

ARPA Minutes Jan 12, 2023

Attendance: Clrs Dave Adams, Gus Steeves, Mike Marketti. Adriana Robaina, Abby Theberge, Michael McCall, George Chenier, Victor Roule, Paul Normandin, Margaret Morrissey, Peg Dean.

Mental Health: Paul said Westboro Hospital offers such training/counseling specific to fire/emergency folks for \$5800 taught by Framingham PD's Sgt Ball. Police now get annual in-service day on this, so they won't join his new effort. Training = 1 hour + clinical evaluation time, with any further 1:1 counseling covered by insurance. Adriana said she'd ask the town's EAP if they offer this, but Paul said they typically don't. Dave noted the issues compare to those seen by veterans in war

Fiber Optics: Margaret said we should've done this ~15 years ago, when she talked to the then-chair of Redev Auth; was rejected as too expensive then and is more so now, but more necessary for citizen communication and town competitiveness. Request is for \$100K "placeholder" for JEL's fiber capacity (will likely need more, working on grant with Victor and Peg that opens in March). Idea came up during Vision 2050 forums, might be able to extend the MA Broadband 123 service now in Sturbridge. Vitore said he helped build Longmeadow's system. Margaret quoted Verizon at \$1358/mo and Charter now has it from pole to building just for JEL, which now has 5 wifi access points + 5 hotspots loaned out for a week each. Peg said the grant covers capital costs across town and hardware/software, but not internal building networking.

Paul noted we approved \$100K to upgrade phone system & wire all town buildings, can't afford \$1358/mo just for JEL. Especially need it to connect PD and FD. Suggested doing a feasibility study and RFP for available services.

George noted his FL county wired whole thing for \$34M; had heard existing fiber here won't work well due to mixture of fiber and copper lines. Noted project will need to be in stages. Peg & Victor agreed, noting Longmeadow took 12 yrs. & feds are offering \$1B+ in grants for "shovel-ready" broadband work.

Micro-projects/Transit: Peg said she's talking to CMRPC, started with QCC regarding transport between the HS and somewhere downtown for an adult student lounge. Project will help promote the various existing transport options in town. Council already approved this via Reserve fund, so this just reimburses that money.

George noted Elderbus wait times have increased to 3-4 hours, therefore isn't practical for many people. Dave said he's heard of another senior program that can get a van + 2 staff. Gus suggested including surveying for future needs beyond seniors.