Public Hearing on American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") Town Funds

Discussion on Potential Projects to be Funded by American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") Federal Funds

- The town received $762,740.11 in ARPA funds with $470,302.38 committed and $416,568.38 expended to date. The remaining funds to commit by December 31, 2024 and expend by December 31, 2026 are $292,437.73.
  - A schedule outlining the status of the ARPA funds has been provided for Selectboard review.
- Selectboard to review letter submitted by Hobie Guion for mold remediation in the Four Corners School House. At the April 17, 2023, the Selectboard voted to commit up to $30K in funds to match anticipated grant funds for the project. The grant request was approved. The work is expected to be completed by August 30, 2024. If the project is funded with ARPA funds, the cost needs to be committed via formal contract with contractor or completed with all funds expended by December 31, 2024.
- The Selectboard to consider funding FY 2024 Ash Tree Management project with ARPA funds. It was discussed at the May 1, 2023 Selectboard meeting that the need exists to expand on this effort to mitigate the impact of the emerald ash borers. The annual funding provided for this effort is $15K per year, which has not covered the cost over the past couple of years.
  - The Resilient Roads Committee provided an update for the Selectboard as follows:
    - The grants available for the ash tree management efforts are only $5K, covering a minor portion of the total costs expended. The town has removed about 800 trees thus far, including some non-ash hazard trees. That’s about one third of the ash from our original inventory work. Community and Urban Forestry just released information on grant programs for 2024. The Caring for Canopies grant limit is still $5K unfortunately. They do have a new grant program, Growing Urban Forests in the Face of Emerald Ash Borer Grants, which is also limited to $5K. Only roads within a mile of designated village centers (e.g., North Montpelier, Adamant) are eligible. Therefore, the total grant funds available would be a maximum of $10K.
    - The committee is suggesting Brazier, Center, and Lyle Young Roads for 2024. That’s roughly 400 trees. Based on the spending thus far, it is safe to assume that the cost for this effort will be at least $60K.
    - One consideration is that many of the trees can be considered utility trees. While GMP has removed a good number of roadside ash trees in East Montpelier, WEC has been focused on transmission corridors instead. Overall, our inventory showed that about 10% of the roadside trees are within town/utility shared rights of way. There is a potential to partner with WEC on tree removal to get them to chip in on the cost.
    - The Resilient Roads Committee provided a summary of the Annual Ash Tree Project for Selectboard review.
Selectboard Meeting

Additions to the Agenda
None

Consideration of Delinquent Tax Engagement Letter
• Delinquent Tax Collector (“DTC”) Pallas has been working with Jim Barlow, Town Attorney, on issuing demand letters to the delinquent taxpayers. DTC Pallas provided the engagement letter for Selectboard review and approval.
  o If the Selectboard is comfortable with the letter, the Selectboard to authorize Chair Gardner to sign the letter via motion.

Consideration of The Housing Foundation, Inc. Mortgage Discharge (Sandy Pines)
• The balance of The Housing Foundation loan funded by the Revolving Loan Fund was paid off in September, 2022. In order to finalize the mortgage discharge, Treasurer Pallas provided the Mortgage Discharge to be signed by Chair Gardner.
  o If the Selectboard is comfortable with the Mortgage Discharge, the Selectboard to authorize Chair Gardner to sign the letter via motion with the motion reading as follows per Town Attorney Jim Barlow: “To approve discharge of The Housing Foundation Inc. mortgage dated March 18, 1998, and recorded at book 61, pages 497-503 of the East Montpelier land records.”
    ▪ The document is to be notarized at the time of signing.
• TA Jenkins has scheduled Downstreet to meet with the Selectboard at the September 18th meeting to discuss the potential to assign the remaining balance of the Revolving Loan Fund ($262,629) to Downstreet. At the May 2, 2022 meeting, the Selectboard discussed the potential with Rebecca Schrader, Revolving Loan Fund Advisor, to transfer the funds to an organization focused on affordable housing, such as Downstreet. At the time, Downstreet was restructuring and not authorized by the state to receive the funds but is currently eligible to receive funds. At this time, the town is out of compliance with state guidelines on managing these funds. Per the state, the town needs to either transfer the funds to Downstreet or return the funds to the state.

