

1/14/22 VCLN Workshop - Chat

ARPA And Your Town - Getting Involved and Maximizing the Opportunity

David White : David White with White + Burke Real Estate Advisors

Ann Lawless : Ann Lawless, Wheelock Selectboard

Molly Stone : Molly Stone, Bradford VT

Barry King : Barry and Warren King, Ripton VT

Patty Eisenhour : Patty Eisenhour - One Londonderry Housing Group

Jeff Forward : Jeff Forward, Richmond, VT

Nick Kramer : Here's a link to the workshop library on our website:

<https://www.vtrural.org/leadership/workshops/library>

Shane O'Keefe : Shane O'Keefe, Londonderry Town Administrator

Rachel Onuf : Rachel Onuf, Vermont Historical Records Program at VT State Archives & Records Administration

John Burton : John Burton - Chair of South Burlington Economic Development Committee

Nick Kramer : And here's a link to the Community Leadership guide: <https://www.vtrural.org/leadership/guide>

John Bennett, Windham Regional Commission : John Bennett, Windham Regional Commission

Marcey Carver : Marcey Carver, Bradford Planning Commission

Dare Chamings : Dare Chamings, Bennington

Eric Lineback : Eric Lineback, Dummerston Energy Committee Chair, DVFiber town representative

Justin Will : Justin Will, Vershire, VT. VerShare Community Development, Town Energy Committee. Small business owner.

Jeff Forward : That statistic needs to get out there. Totally unacceptable.

Bob Farnham : Remember to mute please.

Vince O'Connell : Are there any restrictions on lost revenue spending?

Marcey Carver : how do you determine lost revenue?

Steven Isham : Can this money used to hire a energy coordinator?

Rae Washburn : Do we need to document \$10m loss or is it as you say a standard deduction?

Bree Drapa - Westford Public Library : Will these slide be available to share with our community?

Jeff Forward : Really presentation. Can we get those slides?

Nick Kramer : We'll definitely share the slides afterwards

Jeff Forward : Loss revenue may be easy. However, it is not very transparent and I fear it undercuts the integrity of local government.

Jeff Forward : This loss revenue path, seems like squandering this opportunity.

Ted Brady : Jeff, I agree that it creates an opportunity to make a mistake, that's why we continue to encourage folks to take it slow, be thoughtful, engage, and focus on those three key things: good governance, leveraging your funding, and long-term recovery!

Jeff Forward : I really like the slide that discusses responsible ways to think about this money. I hope to stress that approach on my local ARPA committee.

Ted Brady : Here's a link to the State's allocation table for the Local Fiscal Recovery Fund:

https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Ffinance.vermont.gov%2Fsites%2Ffinance%2Ffiles%2Fdocuments%2FAbout_Dept%2FLocal%2520Fiscal%2520Recovery%2520Payments.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

Jeff Forward : Are the agreements that St. Albans drew up for these grants and loans available for other towns to use as templates. This could save on legal fees.

Jon Copans : <https://jerichovt.org/>

Jeff Forward : Really cool projects. St. Albans may have more administrative capacity to develop and administer some of these ideas. It is difficult for me to imagine my small rural community to own and maintain a commercial space. we have enough difficulty maintaining the buildings we already own.

Ann Lawless, Wheelock, also HEAT Squad NEK : Inspiring, Dominic. Thnx! Hoping to hear more from small towns about annual policy/goal setting sessions and resources for capital needs assessments. Would love to see some examples from very small towns around pop. 750.

Jon Copans : Here is a link to Jericho's survey site - <https://jerichovt.org/arpa-funding-priorities>

Heather Moore : Thank you for sharing!

Jeff Forward : Did you collect any demographic information from respondents?

Esther Fishman : Do you think you were getting responses to your survey from across your population? Or, from the folks who are more outspoken ?

Katherine Sonnick -Town of Jericho : We are able to collect that data through the website, but the Selectboard wanted to keep the survey takers identities anonymous.

Ann Lawless, Wheelock, also HEAT Squad NEK : John, What % of your citizens use the internet? Are you taking any steps to reach non users and integrate print responses into Bang the Table work. Thank you for the inspiration!

Katherine Sonnick -Town of Jericho : We did print up the survey for anyone who wanted to take it in that form. We had 2 residents take the survey that way.

Jeff Forward : Average age 78?

Jeff Forward : And Nick brings down that average.

john Abbott : Thanks for answering re: survey distribution alternatives Katherine. Not sure about percentage of internet users in Jericho? I do know that the number of households without broadband is relatively small. We are seemingly unable to join a CUD to address this and are considering whether the "juice will be worth the squeeze" should we have to reach last milers on our own?

Ted Brady : Great to see folks. I unfortunately need to jump to the next Zoom! Stay safe and warm this weekend...

Jeff Forward : Thank you so much Ted.

Alexis Leacock : Fabulous informative presentations! Thank you.

Susan Houston : These gatherings are so useful.

Bree Drapa - Westford Public Library : Would VLCT be willing to make a "digital clearinghouse" for all the different towns/committees to send their documents (surveys, plans, etc.) for others to look at and use?

Susan Houston : Thank you!

