

Southborough ARPA Committee
February 10, 2022
Virtual Meeting held via Zoom

Call to Order

Ms Hamilton called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and took roll call attendance. Present: Andrea Hamilton (Chair), Meme Luttrell (Vice Chair), Tim Martel, Joe Palmer, Anne Rubenstein, Tony Schoener, John Wood.

Announcement of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on June 16, 2021. The meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in person attendance by members of the public permitted. Public may view proceedings via meeting link:
<https://www.southboroughtown.com/remotemeetings>

I. The committee discussed its approach and strategy for making recommendations on use of the ARPA funds.

Goals: By consensus we established four categories we want to address:

- Ongoing pandemic-related need for Southborough residents and businesses (health or economic)
- Reduction of property tax burden for town residents, for the short term, for example using ARPA money to complete projects that would otherwise be paid for from general funds, and for the long term, for example as an investment to encourage businesses to locate in Southborough and therefore decrease residential tax burden.
- Address significant community wants, for example, more sidewalks
- Risk-reduce future town expenditures

Members emphasized a desire to help the town address unmet needs revealed as a result of Covid19 and also to help the town recover economically from the pandemic. We discussed the pros and cons of utilizing the funds for existing capital projects and how to avoid possible duplication/overlap if there are grant funds or other resources in areas we consider.

Solicitation of requests for use of ARPA funds

- Outreach to Town departments, boards, committees, and commissions
- Deadline: We extended the deadline for requests from February 14 to February 28.
- Provide template for responses: Some initial responses provided more detailed information than others, Proposals should include:
 - Who owns/manages the proposed project?
 - Are there potential or available alternative funding sources
 - Does the project need to be bid?
 - Can the proposed project realistically be completed by the December 2026 deadline?
 - All proposals should be submitted in writing before closing date of Feb.28
- How will proposals be tracked?
 - Email responses will be delivered to Ms. Hamilton.
 - There will be a standing agenda item to review requests.

- Who else might we contact about community needs/wants?
 - Select Board and Town Treasurer regarding rent and mortgage relief, Housing Trust Fund, Emergency Fund
 - Southborough Youth and Family Services and SHOPC regarding less visible needs of community
 - Rotary and Chamber regarding impact on local businesses
- Presentations:
 - Groups are not required to present to the ARPA committee; the committee can invite respondents to elaborate on their proposals.
- The following departments/committees have provided input as of this date:
 - Facilities and Capitol Planning presented at ARPA committee meeting on Feb 2.
 - Planning has provided a written list of top four wants
 - Board of Health will submit and/or present at the next ARPA meeting

Community surveys/forums

Survey: We plan to poll the community via an on-line survey in March.

- The survey will offer the community concrete options to rank, but we may include an option to make a suggestion.
- Work with the Municipal Technology Committee (MTC) to develop the survey format and distribute it by email. MTC received good response to the town survey last year.
- Design survey questions after February 28 closing date for proposals.

Public Forums: Although not discounting a dedicated public forum meeting, no specific date was discussed.

- Promote and Encourage Public Comment at ARPA Committee meetings:
- Vehicles to inform community of our task, meetings, public comment times, survey and potential forum:
 - MySouthborough.com
 - DPW signboards
 - Existing Facebook groups and an active Twitter account that have received good response on other town surveys
 - Town website posting
 - Inexpensive postcard mailing: (Every Door Mail Drop) that the Town has access to.
 - EDC had positive response from mailing flyers
 - The Town Clerk maintains a list of people/groups who welcome civic announcements.

Proposed Schedule

- Weekly: The committee plans to meet weekly on Thursdays until the charge is fully addressed
- February 24: Create evaluation rubric; continue to invite/promote awareness for proposals
- February 24 onward: Evaluate proposals as they come in; Draft survey format and questions
- February 28: Deadline for receipt of all written requests for use of ARPA funds
- March 3? Finalize survey (tentative)
- March 7? Distribute survey (tentative)
 - Need at least two weeks for survey responses
- March 7: promote survey Potential EDDM (every door mail drop) postcard pointing to survey and public comment periods. Who would pay for this? Does BOS need to pay/vote for it? -
- March 25 close survey data collection (tentative)
- March 31 - onward: compile data; consider all input; deliberate and prioritize
- Present to Select Board at a regular meeting prior to May 16

II. Next Steps/Action

- Create a template for second email request for proposals. Ms. Hamilton
- Arrange second email blast to invite proposals from town departments, boards, commissions. At the February 3 meeting we learned that at least the Historical Commission had not received the first email. Ms. Hamilton
- Create a log for all proposals. Reach out to Jason Montijo in the tech department for a share point. Manage and edit and provide view rights to the committee Ms. Hamilton
- Collaborate with MTC on survey format and distribution. Ms. Rubenstein
- Contact SHOPC and Youth and Family Services to learn if there are other organizations or nonprofits dealing with community needs that should be made aware of the APRA funding opportunity. Ms. Hamilton and Ms. Rubenstein
- Ask Select Board about budget for EDDM. Mr. Wood
- Explore how to seek input from the local business community (Rotary, Chamber, etc.) on use of ARPA funds Mr. Wood

III. Administrative business

- APPROVED Minutes of January 25, 2022:
- APPROVED Minutes of February 3, 2022

IV. Unfinished Business

- Evaluation criteria
 - TABLED due to the late hour, unanimous vote

V. New Business

- Next meeting February 17, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. by zoom

VI. Public Comment

- None

Meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m. by unanimous vote.

Minutes prepared by Anne Rubenstein.