

**TOWN OF CASTLETON
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
Fire Station Community Room
273 Route 30N
Wednesday, July 20, 2022, at 6:00 PM**

**Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/x4vm1QPdiMPFsHKxEKIdH4lQA-44V_z8YNRuTWLOmvTAIdmlduSFmgN2Ma8Z7Z25.WOYXaSYEd29AIO_-
Passcode: ps=N87u4**

PRESENT: James Leamy, Chair, Richard Combs, Mary Lee Harris, Joseph Mark, Parliamentarian, Michael Jones, Town Manager, Ted Molnar, Mary McIntyre, John Burke, Joan Brown, Mary Kearns, Nancy Mark

PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Mary Droege

Absent: Robert Spaulding, Member

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Select Board Chair, Jim Leamy at 6:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Combs made motion to adopt the agenda. J. Mark seconded the motion. All were in favor of adopting the agenda. Motion passed 4-0.

SELECTBOARD TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE USES OF THE ARPA FUNDING AND DISCUSS THE TIMELINE FOR OBLIGATION AND EXECUTION OF AVAILABLE FUNDS

J. Leamy asked for comments from the board members. J. Mark stated he felt this was an unforeseen opportunity to have 1.38 million dollars with no strings attached, once in a lifetime opportunity. It is something that they should consider using for long term projects that could not otherwise be done.

R. Combs asked if the list provided by town manager is all inclusive. M. Jones stated it is not. Some is from Selectboard members, some are projects that have been in discussion for some time, wastewater, broadband internet. M. Jones further explained the items on the spreadsheet of proposed projects/uses for ARPA funds provided for discussion by the board.

R. Combs asked about broadband, didn't see it on the list. M. Jones stated T. Munks, the town rep, felt it was not ready for discussion as far as final numbers was concerned. Discussion on the broadband, the fact that it has been heard that it would be \$45,000 to purchase the broadband, more like 4.5 million to install.

R. Combs asked about the dates that have been attached to these funds. M Jones stated they have until 12/2024 to obligate the funds, have until 12/2026 to spend it. R. Combs felt sewer expansion, help with Fire District line replacements and air pacs for the fire department, upgrades on library and Village School were larger ticket items. J. Leamy felt the Fire District had access to funding.

ML Harris asked about water being extended down Blissville Road and the fact it needs to go under the

railroad tracks, sewer goes under the tracks already, but water does not. M. Jones stated it would probably be a year and a half down the road, as there would be engineering to deal with, as well as designing and the scheduling with the railroad and any projects they may have planned.

PUBLIC COMMENTS PERIOD

J. Brown stated they employ over 50 people and are limited how much more they can grow without water and sewer, and they would be willing to assist with the project financially. R. Combs asked if they had to choose, which would be more beneficial to them, water or sewer. J. Brown felt the sewer would be the easiest, but they are on a private well and use a lot of water.

T. Molnar asked about the broadband project and why it wouldn't be put on the list, as it is needed and should be included. J. Mark stated need a plan how to plan and pay for it, which they do not have. T. Molnar suggested it be included in the list. J. Mark stated the list is for ARPA and wouldn't want to include and approve and then not be able to pay for it. J. Burke stated broadband was something he worked on at length on the public utility commission, and it is easy in largely populated area, but an area like this it is much more difficult to calculate whether it can sustain itself, it would have to have 14 customers per mile for it to sustain itself. It was stated the libraries may be getting funds for broadband from the State library fund department upgrade library equipment because it is so old. T. Molnar stated he asked Comcast about getting it up Pond Hill Road and he was quoted \$7,500.

M. McIntyre asked what the Lodge has for sewer. M. Jones stated sewer goes up to Crystal Haven on Route 30, water goes to the Fellowship church. Discussion on water being expanded up Route 30, M. Jones stated it is a huge amount of dollars to get water up any further.

J. Brown stated she is now speaking as the library representative, it is a beautiful building, in the most historic part of the town, it needs to be taken care of. Mary Kearns is doing a great job as the director, there are many families using the library on a regular basis. But the building needs to be taken care of, they are getting grants, are very close to being handicapped accessible, and they have many other areas that need attention.

Nancy Mark stated it is a team effort, and they have worked very hard at the library. She presented to the board what they've spent and what they are doing for handicapped access and explained the funds used and committed for their improvement projects at the library, as well as the handling of the funds available within the library budget. R. Combs commended the members of the library board and how they have planned and used their funds. The presentation shows that they would deplete almost all of their funding to complete all projects that are priority, and the reason they are asking for funds. M. Kearns stated they have 24/7 Wi-Fi that is used all the time by the public. It is a stopping point for the town to get information about the town.

M. Jones stated there has been ongoing conversation about an understanding of who is responsible to fix what at the library, the town or the library. There should be assessments of infrastructure for the town, buildings and equipment. A step of where infrastructure is at in the Town, beginning this week with an assessment being done on the library and the Village school.

M. Droege via zoom stated that it is her understanding that the land on the north and south sides of the Castleton River at Dewey field is for sale, which is not common knowledge, and she feels the town should consider purchasing that land to assist the group that is working on a walking trail along the river and _____

would protect the Dewey Field property as well.

M. McIntyre stated the library should get the funding they are requesting as they are a cornerstone and serve every age group in the town and are a safe zone for anyone needing a safe place to go.

J. Mark asked about the \$100,000 for line replacement for the Fire District being the only water related item on the list. Water expansion to Brown's is not on the list but is not something that could be done by the Town. J. Mark also explained economic development, and trying to attract new business, but also important to support and retain the existing businesses, sewer and water expansion would support that. He also felt that some projects should be done sooner than later and some portion of funds, possibly a 1/3 being allocated to those projects.

Discussion on a decision about any funds being allocated at an upcoming meeting. M. Droege asked if there would be more meetings like this scheduled. J. Leamy stated that is up to the board. M. McIntyre asked about the Village School being on the list. J. Leamy stated it is up in the air right now. R. Combs stated list was generated before the decision on the Village School was made and has not been updated.

M. McIntyre asked about tree and stump grinding proposal on the list and whether the town owned a stump grinder. M. Jones stated he will be coming to the board to purchase a stump grinder, as it is now \$500 to grind a stump, and it would take two years to pay for itself.

R. Combs stated he agrees with J. Mark that they preserve the businesses that are in town. He asked how to go about finding how much to expand water and sewer down depot lane. M. Jones stated he got an unfavorable response from CFD #3 when asked. J. Leamy stated there is also a large business on Creek Road that has no water or sewer, Woodard Marine. R. combs asked M. Jones if the board could propose the question to CFD #3. J. Burke explained should confirm with CFD #3, then go to CFD #1 for further approval.

SELECTBOARD CLOSING COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None at this time.

ADJOURN

J. Mark made a motion to adjourn at 7:08pm. R. Combs seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted

Allison Harvey
Recording Secretary
Transcribed via Zoom Recording