

Town of Agawam Community Preservation Committee

Minutes
March 4, 2020

Members Present: Henry Kozloski, Louis Russo, Rich Maggi, Violet Baldwin, Ray Moreau, Les Tingley, Doreen Prouty, Vin Ronghi, David Cecchi

Others Present: Jennifer Bonfiglio; CPA Administrator

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairman Kozloski

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Member Russo made a motion to accept the January 22, 2020 meeting minutes by Member Baldwin. All in favor to approve minutes.
2. CPA Balances & Project Updates: Jennifer Bonfiglio provides an update on all outstanding projects and current fund balances.

\$12,675.00	Reserve for Open Space
\$466,801.76	Reserve for Historic
\$806,667.40	Reserve for Community Housing
\$308,673.66	Budgeted Reserve
<u>\$1,434,673.25</u>	Unreserved fund balance
\$3,029,491.70	

3. **Application for funding- School Street Barn-** Marc Strange, Director of Planning & Community Development presented the application on behalf of Mayor and barn committee who are requesting \$329,530.00 in CPA funds for the School Street Barn Stabilization and Restoration project. The purpose of the project is to fund the design update, stabilization and rehabilitation of the School Street barn in preparation for a grant application to the Mass. Historical Commission. A background and history was provided to the committee by Mr. Strange. The School Street Barn was originally conceived and designed as a three-season facility that could be opened to the public and host events like weddings and art exhibits. This project was supported by the CPA committee, who recommended \$447,000 in CPA (Historical) funding for the project. The City Council accepted the CPA's recommendation and voted to appropriate \$447,000. That project was exhaustive and included rebuilding the foundation. In an attempt to move the project forward but stay within the \$447,000 budget, the town decided to break the project into three phases. Phase 1 of that project was put out to bid and the low bid was around \$650,000. The complete project with all three phases would have easily cost more than \$1M. With all in agreement that we needed a different approach, the town reconfigured the project from a three-season facility to a more basic stabilization and repair effort. When the town put this stabilization and repair project out to bid with a base bid (and 11 alternates) to see how much work we could get done within the \$447,000 budget, the low base bid, plus three alternates, came back around \$210,000. However, the foundation work was not included in that \$210,000 and the CPA committee refused to support the project without the foundation receiving the work that the CPA believed it needed. Fast forward to 2019—as the condition of the barn was worsening, Dick Bennett approached the town about reconsidering the project. With the Mayor's approval, the barn committee, which consists of Marc Strange, Dick Bennett, Henry Kozloski, David Cecchi, Jill Messick and Jen Bonfiglio reconvened to consider ways to preserve the barn within an acceptable budget. A building evaluation was conducted in October, 2019 by Timber Point Building Co. That evaluation concluded that repairs should be addressed before any more significant degradation to the structure occurs. The town also reconnected with Crosskey Architects. Crosskey also re-evaluated the building and recommended restoration services to prevent any further deterioration. The Barn committee ultimately decided that a stabilization and repair project was the best way to move forward; so Crosskey was asked to create a scope of work—with the Barn committee's input--and a budget for the repairs that were needed to the

wooden structure and for three different foundation options—full replacement, stabilize/repair/preserve, and stabilize/monitor.

The Base Bid cost estimate came in at \$247,200. The Foundation estimates came in as follows: \$482,100 (full replacement), \$303,800 (stabilize/repair/preserve), and \$16,400 (stabilize/monitor). The Barn committee reviewed these bids with Mayor Sapelli and the majority opinion was that requesting funding for the Base Bid, plus the stabilize/monitor foundation option was the most prudent course of action. After choosing the base bid with foundation option 2, the total estimated construction is \$248,300.

With this application, the Committee is requesting funding in the amount of \$329,530 to stabilize and restore the School Street Barn. These funds will pay for the Base Bid including the Stabilize/Monitor Foundation Option described in the Scope of Work provided by Crosskey Architects along with a 10% contingency (\$24,830) and \$56,400 for Crosskey Architects' services. The scope of work is reviewed with the CPA committee

In an effort to mitigate the cost, the Town is applying for a Mass Historical Commission grant through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund. The grant is a state-funded 50% reimbursable matching grant program to support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites (cultural resources) listed in the State Register of Historic Places. The maximum grant award is \$100,000. The grant application deadline is March 20th. The grant schedule is provided to the committee.

Member Tingley asks what kind of data there is to support the conditions assessment report. Marc states there is a letter updating the assessment in the CPA application dated March 3, 2020.

Member Baldwin asks how confidence is there in receiving the grant. Jen Bonfiglio and Marc Strange both attended the grant workshop and feel that since this the second application there is a very good chance.

Member Ronghi asks what material is being used. He is advised the barn is historical and any and all work and material must comply with the Secretary of Interiors Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties.

Member Ronghi asked about electric service. Jennifer stated the Town would do the electrical service.

Member Maggi asks why the cost was so high for general requirements. Marc and Jen both explain contractors are not that hungry for work and also prevailing wages apply.

