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By Linda Amerighi at 8:18 am, Apr 13, 2022

Sharon ARPA Advisory Committee
April 6, 2022 Meeting Minutes
Draft until approved at the next regular meeting

The Sharon ARPA Advisory Committee held a regular meeting at 6:30pm on April 6, 2022. This is a Zoom-only meeting.

Committee Attendees:

Jill Drew
Tom Bartram
Barbara Prindle
Gretchen Hachmeister
Tom Casey
Carol Flaton
Sophia Wang
Donna DiMartino

Public Attendees:

Pat Whelan
Lyman Whelan

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm.
2. The proposed meeting agenda was approved without change.
3. Minutes of the March 26, 2022 meeting were approved as circulated.
4. Public Comment: None.
5. Review ARPA grant applications

a. Sharon Housing Authority – \$50,000

Pat Whelan, the treasurer of Sharon Housing Authority, briefed the committee: Sharon Housing Authority runs the 32 apartments at Sharon Ridge, the affordable housing complex. The rent income has not been sufficient to cover repairs and basic maintenance of the property. For example, the latest income of Sharon Ridge is about \$174,000 but the total expense with repairs is \$204,000. The ARPA funding would be used to cover part of the cost for replacing HVAC systems in the Sharon Ridge Expansion, fixing crumbling sidewalks and stoops, paying \$5,000 in outstanding bills that are in arrears, and renovations required when a tenant vacates.

Because Sharon Housing Authority is a state qualified affordable housing program, it is eligible for ARPA funds under the expanded rules issued in January by the U.S. Treasury, even if the gap between its rental income and repair costs is not directly caused by COVID. Ms. Whelan

said rent will increase, but she also hopes that the town can establish an affordable housing fund similar to the ones that Salisbury and Washington have to support ongoing needs.

When asked, Ms. Whelan agreed to provide to the advisory committee a cost breakdown of each item that the requested ARPA funds will support.

b. Individual Applications

Both applications were handled according to the process established by the committee to insure personal information be kept confidential. A redacted version of each application was reviewed by a subcommittee comprised of Sharon Social Services Agent Melia Hill and Jill Drew and Donna DiMartino. If eventually approved, the ARPA funds would be disbursed to the entity that is owed the funds (i.e., landlord, mortgage holder, utility or cell phone company). The applicant will not receive direct cash.

- 1) Individual one - \$5,000 recommended
Quarantined 3 times because of COVID, and then fell ill with the Omicron variant. Applicant was not able to work the entire November and fell behind on bills. Physical, mental and emotional stress caused by shortened working hours triggered autoimmune system issues. This individual applied for \$2,500 and the subcommittee recommended granting \$5,000 to pay outstanding bills after review with the social service agent, to give the individual some breathing room and relief from stress.
- 2) Individual two - \$1,500
Lost job during COVID and had difficulty with finding work because of an injury that limited the physical labor the applicant could do. The loss of regular income caused the applicant to fall behind in making rent, utility and other payments. The original application was \$5,000 but the applicant requested on April 6 that the amount be reduced to \$1,484, enough to cover two months of rent.

6. Committee members agreed to send the three applications reviewed in today's meeting along with the applications previously reviewed (and received before the initial deadline of Jan. 15) to the Board of Selectman for final decisions. Ideally, the application from Sharon Housing Authority should be sent with detailed line-items breakdown; but in case the specifics cannot be provided before the Board of Selectman's review meeting, the committee agreed to send the application with a note regarding concerns on whether the HVAC repair money was being well spent. When submitted, the committee decided to also make it clear that Individual One only applied for \$2,500 and it is the recommendation of the ARPA committee to grant \$5,000; Individual Two's application will be adjusted to \$1,500.

7. Committee members discussed the possibilities of Social Services Agent helping those individuals in need apply for other support programs available.

8. Jill said the town is considered a “non-entitlement unit,” and therefore only needs to report to the U.S. Treasury department on an annual basis. The first report is due April 30. The ARPA Advisory Committee will review a draft report at its next meeting.

9. The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 18, 2022 via Zoom at 4:30pm

10. Unanimous approval of a motion to adjourn and the meeting concluded at 7:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sophia Wang