Sharon ARPA Advisory Committee

October 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Sharon ARPA Advisory Committee held a regular meeting at 5:00 pm on October 17, 2023. The meeting was held via Zoom format.

Committee Attendees: **Public Attendees:**

Jill Drew
Barbara Prindle   None
Donna DiMartino
Jean Bustillo/Admin

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm.

2. The proposed meeting agenda was approved

3. Minutes of the September 12, 2023 meeting were approved as circulated.

4. Public Comment: None

5. Jill explained that over the past two years the Treasury has adapted a more flexible reporting system allowing towns with a size like Sharon to assume up to a $10 million revenue loss and to allow any ARPA funds to be spent for "government services" up to that amount. Making expenditures that fit into that category makes our annual filing simpler and does not require a direct tie-in to other losses due to the Covid pandemic shutdown. As a reminder, we must file a report of the town's expenditures of ARPA funds with the U.S. Treasury every year. The next filing is due April 1, 2024.

6. It was decided that meeting dates for 2024 would fall on the first Thursday of each month as Hybrid meetings at 5:00pm. Dates as follows:

January 4, 2024	July 4, 2024 (holiday, will need to shift date)
February 1, 2024	August 1, 2024
March 7, 2024	September 5, 2024
April 4, 2024	October 3, 2024
May 2, 2024	November 7, 2024
June 6, 2024	December 5, 2024

7. There were no new applications

8. BOS approved the applications for Saint Bernard and Saint Bridget churches. It trimmed ARPA Admin expense line given that very little money has been spent on admin. This frees up more funds for grants. The current balance of unobligated funds is $210,495.

9. Discussion moved forward on whether to elicit new ideas from the community for ARPA expenditures, or whether to focus our attention on the Town Technology proposal. The consensus was that members of the public know how to contact the ARPA Advisory Committee if they have ideas to share or want to apply for funding, so there is no need to advertise for more ideas or applications. Midway through this conversation, Jill realized she had forgotten to record the meeting on video. She hit the button and began recording, with apologies for forgetting.

10. The committee was reminded by Jill that funds need to be obligated by the end of 2024. The committee identified the following immediate items needing to be addressed regarding the Town Technology proposal. The goal would be to upgrade Town Hall technology with systems and hardware that can be efficient and robust enough to last for the next decade. Initial special focus would be on making sure the technology addresses:
    a) Cyber security
    b) Physical security
    c) Hardware updates
    d) Digital file back-ups
    e) Software/email updates

Donna offered to reach out to the CEO of a healthcare agency who had recently upgraded its company's systems. She will ask him for an outline as to what was done so we may learn from it. Donna also mentioned that possibly the Town of Kent had recently undergone a systems upgrade. Jill said she would contact Jean Speck, Kent's First Selectman, who has an interest in technology and security, to see what Kent has done.

Jill asked committee members to list what they believe is most important in a system/security upgrade. The committee will also figure out how best to interview Town Hall employees about what they know to be the most important gaps and needs that should be filled. These ideas will be discussed in the December meeting.

11. Motion made to adjourn

The next meeting will be held November 21, 2023 at 5:00 pm. Donna will be away, but she will forward all information to the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Bustillo
ARPA Secretaty