Member Maggi questions why the foundation is not being addressed. He feels the work being done is cosmetic. He has been opposed to the project in the past and feels there is no solid direction to save the barn. He states it is an old building that serves no public purpose except being on the historical inventory. He does not believe there is a public benefit to doing the project.

Marc states he understands it is a tough project. \$1,000,000 is needed to get the project to the original goal. It is a Town owned building and significant to the history of the Town. The options presented tonight are to preserve the building at a cost of \$250,000.

Member Maggi adds that the CPA committee was criticized recently for wasting money and the purpose of awarding CPA funds is to serve the public.

Member Baldwin asks if the Town does nothing what is the outcome. Marc states the wooden structure will fail before the roof. He adds the barn is an icon of the Town and is the photograph people first see when visiting the Town's website.

Member Moreau asks if the foundation is sinking. Marc states that has not been reported but would defer to the experts. Member Moreau also asks if the barn has been used for storage. Marc states it was recently cleaned out, although it was used for 100 years as storage and will continue to be. If it was not on the National Register of historic places, this would not be an issue.

Member Tingley states the true value of the barn is in the wooden structure and its history. He feels it doesn't seem like a lot of money to preserve the barn and to bring it to a safe level but asks if we could use resources in town to preserve it. He also states he would prefer to see the barn left alone.

Member Russo states the original plan was to open the barn for educational opportunities and we have gotten away from that. Marc Strange states that option includes opening it to the public and is too expensive.

Jen Bonfiglio states we cannot open the barn to the public unless the full scope of work is completed.

Chair Kozloski reiterates the proposed scope will not allow the barn to be open the public because it will not be handicap accessible.

Member Ronghi states the committee all agrees not a lot has changed since the last application to CPA. He feels if there is a way to restore or repair the barn a workshop with the historical commission and city council would drive it. He questions if the barn was to be restored, what would it look like with no compromise. He questions if the town could petition the state for a variance form handicap accessibility requirements.

Member Ronghi also asks what the public benefit is. He feels the proposed scope is a municipal benefit only. He questions whether the proposed workshop could result in bonding for the project so that it is completed properly. He states the Historical Commission should explain the value of the barn further and a council workshop should include their input.

Member Maggi asks if it would make sense to do the barn properly at a higher cost and suggests approaching the city council for buy-in as well as seek donations, corporate and private. He feels the current proposal is a temporary fix.

Member Ronghi states the committee would be compromising to do the suggested repairs only because the barn would still not be functional. He feels the town should embrace the full scope and cost should be secondary.

Marc Strange states to the committee, the Town is in front of the CPA to request funding which would enable the Town to apply for a grant.

Jen Suggests increasing the funding request to cover the full scope of work which allow the Town to apply for the grant and provide time to schedule a workshop with the council.

Chair Kozloski opens the meeting to the public.

Dick Bennett, Barn Advisory Committee Member and former CPA member states he has spent over 15 years on the preservation of the barn. He states this project will restore the entire wooden structure exactly as is with no changes. The foundation is only \$434,000, but too expensive to complete now. It can be done at a later date without undoing the current work. He states the deterioration is continuing and it is critical to save the wooden structure now.

Member Ronghi questions the future use and states the public benefit is what matters. He also would like the city council to assist in the decision. He stated he would rather not fund this application now even if missing out on the grant. CPA has plenty of money to bond and fund the project the right way.

Chair Kozloski suggested voting on the project contingent on the grant.

Member Baldwin states the barn has been before the committee many times. There are many divisive factors and she does not see us getting any further. There is a wide divide and she would like to see it kept as a barn. Member Ronghi motions to table the agenda item and take it under consideration with the council and historical commission. Second by Member Moreau. All in favor.

4. Motion by Member Maggi to reserve \$6,523.96 from the FY2020 undesignated fund balance to the Open Space fund as a result of surplus funds from the state. Second by Member Prouty. All in favor.
Motion by Member Ronghi to reserve \$6,523.96 from the FY2020 undesignated fund balance to the Historical Resource fund as a result of surplus funds from the state. Second by Member Baldwin. All in favor.
Motion by Member Prouty to reserve \$6,523.96 from the FY2020 undesignated fund balance to the Community Housing fund as a result of surplus funds from the state. Second by Member Baldwin. All in favor.
Motion by Member Russo to reserve \$42,405.71 from the FY2020 undesignated fund balance to the Budgeted Reserve fund as a result of surplus funds from the state. Second by Member Moreau. All in favor.
Motion by Member Maggi to reserve \$3,261.98 from the FY2020 undesignated fund balance to the Administrative fund as a result of surplus funds from the state. Second by Member Russo. All in favor.
5. Motion to table CPA application review by Member Baldwin. Second buy Member Moreau. All in favor.
6. Motion to adjourn at 6:32 by Member Baldwin. Second by Member Ronghi. All in favor.
Chairman Kozloski closed the meeting.