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By Linda Amerighi at 9:51 am, Sep 09, 2021

Sharon ARPA Advisory Committee
September 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes
Draft until approved at the next regular meeting

A regular meeting of the Sharon ARPA Advisory Committee was held on Sept. 1, 2021 at 6:30PM in-person and via Zoom at the Town Hall.

Present in person

Emily Soell

Donna DiMartino

Barbara Prindle

Jill Drew

Tom Bartram

Tom Casey

Carol Flaton

Mary O'Reilly

Present on Zoom

Meghan Flanagan

Doug Cahill

Gretchen Hachmeister

Michele Pastre

1. Call to Order@ 6:33pm
2. Minutes of the August 19, 2021 organizational meeting unanimously approved
3. Jill Drew discussed the draft job posting for a Committee Admin/Recording Secretary. Discussion revolved around hiring a temporary resource to be the recording secretary. Tom Bartram clarified that if multiple people apply, the selectmen and a few ARPA committee members should interview the candidates. Donna DiMartino emphasized that it be clear that this is a temporary position and limited to 4 hours/per week. Carol Flaton highlighted that if there is a lot of research or outreach required 4 hr/week might be insufficient. Emily Soell mentioned that at some point communication may be a critical part of this role and that might not be covered in these hours. Jill Drew revised the job description according to the committee discussion and suggested that it be forwarded to the Town's Selectmen.
4. Jill Drew outlined the suggestions for the Community Outreach piece of this ARPA program. She also described that the CT Conference of Municipalities recommends that towns create an online "dashboard" to keep the public apprised of how the ARPA funds are being allocated and who is benefiting. Meghan Flanagan has already donated her time by setting up a draft Sharon ARPA website so that the Committee can keep the public apprised. The fees for this website for 2 years would be \$472, including the purchase of a domain name.
5. Jill Drew proposed the idea of a resident survey, which could be completed online by posting it on the Town website and also completed on paper if mailed to residents who don't respond digitally. The survey would allow residents to give the Committee feedback about what has worked to date in terms of the local response to the Covid pandemic, what hasn't worked, and what they think should be done with the ARPA funds. The survey could also provide brief instructions for how to apply for assistance from the ARPA funds. Michele Pastre emphasized that it was critical to get input from the residents, particularly elderly residents. Jill Drew suggested the survey could also ask

residents how they wish to be contacted in case of local emergencies: by email, text or telephone, so that the Town's emergency management communications could be strengthened. Committee members agreed that, while that information is important, the survey should also be designed in a way that residents could respond anonymously. Tom Bartram suggested that the survey idea be floated with the Selectmen as it is ultimately their decision.

6. The Committee supported the initial recommendation to target administrative expenses of up to 2% of the Town's total ARPA funds (approximately \$16k).
7. The initial written request from the Sharon Fire Dept./Sharon Fire Department Ambulance was discussed. Tom Bartram explained the specific OSHA audit, how the pandemic has highlighted the gaps between policy and practice, and that everyone's goal is to follow protocols to keep our volunteer first responders safe. Jill Drew highlighted that the request is very preliminary. Barbara Prindle praised the request for being very well structured, and suggested that we use it as a template for other requests. Jill Drew mentioned that this template would perhaps need to be adjusted for different groups (i.e. individual requests/recipients).
8. Mary O'Reilly and Carol Flaton talked about dividing the recipients into basic buckets: individuals, emergency services, non-profits, for-profits. Barbara Prindle added the Town of Sharon as the 5th recipient.
 - a. Templates overseen by Gretchen Hachmeister (who will share what was received from the State Library ARPA funds) for the different groups:
 - i. Emily Soell – non-profits
 - ii. Tom Bartram – EMS
 - iii. Jill Drew – Town of Sharon
 - iv. Mary O'Reilly/Carol Flaton – individuals
 - v. Doug Cahill – for-profits
9. Carol Flaton mentioned trying to reach out to individuals who may have suffered from Covid and who now have insurmountable medical bills. Donna DiMartino offered to help, as she has good contacts in that area.
10. Jill Drew and Tom Bartram discussed the initial request for a Town Hall 125KW generator. Town Hall currently has no backup power and therefore cannot be used as a base for emergency communications. Jill Drew consulted with Stanley MacMillan, Jr., the town's fire marshal and building inspector, for particulars on what size of generator would be needed, what fuel it would use, etc. Initial cost estimate from GK Electric is \$89k.
11. Barbara Prindle presented an initial request from the Sharon Daycare for assistance with three items totaling \$1,800. The committee agreed to ask for more information about the Daycare's needs.
12. Jill Drew asked if anyone else had heard from any other parties. Meghan Flanagan mentioned that the Sharon Playhouse has reached out and is interested in being considered as a recipient. Emily Soell reiterated that the Playhouse lost substantial revenue as a result of Covid regulations, but also did receive some very good grants. The committee agreed that all applicants would be asked to disclose any other Covid-related relief payments they have received.

13. Jill Drew reminded members that the next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 20 and that the meeting room is reserved for two meetings every month at 6:30PM on the first Wednesday and third Monday of each month, so upcoming dates are:

- a. Monday, Sept. 20
- b. Wednesday, Oct. 6
- c. Monday, Oct. 18
- d. Wednesday, Nov. 3
- e. Monday, Nov. 15
- f. Wednesday, Dec. 1
- g. Monday, Dec. 20

14. The meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Flaton and Jill Drew