

ARPA Committee

Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 12.19.22 11:00 AM
Held via ZOOM - meeting ID 840 0009 8365

Members

Diane Beebe	Joseph Pryor
Heather Dinneen	Joyce Hart for Elizabeth Russ
Barbara Herbst	Gordon Ridgway, First Selectman
Jennifer Markow (not present)	

Others

Richard Bramley, Treasurer
Gini Block, Cornwall Housing Corporation
Some members of The Little Guild board

1

Review Funding

Barbara Herbst reported ARPA funding has been received as follows.

	6.2.21	\$201,542.34
	8.11.22	\$69,266.08
	10.4.22	\$132,276.26
Total ARPA funding received		\$403,084.68
Total ARPA funding released		\$223,670.00
ARPA funding to be released or allocated		\$179,414.68

2

Review New Requests

i Food and Fuel Fund

It was noted that at the 8.25.22 meeting, a grant in the amount of \$25,000 was approved to the Cornwall Food and Fuel Fund. Said grant has been disbursed.

A new request in the amount of \$38,000 was put forth verbally by Heather Dinneen, Cornwall Social Services Director.

General discussion was contemporaneous and included the following topics.

- a) Substantial increase in fuel prices over the prior heating season.
- b) One local vendor is no longer participating in the state program for fuel assistance.
- c) Getting delinquent households on payment plans with the electric company requires a large down payment of the open balance.
- d) This season, 80 applications have been submitted to the state program and funding is needed as a bridge while these applications are being processed.
- e) In addition to the \$25,000 grant approved on 8.25.22, the Food and Fuel fund received a grant of \$15,000 as approved on 4.4.22.

ii Cornwall Housing Corporation

It was noted that at the 8.25.22 meeting, a grant in the amount of \$100,000 was approved to the Cornwall Housing Corporation. Said grant has not been disbursed, pending receipt of the balance of funding from the Federal Treasury.

The committee asked for an update from the Cornwall Housing Corporation

- a) Lack of affordable housing is at a critical status in Cornwall.
- b) Predevelopment and construction costs remain prohibitive for individuals to create housing.
- c) CHC has begun discussions regarding options for creating an Acquisition Fund for affordable housing. It is a goal to engage local businesses and county stakeholders in this process.

Motion

G Ridgway Made a motion to release the previously approved 100,000 grant to Cornwall Housing Corporation.

B Herbst Seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously

iii Little Guild

The Board of Selectmen received a request for ARPA funding from the Little Guild to support creation of a new facility. The Board of Selectmen referred the request to this committee, said request is appended to these minutes.

ARPA Committee

The request was presented by their Treasurer which included an overview of the new facility as well as the many benefits the Little Guild brings to the local community.

General discussion was contemporaneous with the presentation and included the following topics.

- a) Other or additional fundraising measures undertaken or to be undertaken.
- b) Options to creating a few facility.
- c) Keeping The Little Guild in Cornwall.
- d) The Little Guild currently providing space to the Town of Cornwall for the dog pound.

iv **Greenwoods Counseling Referrals**

It was noted that through the original disbursement process where requests were solicited, Greenwoods (a local NFP) was awarded a grant in the amount of \$4,031 to help create a program that can address and combat the opioid crisis in the Northwest CT towns. On 4.14.22 Greenwoods was awarded an additional \$5,000 to help fund continuation of this new program and support their general operations as a mental health resources and as mental health providers that serve all individuals regardless of their ability to pay for services.

A new request in the amount of \$5,000 was put forth verbally by Heather Dinneen, Cornwall Social Services Director.

General discussion was contemporaneous and included the following topics.

- a) What services Greenwoods provides to individuals in our community.
- b) Greenwoods as a resource for our Social Services Department.
- c) The opioid crisis in the NW corner of CT.

General discussion of the three new requests included the following topics.

- a) Balance of ARPA funding to be allocated after release of the \$100K to Cw. Housing Corp.
- b) The three new requests are a combined total of \$78,000.
- c) Considerations relevant to disbursement of all the remaining funding .