Ann Lawless, Wheelock, also HEAT Squad NEK : Carl, On Craftsbury's advice, Wheelock purchased OWL technology for about \$1,000. We felt it was ARPA eligible.

Heather Moore : Enosburg bought an OWL, laptop, and TV for hybrid meetings

Rae Washburn : Moretown did too.

Deirdre Holmes : In trying to reach people in need for a weatherization program we are using the grand list for targeted mailings. I don't know how successful that approach will be. It would be nice to offer compensation to those in need for time spent attending meetings.

Valerie Capels - Bristol : So did Bristol, but we have not decided to use ARPA funds for it (yet).

Alison Joseph Dickinson : Ripton ordered an OWL, and sent \$25,000 to the Maple Broadband CUD.

Ann Lawless, Wheelock, also HEAT Squad NEK : You set up OWL in an in-person hybrid meeting, about 6' away from the table with the selectboard members and other in person meeting visitors. You connect the OWL to the laptop of the person running the meeting. The OWL zeroes in on each person speaking, including the visitors commenting. Everyone attending by Zoom from home can see all the speakers. What we don't have is a big screen TV so the others in the room can see all the other Zoom participants.

Patricia M Sears : MANY THANKS for the tips re the OWL technology. CHEERS

Stephanie Bonin, Brattleboro : Use your Everyone Eats distribution sites as a community bulletin board: give them a flyer to add to each meal.

Patricia M Sears : A big challenge remains in engaging the Select Boards' Members when they are not jazzed about having community members participate in how to spend the \$\$ when they feel they are the experts. Is there a msg from VLCT that we can amplify in our advocacy to participate w/Select Board?

Esther Fishman : Great question Patricia. I'd love to hear some wisdom about this

Steven Isham : One thing to do is run for Selectboard ourselves

Jeff Forward : Hybrid meetings have been one of the bright spots during the pandemic. I hope they continue beyond.

Patricia M Sears : We have at least 4 SBs who refuse to do remote/hybrid mtgs.

Patricia M Sears : THANK YOU so much for sharing, Alice Peal.

Jeff Forward : How will the ARPA money line up with the federal infrastructure money? Should we wait to see how that infrastructure money plays out?

Heather Moore : When will we have more information on the rules around the revenue loss option for the ARPA funds? Will we be able to include that in our budgets are being voted on in March?

Ann Lawless, Wheelock, also HEAT Squad NEK : To Trish Sears' comment: Can clerks and treasurers be advocates for remote meetings? Generally they have computers and skills. Some have young, unvaccinated children who are more at risk. I think we need to find resources to train community leaders in internet skills and provide them computers. Of course, some might not want this.

Jeff Forward : MMCTV is awesome

Susan Houston : Craftsbury has two community members be the tech people to keep hybrid meetings go smoothly.

Patricia M Sears : Keep in mind our SBs have had the same SB members for 20+ years bc of familial power to whip elections.

Patricia M Sears : How can we amplify VLCT messaging to SBs to include community members? What are their messages?

Rae Washburn : Been on sb for over 20 years and I have only been opposed maybe 3 times. I don't consider myself a whipper.

Ann Lawless, Wheelock, also HEAT Squad NEK : In defense of selectboards, there is a TON of work to do to just manage the daily routine. Sometimes there's hiring road crew members and dealing with contracts. It is understandable to try to keep the work going smoothly and to a minimum. I believe most small town selectboards need help transitioning to more of a strategic model. I believe most SB members are doing the best job they can given how they think of the role.

Patricia M Sears : Good point Rae. THANKS

Rae Washburn : spot on Ann. thanks

Patricia M Sears : THANK YOU, Justin. Needed that reminder.

Nick Kramer : One small thought re. approaching SBs--public, full board meetings aren't the only way to engage. No violation of Open Meeting law to send a personal email or give a phone call. Sometimes that can be a lower-stakes, lower-time pressure way to share an idea or a thought, and plant the seed of an idea that can make its way into the public process.

Patty Eisenhour : Community members are sensitive to using town funds on infrastructure projects that may benefit just a few. Example: sewer and flood mitigation may only benefit village centers. Because ARPA funds are coming from the Fed, (vs resident property taxes) funds may be best deployed for these type of projects. Curious how towns are feeling about this?

Patricia M Sears : TY, Nick. We're doing that. Still would like to know more about what VLCT is doing to advocate for community involvement so we can align with that, too. THANKS

Brian Lowe : Great work, Jon!

Jennifer Stromsten : thank you this was terrific

Ann Lawless, Wheelock, also HEAT Squad NEK : Thank you all - great session!

Nancy Gondella : Lots of good information here. Thank you for the presentation.

Steven Isham : Very helpful. Thanks Jon, et. al.

karen davis : Thank you- this was extremely valuable

Carolyn Stevens : Thank you - so many great ideas!

Jeff Forward : Great session Jon and Nick and Brian. VCRD is such a valuable resource. Thank you so much.

Vince O'Connell : Thanks!

John Burton : Great session. Good to network with everyone.

Nicole Draper Swanton VT : Thank you

Jeffrey Gephart : Thanks!

Heather Moore : Thank you!