

TO: Todd Odit, Town Manager  
Joy Dubin Grossman, Assistant Town Manager  
Select Board  
FM: Carl Bohlen, Committee Chair on behalf of the HAHC  
RE: HAHC FY24 Budget Request Follow Up  
DATE: January 13, 2023

The Hinesburg Affordable Housing Committee (HAHC) met on January 11 to discuss the reduction in our budget request from \$12,000 to \$5,000. We respectfully request that our budget request for FY24 be reconsidered and more fully funded as detailed below.

**Background:** The HAHC originally requested \$12,000 in an email on October 2, 2022 with \$10,000 of that for a Housing Fund, a fund originally proposed by Phil Pouech, and \$2,000 for general committee operating costs. We presented our request to the Select Board at its October 12 meeting. Also during this timeframe, the HAHC also advocated for dedicating ARPA funds to the Housing Fund, Town staff negotiated the use of \$100,000 in the Town's RLF for the Housing Fund with \$50,000 of the RLF funds awarded as a grant to the Kelley's Field expansion project.

In reviewing budget documents in late December for the January 4, 2023 FY24 budget public hearing, the HAHC realized its budget request was reduced from \$12,000 to \$5,000. There was not enough time for us to meet as a committee to provide comment on January 4 at the Select Board's public hearing. We warned a special meeting for January 11 to discuss the cut in our request.

**HAHC Request:** We fully understand the desire to keep the increase in costs to as little as possible especially with the decrease in revenues from this current municipal budget. We also see the Housing Fund more of an investment than an expense as it gives us as a Town, the ability to address in some small way, a critical crisis facing residents in our community. The crisis has only worsened as a result of the pandemic, leading the Select Board to identify housing as a key priority. Unfortunately, without funding, very little can be done to assist persons trying to provide affordable housing or to assist persons trying to find affordable housing.

A couple of key points have influenced our request.

1. Funds for the Housing Fund are more important to the committee than funds for our potential operating costs, primarily since we do not have specific operating costs identified at this time, other than paying to advertise for another ADU Forum next fall.
2. We cannot assume ARPA funds will be budgeted for the Housing Fund, since no decision will be made until after the budget amounts are set, and ARPA funding amounts have not yet been discussed by the Select Board or the voters.

Our request is provided in the format of two options.

Option 1: Restore the \$10,000 for the Housing Fund and reduce the Operating funds to \$100 or even zero.

Option 2: Reduce the amount for the Housing Fund to an amount between \$5000 and \$7000 and reduce the Operating funds to \$100 or even zero.

**Note:** We also request that the Draft Budget Overview document clearly identify the amount that is in the final budget, since this is a new request. We want voters to know this is in the budget.

As you would likely guess, the HAHC prefers Option 1 and hopes you see the value in adding \$5000 (or \$5100) to the \$5000 now in the proposed budget. We are happy to clarify any information in this memo and answer any questions you have.

Thank you.