Motion

B Herbst

Made a motion to approve three grants as follows;
\$5,000 to Greenwoods upon recommendation of the Social Services Director, Heather Dinneen.
\$35,000 to the Little Guild to help fund creatin on a new facility per their request.
\$38,000 to the Cornwall Food and fuel fund to subsidize residents in need of fuel assistance.

G Ridgway

Seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously

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Public Comment

Adjourn

Members of The Little Guild expressed their sincere thanks.

12:15 PM

Minutes recorded by: Barbara E. Herbst

Minutes remain "Draft" until accepted at the next regular scheduled meeting, please see subsequent meeting minutes for any corrections to these minutes.

**Town of Cornwall
12.19.22 ARPA Disbursement
report**

1	03/24/2022	80321	Cornwall Inn & Lodge	ARPA Grant 2-403085	12,968.00
2	03/24/2022	80322	Cornwall Child Center	ARPA Grant 1-403085	15,000.00
3	03/24/2022	80323	Greenwoods Counseling Referrals	ARPA Grant 7-403085	4,031.00
4	03/24/2022	80324	Cornwall Historical Society	ARPA Grant 9-403085	6,000.00
5	03/24/2022	80325	Cornwall Library	ARPA Grant 11-403085	15,000.00
6	03/24/2022	80326	HVA - Housatonic Valley Associati	ARPA Grant 10-403085	3,034.00
7	03/24/2022	80327	HYSB - Housatonic Youth Service E	ARPA Grant 8-403085	15,000.00
8	03/24/2022	80328	The Little Guild	ARPA Grant 6-403085	15,000.00
9	03/24/2022	80329	NW CT Arts Council	APRA Grant 5-403085	4,031.00
10	03/24/2022	80330	West Cornwall Public Library	ARPA Grant 3-403085	5,000.00
11	03/24/2022	80331	United Church of Christ	ARPA Grant 4-403085	8,900.00
12	04/14/2022	80368	Friedman, Robert A	ARPA grant 12-403085 (4,200.00
13	04/14/2022	80369	Cornwall Food and Fuel Fund	ARPA grant 13-403085	15,000.00
14	04/14/2022	80370	Wish House	ARPA grant 14-403085	8,700.00
15	04/14/2022	80371	Chore Service	ARPA grant 15-403085	10,000.00
16	04/14/2022	80372	Greenwoods Counseling Referrals	ARPA Grant 16-403085	5,000.00
17	04/14/2022	80373	Bonney Brook	ARPA Grant 17-403085	6,806.00
18	08/04/2022	80789	Barrett, Tom	service honorarium	400.00
19	08/04/2022	80766	Beebe, Diane	service honorarium	1,200.00
20	08/04/2022	80767	Berry, Jonathan M	service honorarium	1,200.00
21	08/04/2022	80790	Berry, William D	service honorarium	1,200.00
22	08/04/2022	80791	Bevans, John	service honorarium	400.00
23	08/04/2022	80788	Bigos, Barbara	service honorarium	400.00
24	08/04/2022	80887	Bottom, Stephana	service honorarium	400.00
25	08/04/2022	80792	Bouteiller*, Jean D	service honorarium	400.00
26	08/04/2022	80768	Burke, Terry	service honorarium	1,200.00
27	08/04/2022	80793	Cadwell, David B.	service honorarium	400.00
28	08/04/2022	80812	Carano, Mike	service honorarium	1,200.00
29	08/04/2022	80795	Cheney, Ted	service honorarium	400.00
30	08/04/2022	80769	Dinneen, Garrick	service honorarium	1,200.00
31	08/04/2022	80770	Dinneen, Heather	service honorarium	1,200.00
32	08/04/2022	80796	Dinneen, Vera L	service honorarium	400.00
33	08/04/2022	80797	Dodge*, JoAnne D	service honorarium	400.00
34	08/04/2022	80798	Dolan, Richie	service honorarium	400.00
35	08/04/2022	80799	Dzenutis, Ralph J.	service honorarium	400.00
36	08/04/2022	80800	Griswold-Nelson*, Karen M	service honorarium	400.00
37	08/04/2022	80817	Hall, Jane	service honorarium	200.00
38	08/04/2022	80771	Hart, Joyce	service honorarium	1,200.00
39	08/04/2022	80773	Hedden Connie	service honorarium	1,200.00
40	08/04/2022	80772	Hedden, D. Stevenson	service honorarium	1,200.00
41	08/04/2022	80801	Herbst, Barbara	service honorarium	400.00
42	08/04/2022	80802	Johnson, Kayla B.	service honorarium	400.00
43	08/04/2022	80774	Kosciusko, Skip	service honorarium	1,200.00
44	08/04/2022	80803	Kotchoubey, Marina A	service honorarium	400.00
45	08/04/2022	80775	LaPorta, John (Great Hollow)	service honorarium	1,200.00

