

**Southborough ARPA Committee
April 14, 2022
Virtual Meeting held via Zoom**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Andrea Hamilton called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m. and took roll call attendance.
Present: Andrea Hamilton, Meme Luttrell (Vice Chair), Tim Martel, Joe Palmer, Anne Rubenstein, Tony Schoener. (ABSENT: John Wood)

REVIEW OF AGENDA

REVIEWED PROPOSAL TRACKER to determine the need for more in-depth information:

Topics reviewed:

- Need for ballpark number for the tax abatement item (from Select Board)
- Estimated figure for premium pay proposal including all eligible full and parttime personnel
- Determine if Wi-Fi and website proposals the only actionable items submitted by Municipal Technology Committee
- Explore reasoning on temporary funding for Board of Health positions,
- Explore the SHOPC request to put ARPA funds in the Affordable Housing Trust (may not be allowable)
- Details re: Youth and Family services

DISCUSSED VARIOUS APPROACHES FOR MAKING OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- What is threshold for approval of item (majority? unanimity?)
- Should cost of projects be a consideration?
- Our personal rankings?
- Top survey rankings?
- Should the committee make recommendations on full amount of ARPA funding, or leave funds for commitment next year? (Funds must be allocated by the end of 2024, projects completed by end of 2026.)
- Should the committee provide some economic relief for non-property-owners? Checks to residents?
- Should the committee consider projects that have likely funding through alternate sources?
- Should committee recommendations align with Master Plan goals?
- Should the committee base decisions on how much of the town is impacted by the expenditure? Or should small but desirable projects that have been postponed for years be recommended?

REVIEWED TOP SURVEY RESULTS: tax relief, sidewalks, senior center, premium pay for first responders, and Board of Health proposals.

Feedback not received yet on whether (1) the wording change on day 4 of the survey impacted the results or (2) whether the elimination of surveys with only a single response (one issue) impacted the results.

Brief discussion: Wouldn't all of these allocations (of federal money) alleviate the local tax burden. General consensus: Yes, applying ARPA funds to any local project reduces the impact on the tax rate.

HIGHLIGHTS OF DISCUSSION with Public Works Superintendent Karen Galligan: department head:

- There is unlimited need for sidewalk maintenance and new sidewalks.
- Reviewed the various sidewalk proposals and the logistics of committing funds and concluding specified projects by the end of 2026.
- With prices so high for asphalt and other materials, bids are unpredictable and might not work out favorably to complete within the necessary time period, but funds could be returned to the Select Board for timely expenditure under ARPA regulations.
- Discussed accounting measures for sidewalk funding; overruns, unspent funds.
- Explained that timelines are complicated, even when a project is determined to be high priority. It can take years to obtain matching grants and neighborhood approvals.
- Some of the streets that need sidewalks most will be the most challenging. Issues include safety, ADA compliance, bike lanes, DCR land ownership, drainage, how the causeways bisect the town, utility company involvement, involvement of neighborhoods.
- Concluded that ARPA funded projects need to be smaller scale. Most likely candidates would be Cordaville Road, Richards Road and St. Marks North.
- Touched on how the Complete Streets grants might impact sidewalk construction.

The board thanked Ms. Galligan for providing clarity on sidewalk proposals.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 17, 2022 MINUTES

Motion to approve: Ms. Rubenstein; Second: Mr. Palmer

Roll call vote: Yes: Ms. Luttrell, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Schoener, Ms. Rubenstein, Mr. Martel, Ms. Hamilton

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kevin Miller suggested that the 2015/16 Sidewalk Construction Report did a tremendous job ranking 50 roads that need sidewalks using 10 criteria.

Sam Stiver noted that the Public Works Planning Board reranked the projects and updated the maps after consulting with engineering. He also noted there are neighborhoods that have good interior sidewalks but do not connect to other parts of town.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Next meeting: TUESDAY April 19, 7:30 p.m.
2. Agenda set for April 19th

3. Follow up:
 - a. Mr. Palmer will identify what has alternative funding.
 - b. Ms. Luttrell will correlate items with Master Plan goals.
4. Chair noted that the Select Board has requested that the committee present recommendations before Town Meeting (May 5). If we have two more meetings this may be possible.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS-- None

MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 9:31 P.M.: Mr. Palmer; SECOND, Ms. Luttrell

Unanimous vote: Ms. Luttrell, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Martel, Mr. Shoener, Ms. Rubenstein, Ms. Hamilton

Minutes submitted by Anne Rubenstein, Committee Member.