Listers Errors & Omissions
• The Listers provided additional information for the Errors & Omissions form reviewed at the last SB meeting.
  • Per the Listers, the Error & Omission for SPAN 195-062-11220 is to increase the total value $10,500 to reflect the reinstatement of 6.46 acres that were removed in error. A subdivision creating 2 lots of 3+ acres each was recorded in the 2023 tax year; however the 2 lots did not transfer to new owners until after April 1st (which will appear in the 2024 grand list).

Consideration of Town Office Cleaning Quote
• Municipal Coordinator Canada obtained a quote from Lamco Cleaning Services, LLC. as a comparison to the company currently cleaning the town office. The quote from Lamco was $80 per week compared to the current rate of $100 per week.
  o In February, the current cleaning service increased the rate from $60 per week to $100 per week.
  o The FY2024 budget for office custodial services is $3,000 per year which was based on historical rates and is too low for current market rates.
  o At the current rate of $100 per week, the annual cost would be $5,200 per year. At the Lamco quote of $80 per week, the annual cost would be $4,160. The FY2025 budget will be adjusted to reflect the market rate of cleaning services.
  o The Selectboard to consider the quote from Lamco Cleaning Services, LLC. If comfortable with the quote, the Selectboard to authorize TA Jenkins to contract with Lamco Cleaning Services, LLC. for town office custodial services via motion. If approved, TA Jenkins will draft a contract based on the template provided by the Town Attorney for the services.
Town Garage Project Update

- The Selectboard to discuss next steps regarding the potential replacement of the current town garage. Mr. Etnier to discuss information received on best structure (committee, etc.) for the town to manage the project and define the scope.

July 2023 Storm Damage FEMA Update

- The FEMA Recovery Scoping Meeting was held on Wednesday, September 6, 2023. TA Jenkins and Road Foreman Perry reviewed damage and finalized the Damage Inventory eligible for FEMA funding. The next step is the FEMA site inspection of the damaged areas not at least 90% complete. There are 4 locations that the FEMA Site Inspection team will visit:
  - Sanders Circle Culvert
  - Sparrow Farm Road Culvert
  - Sodom Pond Road Culvert
  - Guyette Road Culvert
- The site inspection will be scheduled for either next week or the week after.
- The Damage Inventory has been provided for Selectboard review.
- TA Jenkins will continue working with FEMA on the process to document damages and expenditures incurred.

Warrant

- September 11, 2023 Regular Expense Warrant
  - The warrant should be signed by all Selectboard members present. If an “in-person” quorum is lacking, the warrant should be approved by one of the in-person Selectboard members authorized to sign the warrant on behalf of the Selectboard.

Town Administrator Report

- Selectboard to sign curb cut permit 23-031 approved at last meeting.
- Zoning Update will be provided at the September 18, 2023 meeting.
- Selectboard to discuss January meeting dates. Regular meetings would be held on January 1, 2024 and January 15, 2024. Proposed dates of January 8, 2024 and January 22, 2024 presented for Selectboard consideration.
- Meeting Schedule:
  - September 18, 2023   6:30 p.m.   Regular Meeting Date
  - October 2, 2023     6:30 p.m.   Regular Meeting Date
  - October 16, 2023    6:30 p.m.   Regular Meeting Date
  - November 6, 2023    6:30 p.m.   Regular Meeting Date
  - November 20, 2023   6:30 p.m.   Regular Meeting Date
  - December 4, 2023    6:30 p.m.   Regular Meeting Date
  - December 18, 2023   6:30 p.m.   Regular Meeting Date