**Town of Cornwall
12.19.22 ARPA Disbursement
report**

46	08/04/2022	80776	Larson Ted	service honorarium	1,600.00
47	08/04/2022	80777	Lindholm, Patience	service honorarium	1,200.00
48	08/04/2022	80820	MacNeil, Roderick J.	service honorarium	1,200.00
49	08/04/2022	80805	Malahan Jr., John A	service honorarium	400.00
50	08/04/2022	80778	Markow, Jennifer ~	service honorarium	1,200.00
51	08/04/2022	80806	Preston, Jack	service honorarium	400.00
52	08/04/2022	80807	Prindle, Paul	service honorarium	400.00
53	08/04/2022	80779	Ridgway, Gordon	service honorarium	1,200.00
54	08/04/2022	80780	Ridgway, Ian	service honorarium	1,200.00
55	08/04/2022	80781	Ridgway, Jayne	service honorarium	1,600.00
56	08/04/2022	80782	Ridgway, Rebecca	service honorarium	1,200.00
57	08/04/2022	80811	Ridgway, Elizabeth	service honorarium	1,200.00
58	08/04/2022	80813	Russ, Will	service honorarium	1,200.00
59	08/04/2022	80783	Saccardi, Steve	service honorarium	1,200.00
60	08/04/2022	80808	Scoville II, Frederick R	service honorarium	400.00
61	08/04/2022	80784	Scoville, Fred ~	service honorarium	1,200.00
62	08/04/2022	80785	Sears, Richard	service honorarium	1,200.00
63	08/04/2022	80809	Slaven, Jessica	service honorarium	400.00
64	08/04/2022	80814	Tyler, Earle	service honorarium	1,200.00
65	08/04/2022	80786	Tyson, Josh	service honorarium	1,200.00
66	08/04/2022	80787	Vanicky*, James R	service honorarium	1,600.00
67	08/04/2022	80794	Weigold, Cara	service honorarium	400.00
68	08/04/2022	80810	Whitford, Robert G	service honorarium	400.00
69	08/04/2022	80815	Williamson, David	service honorarium	1,200.00
70	08/25/2022	80888	Cornwall Food and Fuel Fund	ARPA allocation to Food	25,000.00
					223,670.00

Dear Board of Selectmen,

The effects of Covid 19 for the Little Guild have been far reaching: our staffing, fundraising, rate of adoptions and surrenders have all been affected, and we have responded to a substantial increase in need for additional support to pet owners in the community.

Staffing:

The Little Guild has a small staff of 9 full-time and 2 part-time employees. The animal care staff are essential workers with animals needing care 365 days a year. This has presented challenges throughout covid. In 2020 we had two staff cases of covid including that of our shelter manager; In 2021 we had another three cases of covid amongst the staff. We also had several staff members who had been exposed to the virus; following CDC guidelines at the time this resulted in those staff members having to quarantine. In 2022, we've had five staff cases of covid infections and additional instances of close exposure. With such a small staff, every prolonged absence due to covid infection or exposure resulted in the remaining staff having to work overtime, increasing our payroll costs and stretching thin our staff's efforts.

Fundraising:

The Little Guild is a 501(c) 3 with approximately 75% of our annual operating budget coming from adoption fees, donations and fundraising. Covid halted much of our fundraising efforts in 2020, and we were unable to hold our biggest annual fundraiser, The Great Country Mutt Show. Additionally, the annual Run & Wag 5K Race was held virtually, as were several adoption events, resulting in lower donations and participation.

