

**Minutes of the special meeting of the
ECONOMIC RECOVERY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, January 25, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., via GoToMeeting

In attendance: G. Cook, A. Stirna, L. Hogarty, D. Lefko, K. Emerson, and S. O'Brien.

Cook called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Public Comment: O'Brien reviewed the purpose of this section with the Committee explaining that this would be a designated item in each agenda going forward to permit the public to provide comment to the committee, rather than having the public interject during our meeting discussions. The committee agreed that this seemed appropriate to include going forward. Cook suggested that we change the agenda item from "public comment" to "public/visitor comment".

Review and approval of meeting minutes from January 12, 2022, and January 19, 2022: Hogarty moved to accept the meeting minutes from January 12, 2022 and January 19, 2022 as presented. Lefko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Financial Report: Cook stated that he had spoken with Nancy and that the funds had not changed since our last meeting and therefore, we would not require an update from Gina at this meeting. Committee discussed that this should remain an agenda item going forward for purposes of tracking the dollar values as a committee.

Recap of Town Hall: Stirna complimented Mancini and Bauer for a great job presenting at the town hall on January 19, 2022. Cook inquired as to whether the presentation triggered anything with the Committee about how we could/should spend the funds. O'Brien informed the committee that we have received new public input through our committee email and that she will send out in the coming days for the committee's reference and review. Additionally, anything else received between now and the next meeting will be provided to the committee in advance of the next committee meeting.

Emerson addressed whether the committee felt we would need to repeat a request for public comment. Lucinda commented that she was hopeful we would have 10-12 public comments, and if we do not have that by the end of the comment period, we should discuss putting out a second call for input. O'Brien indicated that we will certainly have a handful in the "teens" and that we should see and review what we have at the end of the comment period and begin working on themes. If we do not have recommendations to allocate all funding after that, then we could certainly go back to the public to ask for further input. The committee discussed ways in which we could further advertise the call for public comment and considered the option of pushing out the deadline to receive public comment. Following that discussion, O'Brien recapped the consensus of the group, which was to not change the deadline at this time, but to have the First Select Woman continue to share the information regarding the opportunity to provide public comment in her listserv email to the town as many times as possible until we reach the deadline for submission in February. The Committee agreed and O'Brien indicated she would speak with the First Select Woman regarding this decision.

Cook inquired as to whether anyone brought up the idea of using these funds on solar activity? Hogarty stated that Mancini and Bauer did a good job at reminding the public that we wanted their specific ideas/suggestions to be submitted in writing, so no specific ideas were really discussed at the town hall.

Stirna did mention that people were bringing up their concern regarding PFAS, which is an ongoing issue that is being discussed by many in this town.

Discussion of conflict of interest/need for recusal: O'Brien opened this discussion for the committee to consider what, if any, parameters should be set for an individual committee member to recuse themselves from a vote on a particular proposed use of funding in the future due to direct personal interest/investment in the group/organization/etc. that would directly benefit from the funding received.

Hogarty commented that no one should have to recuse themselves unless it is a "personal gain" conflict. Lefko advised that we simply want to remove any views of impropriety. Using the library as an example, Lefko indicated that if there was a vote on allocating funding to the library, that he would want Hogarty to recuse herself as a member of the library board. The optics on her voting on such an item simply would not look good. Stirna indicated she viewed this in line with Hogarty, and that Hogarty's vote would only be one vote, which would not make a difference when it came to a vote of 9 people, and that before deciding on the appropriateness of recusal, she would need an example of the impropriety.

Cook indicated that he agreed with Lefko that the optics may not look good depending on the situation, and that it would not be a waste of time to get an opinion from the town attorney simply to protect ourselves down the road. Hogarty suggested we check with CCM for guidance first. Lefko agreed this needed to be discussed and reviewed by the committee. Stirna agreed we should check with CCM first and if there is no guidance, we can prepare a request for the BOS regarding the use of the town attorney to seek additional guidance. The Committee agreed.

Review of public input received to date: Cook indicated that this was already discussed. O'Brien confirmed that she would prepare the documents to be shared with the committee, as well as create a document highlighting the "themes" of the public comment to aid in discussion for the committee at the next meeting.

Emerson inquired as to whether, if we use the "lost funds/revenue" option to allocate some of the funds, does the specific breakdown of that use fall to us as the committee, or will that be the responsibility of the Board of Selectman, Board of Finance, etc. Cook indicated he thought that we could likely put parameters around it when submitting our recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. The committee also discussed the use of funding for the ambulance company and fire company, due to their specific entity type in town. Emerson reiterated that it would be helpful to learn about whether we can make a recommendation about "lost funds/revenue", and if we as a committee would be permitted to further guide the use of that funding.

Adjournment: Stirna moved to adjourn the meeting. Lefko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance. The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara O'Brien