and amenities. This is for the Phase II Woodland Springs dwellings currently under construction. Some amenities may not be ARPA eligible. Discussion regarding the nature of the items in the request and the overall generosity of the commission to date lead to some skepticism among the commission members. Rick suggests we focus on the permanent items, pavilion and patio, and get at least a quote from a second source. The commission is willing to entertain a revised proposal at the next meeting.

5. Funds Update

Amber reported that funds expended are \$1,510,556.22 of the obligated \$2,653,976.20 with a balance of \$1,145,277.98 remaining unspent for approved projects. Further, there remains \$865,764.09 not yet obligated for new proposals and subject for consideration by the commission. Amber reported that the Treasury Department has issued another update to the Final Rules impacting infrastructure projects, and she will provide guidance at our next meeting.

Rick requested an update regarding the installation of the Permanent Electronic Communication boards. Devin reported that the first sign location is being prepared but behind schedule. Rick reinforced the need to relocate the signs stored at WPCF before winter. Electrical work costing \$5K remains unallocated.

6. Project list update

The Haymarket Common project is proceeding very well. Main St. pads just completed. Trees going in this week. Pole bases in Haymarket Common and along Main St. were found to be corroded and needing replacement and now can be put into a better spot. The pole base work, some additional furniture and a few other project actuals are causing an overrun of approximately \$15K.. A **MOTION** by Steve seconded by Dave to increase the Haymarket Common project from \$150K to \$165K was approved unanimously.

Devin reviewed potential engineering design projects and proposal from Cardinal Engineering. This set of proposals address design work for Handel Rd, Hampden Rd, Colburn Rd and Highland Terrace and is associated with the existing Capital Improvements Matching Grant Opportunities project. The proposals total \$326,400 which is more than the \$250,000 allocated. Engineering designs are valuable in order to have shovel ready projects as state grants become available. After a substantial discussion, the commission determined to hold to the current approval level and directed Devin to proceed but to prioritize as he sees fit to stay within the approved allocation.

7. Future Projects


Lynn Nenni (CFO) reviewed fiscal reports for the town budget that demonstrate a substantial shortfall in the Utility Fund and is requesting \$500K from ARPA to offset the shortfall and avoid future town fiscal catastrophe. The request follows a Selectman's meeting review where it was suggested that ARPA might be a source of funding. After substantial discussion, it wasn't clear if it was ARPA eligible. Lynn and Amber will research, and contact other municipalities who have leveraged ARPA for similar reasons to understand their eligibility interpretation. This topic was tabled until a future meeting, possibly at a Special meeting prior to October.

Devin reviewed a request brought to him by the Conservation Commission for a storage shed at Dennis Pond. At an estimated cost of \$5K Dave will add that to proposed projects so we can consider this at a future meeting.

8. Adjournment

Next Regular meeting is scheduled for October 5 at 9:00am. An agenda item should be included to review the proposed remaining projects to set direction for the best use of the remaining funds. Other agenda probabilities include Utility Fund, Woodland Springs Pavilion/Patio, Treasury Final Rule update, Shed for Dennis Pond. Members should be aware of a probable special meeting in two weeks. On a **MOTION** by Amber, seconded by James we agreed unanimously to adjourn at 10:41 am.

Respectfully submitted,

 9/18/2023

David Bachiochi

Recording Secretary