

DRAFT

TOWN GRANTS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 6:15 pm

Town Hall, 104 North King Street

1. **Call to Order:** Emily called the meeting to order at 6:25 pm.

Present: James Gatz, Emily Samide, Carrie Blessing (Phone), Marcy Bartlett, Mary Fortuna

Absent: Shannon Thomas

Guest: Leigh Ann Evanson, Professional Grant Writer

2. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion was made by James Gatz with second by Mary Fortuna to approve the minutes from December 2, 2025.

3. **Public Comment:** None

4. **Ongoing Business:**

- Leigh Ann Evanson was present to discuss a possible grant proposal.
- The Age Friendly Shepherdstown Committee has launched their Livable Communities Grants for 2026, and the applications are due on March 4th.
- AARP's grants for 2026 include three areas: 1.) Flagship Programs; 2.) Capacity Building; and 3.) Demonstration Projects.
- The AARP demonstration grant could be part of future proposals for congressionally directed funding to make it permanent.

Two potential projects were discussed for grant opportunities:

- Grant for supplies and cost for temporary closure in the space around the Market House as pedestrian only space; this could be used for temporary summer pop-up events, July 4th and Labor Day events. Parking issues may not be favorable with residents.

- Creating a shortcut path to the Shepherdstown Public Library on the Lowe property allowing people with mobility issues better access. The Age Friendly Shepherdstown Committee on behalf of the Town are looking to get a paved pathway to the Shepherdstown Public library. A family member contact is needed for Lowe property to discuss this proposal.
 - An awardee such as SAIL or the Library that is outside of town limits was discussed.
 - The Budget or Statement of Work will need to be presented to Town Council for review of the potential project proposal.
 - James Gatz indicated the Town needs to have a partnership.
 - The maximum grant for the Market House area is \$25,000, and the grant needs to be submitted by December 15, 2026.
 - Leigh Ann said she will meet with the Public Works Committee next Monday.
 - AARP Grant Funding for Festival Marketplace Demonstration - Discussion with Public Input will be reviewed at a special Town Council meeting.
5. **Action Item:** Documentation is needed for review that includes the Budget and Statement of Work, so it aligns with the current Comprehensive Plan at a special Town Council meeting to include Public Works for the Market House grant due March 4th.
6. Mary Fortuna gave an update on the webinars she attended on funding and grant platforms, and the documents are in SharePoint in the grants research file. There is a list of free training courses. She also explained how to use Grant Finder and the benefits.

The following information was reported:

- WISH opportunities are open and Letters of Inquiry are due in March.
- There are funding opportunities through the one Big Beautiful Bill for family values, drones, police safety, border protection and rural health that will be passed through the states.
- There is an AARP Grant that pays up to \$115,000 through the National Park Service for battlefield land available through the National Park Service.
- Establish a link for new opportunities and resources with a search portal. Build relationships with Rotary members. Use the link to provide communication regarding funding opportunities with an email group to show each priority it aligns with.

- Clarification is needed about what the committee’s role is in terms of helping and communicating the funding opportunity with the intent of applying.
- The most current version of the grant guidelines approved by Town Council is on SharePoint.
- Mary is going to start working on the calendar, the grant tracker, pdf version.

There are three folders on SharePoint:

- 1.) FY 2026 Community Plaza, sidewalks on Drummond
- 2.) Gov. Justice’s General CBS Request—Chesapeake Bay Trust Green Streets grant
- 3) Tobacco Warehouse
 - There is a folder for sidewalks. Emily added blank forms from last spring’s submissions to include Community Impact, Jobs Generated and Letters of Support (Shannon). Carrie said she can prepare forms and details based on last year’s meetings and can put together drafts and follow-up with Shannon and coordinate. Responses will be ready to be reviewed at the next meeting.

Mayor James Gatz:

- WISH grants are important/Tabler Farm
 - Traffic study – Region 9
 - Trees – Mid-Atlantic Tree Foundation. Linus asked Region 9 to do this application
 - Budget from 2025 – are there funds for hiring a consultant grant writer?
 - Existing grants
 - Green infrastructure projects and the Market House
 - Multiple opportunities for funding (apply for all of them)
7. **New Business:** Grant opportunities were discussed at the beginning of the meeting.
8. **Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:40 pm.

Respectfully,

Beverly A. Bennett