Community Support In Keeping Pets In Their Homes:

Covid continues to affect animal welfare far beyond adoptions and surrenders of animals. The Little Guild has been asked to provide much more than adoption services. Emergency or temporary housing for pets of families in crisis, food and medical assistance to keep animals in their home, and community engagement in education and training are a much larger part of the work our communities now need.

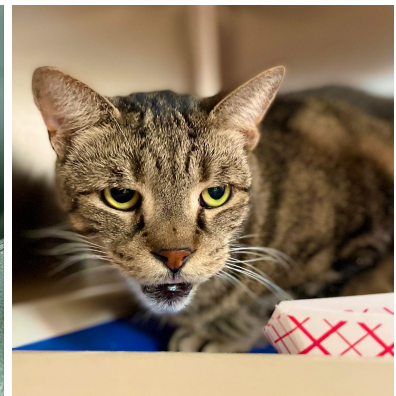


Pet owners are struggling to keep animals in their homes with the challenges of moving and returning to work, especially with the increase in inflation. The Little Guild has a Pet Pantry on site that offers free cat and dog food and supplies for pet owners in need. To address the increased need during covid over the last year, we also now partner with Friendly Hands Food Bank to distribute pet food and supplies to pet owners in need once a month in Torrington. We estimate 1,000 additional pet owners are supported through the monthly Pet Pantry events. Additionally, we host a free vaccination event, as well as no-cost spay and neuter vouchers to financially struggling pet owners. With the increase in need we plan to hold the free vaccination clinic twice a year going forward rather than annually.

With the return to working in the office, we've had pet owners seeking help in training their dogs to accommodate their back to work change in schedule and the consequent rise in anxiety for animals. In response we've instituted a low-cost dog training program for community members, and a no-cost dog training program for Little Guild adopters and Cornwall Town Residents. Countless pets stay in homes with their families due to these efforts which is as important as adopting out new pets. We also partner with Susan B. Anthony Project and Women's Support Services to assist their clients in crisis by taking care of their pets, this program was utilized for the first time in years during the covid 19 crisis.

Adoptions and Surrenders:

Even with the Little Guild closed to the public due to covid beginning in March 2020, in the fourth quarter of that year our adoptions rose significantly, totalling 93 adoptions from September through December, compared with 49 in the fourth quarter of 2021. The spike in covid adoptions for stay at home families began to reverse in 2021 - a national phenomenon. After the rise of adoptions during the latter part of 2020, adoptions declined in 2021 and have continued to fall in 2022 thus far. At the same time surrenders have continued to increase. In 2020 we had 26 surrenders, in 2021 that number almost doubled to 50 surrenders, and in 2022 we've already had 44 surrenders this year. The majority of the surrendered animals have behavioral and/or medical issues. In fulfilling our mission to rescue homeless cats and dogs and place them in caring homes in our community the road tends to be longer with surrendered animals, increasing veterinary care, staff care, training efforts and the length of time an animal stays at the Little Guild. The result has been an increase in our operating costs and a decrease in our adoption revenue.



This is not unique to the Little Guild: According to Best Friends Animal Society adoptions were down 3.7% and intakes were up 5.9% in 2021 compared to 2020, with the trend continuing into 2022. Best Friends reported 100,000 more shelter pets being at risk of euthanasia this year compared to last year. They also commissioned a survey that showed that 59 percent of people currently considering adopting a pet from a shelter said they were putting the plan on hold over concerns of returning to the office or starting a new job.

A New Facility Here In Cornwall:

There are many challenges for the Little Guild in providing our programs, but by-far the greatest is our current facility. For the last 30 years the Little Guild has operated out of a renovated house, which was not designed to sustain the wear and tear that an animal shelter inflicts, requiring substantial efforts from our staff in maintenance and repairs. The kennel's current state and configuration demand that the staff expend twice the hours in cleaning and it doesn't allow for quarantining. This severely limits the aid we can offer other shelters and individuals in need, and leaves us at the potential risk for disease transmission amongst our own dog population. There are no viable noise reduction options for our poorly configured kennels, greatly increasing the anxiety of dogs that are often already traumatized, also adding to the difficulties for dogs who are in the shelter for extended lengths of time. The cat rooms are small interior spaces with limited ventilation and no exterior windows, so we use televised film loops featuring outdoor scenes to provide some degree of distraction and visual interest. Importantly, there is no area for community events or dog training. Training sessions ideally happen outside, but in inclement weather they must be held in the office of the Executive Director. There are no quiet spaces to introduce often anxious animals to their potential new families which is not ideal for a successful adoption. Meet-and-greet sessions with potential adopters occur in the small and busy lobby, as does animal welfare education for visiting schools.



