

DRAFT
TOWN GRANTS COMMITTEE MINUTES
Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 6:15 pm
Town Hall, 104 North King Street

1. **Call to Order:** Emily called the meeting to order at 6:20 pm.

Present: James Gatz, Emily Samide, Mary Fortuna (Zoom)

Absent: Carrie Blessing

Guests: None

2. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion was made by Shannon to approve the Feb 3 minutes, with an edit to move Marcy Bartlett to the Guest line; second by Mayor Gatz.

3. **Ongoing Business**

The AARP Demonstration Grant application has been submitted.

Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) applications to Riley Moore's office are due Friday. The calls from Capito and Justice have not been announced yet, but we anticipate them soon.

- Ok to address letters of support "To Whom It May Concern" so all are covered.
- **Emily** will confirm which committees we have to send our applications to for each grant.
- **Mayor Gatz** said that **Linus** is drafting the narrative for the Market House Pedestrian Plaza.
- **Emily** is drafting the narrative for the Sidewalk project.
- **Shannon** is gathering Letters of Support for both projects, by Friday, March 6.
- It was agreed to hold off on Tobacco Warehouse funding for now to allow more time to refine and address major potential obstacles like parking and flooding.
 - Shannon noted that the idea for using the bottom floor for community kayak storage has been tossed around for a while now, to address the flooding issue.
 - Regardless of the creative solution, some committees simply will not even consider a project on a flood plain.
 - Could be an income generator for the Town.
 - Consider applying for a planning grant for this project instead. CDS funding is only for capital projects, not for planning, research, etc.
- Riley Moore will only accept projects which can be done within the year of award (18 months from submission)
 - Emily suggested only submitting the sidewalk grant, in this case.
 - Shannon suggested that the pedestrian plaza could probably also be completed within that time frame.

- There are funding opportunities through the One Big Beautiful Bill which we should look into, including priorities such as healthy aging and health care access.
- We can probably also apply for EDI (Economic Development Initiative) grants for sidewalk upgrades, highlighting that since our town is a portal for the rest of the state it's important to have a safe streetscape
- Once everything is gathered, Karl will submit the CDS applications and Emily will assist.

Grant Tracker spreadsheet: Emily shared updates that have been made to the spreadsheet. Mary has a working list of grant opportunities that could apply to our priorities and which fit into a grant strategy that she is working on. Will review at our April meeting.

- If we hear about additional grants, send to **Mary** and she'll add to the opportunity list.

Grant Process Review: Leigh Ann shared lessons learned from the AARP application. Good opportunity to hone our process.

- Reaching out to stakeholders
 - Discussion about when should notification be more direct, such as a notice to the homeowner, and who should do this.
 - Many from the impacted neighborhood were aware of and available for public comment at the special meeting, but not everyone got the word.
 - When applicable, this should be a Town employee responsibility, not the Grants Committee, who are all volunteers.
- Grant opportunities are often short fused and we must act fast.
 - The Grants Committee only pursues grants which align with the Comprehensive Plan, which was available for comment for a long time. In theory the projects have been vetted. However, some projects are clearly stated while others are implied, so **the Town can help with awareness by creating and posting a list of the projects for which we're seeking funding.**
 - The Town won't always have 100% agreement on projects, but must give people adequate opportunity to raise issues, and then make decisions based on what's best for the majority.
- Documentation storage: Important to ensure all grant documentation, applications, etc., are stored consistently in the Grants Committee Sharepoint. Emily sent Karl the link to our AARP Flagship Grant folder so he can upload the final submission there for future reference and tracking.
- Final reviewer and review process:
 - Important to have one final reviewer who is the designated decision maker for final look and fresh eyes. Should be a Town employee.
 - Need to clearly define our institutional review process: who just needs awareness, who is needed to provide input or make a decision; and who is the final reviewer before

submission. Some will vary based on the project, but the final review should be consistent.

- May be helpful to create a basic SOP to help community members understand the process. Mary and Leigh Ann will discuss the recent AARP process and **Mary** will draft an SOP for committee review.

4. New Business: None

5. General Committee Discussion: None

6. Public Comment: None

7. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:35 pm.