

Recommendations to Corinth Selectboard from the ARPA Committee

May 17, 2022

The ARPA committee – John Haney, Steve Long, Anne Margolis, and Mike Pittman – has been meeting since January to come up with recommendations to the Selectboard for possible uses of the \$425,970 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Our February letter to the town's residents produced a remarkable response that demonstrated the strength of people's commitments to this town. From the more than 100 responses, most of them with multiple suggestions, we were able to combine them into a list of 78 ideas for projects.

We developed a scorecard for the projects, which helped us narrow it down to 38 projects that we determined were eligible and feasible and couldn't be accomplished with existing funds. We also held a public forum to hear further input from residents. We weighed all the input and scored the projects based on a number of criteria including implementation burden, sustainability, percentage of Corinthians benefitting, and whether the project would help relieve an anticipated future tax burden.

The committee makes the following recommendations to the Selectboard. We have proposed budgeted amounts for some of the items, but we weren't able to ascertain costs for others. We recognize that we are leaving the Selectboard with considerable work to juggle projects and costs as they seek to use this windfall most effectively. We hope that we have given them adequate guidance from the community as filtered through our committee. Funds need to be committed by December 31, 2024, and spent by December 31, 2026.

Town Hall weatherization and energy efficiency

Commission an updated energy audit and implement the recommendations. Note: VLCT and Efficiency Vermont have a program to offset costs of an audit. Additional funds for the audit and for implementation of recommendations will likely become available with the anticipated passage of H. 518 of 2022, *An act related to municipal energy resilience initiatives*.

Jaws of life and trailer unit for Corinth Volunteer Fire Department. (Recommend investment not to exceed \$43,600.)

Town Hall repairs (Recommend \$70,000.)

Take care of deferred maintenance, including covering the handicap ramp, replace gutters, siding, paint, etc.). Note: Town has ~\$60k in capital reserve fund. Combined with ARPA funds, it can leverage possible grant funding from VT Arts Council and VT Historic Preservation.

Town Hall heating system switch to heat pumps for heating/cooling

Note: The energy audit discussed above will include recommendations for heating/cooling systems, in addition to efficiency and weatherization, and will include estimated costs and benefits to help inform this item.

Town garage addition to provide heated space for equipment. (Note: pending further detail.)

Welcome signs on highways entering town. (Recommend \$2,000.)

Two on Route 25. One on Chelsea Road at Vershire line and one on Goose Green Road at Bradford line.

Potential matching funds to support New Corinthians' effort to renovate the Masonic Hall in East Corinth, turning it into a community center.

We recommend that the Selectboard holds onto \$50,000 while it monitors progress in the renovation. If and when the board sees sufficient progress, the \$50,000 could be used as a challenge grant for attracting other funding from the community.

Blake Memorial Library. (Recommend up to \$20,000.)

Backup generator or equivalent capacity but non-emitting battery storage system through available utility programs, and equipment storage shed.

Recreational enhancements to the Fairgrounds on Fairground Road. (Recommend up to \$50,000)

Northeast Slopes. (Recommend donation of \$25,000.)

To help ensure the longevity of the kids' ski program.

Replace Hedgehog Brook bridge (Note: confirm estimate with road foreman.)

Document existing wells and septic systems in East Corinth as first step toward feasibility study of municipal septic system (Recommend \$6,650.)

In the event that ARPA funds remain uncommitted in September 2024, we recommend that the Selectboard solicit proposals from organizations for projects that would benefit from funding and that the organizations can implement by 2026.

Our committee is grateful for the strong response from the community to the request for ideas. We recommend the Selectboard, town committees, and any interested volunteers refer to the full list of ideas posted on the town website as they consider how to invest future time and resources into improving our town.

Proposed Ideas for use of ARPA Funds	Average Score
Town Hall weatherization & efficiency (commission updated energy audit, implement recommendations)	24.5
Equipment and vehicle funding for Corinth Fire Department (\$35,600 for trailer unit and jaws of life)	24
Town Hall repairs (entryway, gutters, siding, paint, etc.)	22.5
Town Hall fuel-switching/decarbonization (heat pump for heating/cooling)	22
Town garage: upgrading	21
Welcome signage/beautification	18.5
Fix up Mason lodge, turn into community center with classes, afterschool programming	18
Library (backup generator/battery, storage shed....)	17.5
Ballfield enhancements (pizza oven, tents, recreation)	17.5
Fund kids ski program at NE Slopes	17.5
Repair Hedgehog Brook bridge	17.5
Document existing wells and septic systems in East Corinth as first step toward feasibility study of municipal septic system	17.5
Support to food shelves, Safeline, etc.	17
Funding community organizations	17
Solar array to benefit Town of Corinth, possibly library and town garage too	16.5
Emergency shelter (including potential generator/battery for library)	16.5
Town Hall enhancements (remote worker space, office space expansion, parking, kitchen renovations for personal or small business food ventures)	16
Town forest maintenance, trail expansion	16
Compensate Town Health Officer & Town Service Officer	16
Expand hotspots and/or prepare hotspots for fiber and retrofit spaces for remote access (suggest \$5k)	15.5
Outdoor pavilion(s) (ballfield, library, town forest)	15.5
Corinth rec field: basketball & tennis courts, mountain biking trails, dog park, ice-skating pavilion (possibly at NE slopes) (with gift of land)	15.5
Playground	15.5
Support for a licensed daycare	15.5
Technology to calibrate salt distribution	15.5
Get emergency communication system on town property/under town control, maybe expand to cell tower	15
Support to animal shelter(s)	15
EV charging stations, potentially solar-powered, ideally at town public buildings	14.5
Swap shop	14.5

Disk golf course (WRVS, town forest, NE slopes - est. \$25K)	13
One-time bonus to town employees	13
Preschool - build facility or otherwise support (could combine with after-school)	12.5
After-school programs - build facility or otherwise support (could combine with preschool), including free summer & after-school enrichment	12.5
Purchase store, potentially demolish and replace with public amenity such as picnic/swimming area, park, garden, afterschool spot, community meeting area, parking for tourists, or build multi-family housing	12.5
Pave Fairground Rd. near fire dept. (\$160K)	11.5