

**Select Board Meeting
Minutes
January 11, 2023**

Select Board Chair Mr. Kobus, Select Board member Ms. Dickhaut, Select Board member Ms. Perusse, Select Board member Mr. Kerrigan, and Select Board member Mr. Devault were in attendance. Attendees were Town Administrator Ward, Assistant Town Administrator Snell. Chair Mr. Kobus opened the meeting at 6:00PM.

American Rescue Plan Act Funding

Chair Mr. Kobus stated the board is meeting to review and discuss requests made by the Police Department, Community & Economic Development including WHEAT for ARPA funding for projects and initiatives. He began by inviting Police Chief Coyne for discussion regarding the request for the Clinton Police Department.

Police Department Radio System Upgrades

Chief Coyne thanked the board for their time, he put together some information on the proposed upgrades to the Radio System for the department. He passed out the report he had compiled. He explained he identified the need for upgrades when he became Chief, there are communication problems internally and externally that have been identified. He and Lt. Nelson had visited WoRAD, Inc. in Worcester to gain more knowledge on the radio system and upgrades. It was a great meeting and we came away with a better understanding of what radio system would work best for the town. The recommendation is to purchase 30/31 multi-band portable and 9 multi-band mobiles to be used in the cruisers. These multi band will allow communication with the Fire Department and other communities. Chair Mr. Kobus asked if the quote includes all costs. Chief Coyne explained the quote has become outdated, there may be additional costs for installation in cruisers. These cost include all the programming needed. Chair Mr. Kobus asked about a timeline before the new radios will go live. Chief Coyne explained it would take may be a year or more, it would be 6 to 8 months before the order would come in, minimal training needed. He explained if the board is supportive to the purchase he will put the work to prepare a final costs and research if there is grant funding available to offset expense. Chair Mr. Kobus explained when you look into ARPA funding this is what it is intended for, a purchase like this. Ms. Dickhaut made a motion to support preliminary round of ARPA funding, this is in the best interest of the town. Mr. Devault seconded the motion. Under Discussion: Chief Coyne explained the cost will be approximately \$400,000, but he intends to put more work into research and review of the best fit for the department. Mr. Devault asked if the Fire Department will be part of the upgrade. Chief Coyne explained the Fire Department has the capability of a dual band, this upgrade

would be the same at the Police Department allowing better communication. The vote was unanimous.

WHEAT Community Services Director Jodi Breidiel

Ms. Breidiel thanked the board for the opportunity to present information regarding the services provided by WHEAT to Clinton and the surrounding communities and the exciting plans to enhance these services with plans for a new building. The request is for \$500,000 in ARPA funding to be used to offset the building cost for the new proposed building. This is a \$5 million dollar project with a \$4.2 million dollar bond from Mass Development to help fund the project. The building will provide housing, 8 units will be available for transitional housing to provide shelter for those in need in the community. The other part of the building will be used for office space and a kitchen. Mr. Devault asked if additional funding would be needed to provide other services to the community like food. Ms. Breidiel explained yes there is a need for that as well. She explained that would be a separate ask, this request is to help offset the cost of the new building. Recently they have received an increase in their rent, at this time the current rate will cost the same amount as the monthly payment to payback on the new project loans. Mr. Devault made a motion to preliminary approve the request for \$500,000 to be used for the WHEAT building project as requested. Mr. Kerrigan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Schedule for APRA funding approval

Chair Mr. Kobus explained at the end of the meeting they will discuss a plan moving forward.

Ms. Dickhaut stated she would like to discuss the funding earmarked for the Facilities and town hall improvements. This is a onetime chance to make sustainable upgrades to the town properties, for example the chairs should be replaced in the balcony as well as the floor seating in the auditorium. She explained she served on the Town Hall Renovations committees and was aware there wasn't sufficient funding to complete updating the extended basement area to office on that level. She also has identified many capitol updates that could be done to the building there is a need to paint ceilings and other improvements. Chair Kobus explained the board can review the time sensitive needs and lay out a plan on moving forward over the next four weeks.

Community & Economic Development

Director Mr. Duffy was before the board with a review of ARPA funding request. He explained four of the five requests are to support the ongoing programs that are ongoing activities. The primary focus is on the downtown and economic recovery of the distressed geographical areas of the community or impacted industry. These are program he will continue to do for a while. The downtown funds were used for planters, decorations, table

and chairs totaling \$125,000. This funding helps improve the business environment. For business recovery aid \$150,000 will be used for a few businesses to help facilitate the growth of business. The position of downtown coordinator has been created at \$80,000 annually over the next four years. There is a consultant that has completed some encouraging returns with events downtown. This funding would continue the position. This person will work with the businesses. Using ARPA funds the position would continue until December of 2027. Mr. Devault explained he is reluctant to fund a non-capitol project, he remembers a bad experience at the school department when he served his term on the school committee. He shared School Choice funding was used to cover staffing positions, this funding was only available for a limited time but the positions were created and needed to be funded after the School Choice funding ran out. He agrees there have been good things completed by the downtown coordinator, he is in favor of the position continuing but four years is a long time away. He prefers to see this position budgeted and the funding used towards the community growth and business recovery programs. He stated business is a big pillar of the community and economic recovery is slated for only 6% of the funding, which is low. He is reluctant to spend the money on other things, it should be used for recovery. He is all for town hall building improvements. But isn't sure how the building was negatively impacted by COVID. He is reluctant to improve the town hall, the focus should be more on funding businesses. A higher percentage of the funding should be considered for business recovery. Mr. Duffy explained he had a COVID loan program established to assist businesses funded at \$350,000 only \$109,000 was used. The demand hasn't been there from businesses, he explained he hasn't heard from the businesses. Ms. Dickhaut reviewed Lancaster is spending ARPA funding on all capital improvement projects, the town needs to identify where funding will have biggest impact. She explained not all businesses are in need of assistance, there were many Federal funded programs for business recovery. Mr. Duffy explained relative to the Down Town Coordinator position if staffing were added to the department this would not be the needed position. He would like to explore this discussion more before staffing decisions is made. He explained the final program is a Fuel Assistance program to assist seniors with the rising fuel costs. The funding could be used to assist with the electric services increase along with fuel costs. He explained he would recommend \$50,000 be funded to start the program and increase if used. Ms. Dickhaut stated the need exists now for assistance for qualifying residents and seniors, she doesn't want to wait on this. Ms. Dickhaut made a motion to appropriate \$50,000 in ARPA funding to fund the Fuel Assistance program to be put to good use during these winter months if the need is identified. Mr. Kerrigan seconded the motion. Under Discussion: Mr. Duffy asked for the program to be contingent on WHEAT and the Senior Center administering the funding. Ms. Dickhaut amended motion to reflect the Council on Aging and WHEAT will administer the program for energy assistance. The vote was unanimous.

Class II License Renewal Update – 556 Main Street

Administrator Ward explained the license holder is working with the Board of Health regarding the sanitation code requirements. He is trying to satisfy the requirements and has proposed using the business next store to satisfy the code. He will be attending the Board of Health meeting with proposal and approval. The business cannot operate until they get the sign off from the Board of Health. Chair Mr. Kobus asked if the business owner is aware.

Mr. Devault made a motion to adjourn at 7:30PM. Ms. Kerrigan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joyce Corbosiero
Executive Assistant Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator