

***PRELIMINARY MINUTES***

**VILLAGE OF LUDLOW  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, April 17, 2024**

**5:00 PM**

**HOWARD BARTON, JR. CONFERENCE ROOM**

**Meeting ID: 437 305 4865**

**Passcode: 138977**

**<https://zoom.us/j/4373054865>**

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

Bob Brandt, Chairman

Justin Hyjek

Julie Nicoll

**STAFF:**

Brendan McNamara

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Eric Alden

Patty Greenwood

Scott Stearns

Pat Archambault

Nick Miele

Jean Strong

Scott Baitz

Michael Normyle

George Tucker, Jr.

Alan Couch

Noah Schmidt

Andrea Whitman

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order

- A. Brendan McNamara called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All members present. He led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Consideration of any Changes, Additions or Removals to the Agenda

- A. There were none.

3. DISCUSS APPROPRIATION OF ARPA FUNDS

- A. Brendan McNamara explained that the Village had received \$232,936.04 in ARPA funds. We must commit to the appropriation of these funds by December 31, 2024 and have contracts in

- place. Funds must be totally expensed by December 31, 2026. There are specific guidelines for use of these funds. He said that the funds may be used for highway paving, but his opinion is that not all of the funds should be used on infrastructure. He thinks that some of it could be used on a beautification project. He said that there is a culvert at Pleasant Street that is in dire need of replacement and the approximate cost for that is \$70,000. He said that he has a proposal for upgrade of the Audio-Visual systems at town hall that would be done in cohorts with the town. The “today” estimate is about \$25,000 – with about \$10,000 being the Village share. Ultimately, the Trustees and the Select Board make the decisions for use of the funds.
- B. Bob Brandt said that a previous Trustees’ board had thought the funds should be put to repairs on the sidewalks in the Village. It would be a good boost for the town. He added that the portion of sidewalk by the Veterans’ Park would be about \$112,000 and would make it more pedestrian-friendly.
- C. Brendan McNamara said the sidewalks are a vital part of the Village, and we would have to decide where we would get the most for our money. He said that \$232,000 won’t do it all.
- D. Jean Strong asked if there are funds in the budget for sidewalks.
- E. Bob Brandt said about \$15,000.
- F. Patty Greenwood referred to the Trustees’ minutes from February 7, 2023 and the discussion about sidewalk repairs. She asked if any of that work had been done.
- G. Bob Brandt said it had to be dropped because of the flood.
- H. Michael Normyle asked if the Village has the ARPA funds in hand.
- I. Brendan McNamara said yes.
- J. Michael Normyle said that the tennis and pickle ball courts at Dorsey Park had been damaged by the flood. If not maintained they become eyesores. He volunteered to help with writing a scope of work and help with bids for their repairs. He said that out-of-staters use the courts. He suggested more things and programs for children. It should be a multi-use facility.
- K. Noah Schmidt that he echoes the need for upgrade of the AV systems at Town Hall. We have already invested a lot and it would be great to finish.
- L. Patty Greenwood said that she agrees with the \$70,000 for the culvert and the upgrade to the AV system is a good idea. She would support work on the sidewalks over work on Dorsey Park. She said sidewalks are in the center of town and impact more people.
- M. Alan Couch agreed with work on Dorsey and the culvert. He said that sidewalks should be covered by the Highway department. He suggested that putting funds toward landscaping will require money in the future for its maintenance and upkeep over the years. He said the town will have to maintain the park. He said that there are redundancies in what the town and village cover.
- N. Justin Hyjek said that the guidelines for use of the funds have been upgraded yearly. He said that initially it covered healthcare related items, water, culverts, flood damages, Broadband upgrades. He said that sidewalks are probably covered.
- O. Brendan McNamara said that government services are now included and cover broad scope of municipal expenses including sidewalks.
- P. Justin Hyjek added a fire truck purchase. He said that he would like to see the tennis/pickle ball courts and a picnic area at Dorsey.
- Q. Patty Greenwood asked if the town and village funds are separate.
- R. Brendan McNamara said yes – they were 2 separate allocations and can’t be combined. He said that Dorsey is covered by the Town Recreation Department. He added that \$500,000 does not go far. He said that this is only the first meeting of a few and is to gather public input. We have to be cautious – are we creating another job that will create a future fiscal burden.
- S. Scott Baitz asked if \$15,000 per year for sidewalks is all that is in the budget.

- T. Justin Hyjek said most of the sidewalks by the gas stations are in disrepair and need serious help.
- U. Brendan McNamara said the culvert repair will happen with or without the ARPA funds. It was grossly undersized, but there is nothing in the budget for it.
- V. Scott Stearns asked how the sidewalks got so bad. He said that the sidewalk snow cleaner doesn't help. How can we prevent them from getting that bad and make them last longer.
- W. Justin Hyjek said that the machine may add to the disrepair, but maybe different sales would help. The sidewalks are 50 years old.
- X. Jean Strong asked about the park.
- Y. Bob Brandt said the saved for multiple years and some of the funds were from another source.
- Z. Jean Strong said that part of the permit for the Mobil Station was to keep the sidewalk clear, but they have no sidewalk. She suggested that someone pull their permit to check on this. She said she thinks the Shell Station may have the same requirement.
- AA. Brendan McNamara said he will check.
- BB. Alan Couch noted that Vermont received \$2.7 Billion in ARPA funds. There are 200 towns and if divided evenly, each town would have received \$13 million. He said we should ask our state representatives why Ludlow's share was low.
- CC. Brendan McNamara said it was based on population.
- DD. Justin Hyjek noted that the water pipes in the Village were installed in 1898. This is a pressing issue and the EPA is probably going to make us do a study on them.
- EE. Patty Greenwood asked if there is anyone in town who writes grants and get funding.
- FF. Justin Hyjek said the Planning and Zoning office works with the Regional Planning Commission.
- GG. Patty Greenwood said the town should hire someone to do this. She said that there is a list of projects that Nick Miele has proposed and she supports them. After COVID, there was an influx in the population. She said that Dorsey and the Dog Park were damaged and we need to clean up the town. She said to use the funds on Nick Miele's projects, put in more picnic tables.
- HH. Nick Miele said that Dorsey has the Skate Park, soccer fields, and tennis/pickle ball courts. He wants to develop the parks and not center around teams. He wants to put in more walking paths, outdoor fitness equipment and upgrade the playground. We need a park planner to lay this all out and determine what funding is needed.
- II. Justin Hyjek asked if ARPA funds can be combined with grants.
- JJ. Brendan McNamara said some yes, some no.
- KK. Justin Hyjek asked if parks fall under the ARPA guidelines.
- LL. Scott Baitz said to put some toward playgrounds.
- MM. Justin Hyjek said investing in the parks does not have to be used in such a way that it would need constant maintenance.
- NN. Brendan McNamara said he is hearing a lot of support for parks. He said that the parks fall under the Town. Is there wiggle room with Dorsey, part in the Village? Maybe tag team projects. He said it would probably not be possible, but he will find out. There was also a request for a bike trail behind the high school. Technically that is Recreation. Is that an option?
- OO. Michael Normyle asked who monitors how the funds are spent. He has a hard time thinking that someone in Washington D.C. will look through the reports from small towns.
- PP. Brendan McNamara said he has to file quarterly reports. The next one is due April 30, 2024.
- QQ. Justin Hyjek said he doesn't think they require justification for projects under \$100,000.
- RR. Brendan McNamara said that after dealing with FEMA, he wants to make sure about what is allowed. He suggested that they may want to schedule a meeting for the beginning of May. He will have better numbers from the departments about special projects. If possible, they may be

able to do none little projects this summer and the larger ones next construction year. He would like to have the major allocations by July or August. He suggested 3 or 4 more meetings. He asked the board if they were available May 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

- SS. Andrea Whitman said that a town planner could do that.
- TT. Justin Hyjek asked if we can get a new hire approved and add it outside of the budget.
- UU. Brendan McNamara said yes, but they would have to have funding. He said it would be best to start someone Part time and it is easier to find a part time person. A full time person would be in excess of \$100,000 and it is difficult to find people.
- VV. Justin Hyjek said that this conversation will continue.
- WW. Jean Strong said they should start looking now for a town planner/grant writer.
- XX. Scott Baitz said that this meeting is for the use of ARPA funds and this is not part of it. It would also be for the Select Board, not the Trustees.

4. Other Business

- A. There was none

5. Adjourn

- A. **MOTION by Julie Nicoll and seconded by Justin Hyjek to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisha Klaiber

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Bob Brandt, Chairman of Trustees

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Julie Nicoll

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Justin Hyjek, Vice Chair, Vice Chair