The Little Guild Board of Directors has spent close to two years thoroughly researching the needs and possibilities for a new building. ARQ Architects, a national firm specializing in animal shelter design, was retained by the Little Guild for a preliminary concept design and cost estimate. The consulting firm of Danosky & Associates LLC was hired to conduct a pre-campaign feasibility study, which determined that a \$4 million budget could realistically be raised for a new facility. The Building Committee toured a number of animal

welfare facilities in Rhode Island, New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut, meeting with the executive directors of each shelter. The Committee also visited and reviewed many more shelters online.

We retained a consultant to prepare a financial assessment to evaluate the last four years of the Little Guild's financial metrics compared to other nonprofits, an exercise that has confirmed that we are properly positioned to proceed with a capital campaign and building project thanks to carefully imposed financial discipline, increased fundraising capacity, zero debt, and healthy fiscal reserves. In 2022 a Capital Campaign Committee was formed, and we have now raised over \$3 million toward our goal during the quiet phase of the campaign, which is ongoing. \$1.5 million of that amount comes from the generous support of the Robert Rosenheim Foundation, with the rest so far being raised through donations from a fully participating board, several family foundations, and a group of very supportive local donors.

The Little Guild's Building Committee refocused their efforts to keep the facility in Cornwall and are now not only confident that we can find a solution to build at our current site at 285 Sharon Goshen Turnpike in West Cornwall but that we'll be able to do so while maintaining operations in our existing building. This will allow us to continue to benefit from the strong community support the Town of Cornwall offers the Little Guild as well as to keep our base of local volunteers, who are integral to our successful operations.

In July 2022 the Building Committee retained the services of the Hamden-based architectural firm Silver, Petrucelli & Associates to design the shelter for our current site. They have done more animal shelters in Connecticut than any other firm and have already indicated that they expect to incorporate aspects of ARQ's work into their final plan. Several local and regional builders have been interviewed, and once a final selection has been made, we hope we should be able to start site preparation and construction in the first half of 2023 based on the success of our fundraising initiative. The new building will be simple, efficient and effective. The size and capacity of the new facility will not be increased materially as we have learned that through proper layout and configuration, prudent use of proportion and scale, and intelligent grouping of rooms and work areas a new building of equivalent or even somewhat smaller size can accommodate more animals as well as greatly improved workflow. The improved structure will offer a quieter, calmer and healthier environment for the animals, and while there may be only a modest increase in the number of kennels, their disposition and improved management protocols will present an opportunity to significantly expand the capacity to receive and place many more dogs as well as offering quarantine capabilities not presently possible. It is anticipated that we may be able to rescue and adopt out 50% more animals because a healthier environment will significantly reduce the amount of time an animal has to wait to be adopted. We are exploring constructing a green building, which would enable us to save on heating and cooling costs and thereby strengthen our long-term viability.

A new facility will have an amazingly positive impact on the animals we care for, the community we serve, and the residents of Cornwall. With a more efficient shelter we hope to expand programming including enhanced education and training activities. This year we've had the pleasure of welcoming and working with students from the Sharon Center School, Cornwall Consolidated School, Housatonic Regional High School, Litchfield School, the Cornwall Library's Children's Program as well as Girl Scout Troop 40007. In total, our organization

aids more than 2,000 members of the community annually. The new facility will have a large community room to host events for schools and local civic organizations.



We are confident that a newer, better Little Guild facility will serve as a central resource for everyone living in Cornwall, animals and humans alike. The Little Guild respectfully asks to apply for \$50,000 to \$75,000 of the ARPA funds awarded to the Town of Cornwall for the purpose of supporting the building of a new facility. On behalf of the organization please accept our sincere thanks for all that you have done for the Little Guild, and for your time and consideration of this most recent request.