

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes  
Monday, September 27, 2021

At the Selectmen's meeting held on Monday, September 27, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. the following people were in attendance: Peter Corey and John Tholl, Shawn White participated via conference call.

Others in attendance: Rob Larson, PW Director, John Ross, Jr., Fire Chief, Courtney Vashaw, Librarian, Sondra Brekke, Katie Kopp, Carroll Rexford, Marion Rexford, Catherine Atwood, Kenny Lang, Karen Geraghty of NCIC.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Corey said that we are waiting for the individual who is going to represent the grant writing agency to arrive, and she is on her way. We will go to old business and come back to the public hearing when she arrives.

Old Business:

Public Hearing for Fireworks Ordinance – The Public Hearing for the proposed Fireworks Ordinance is scheduled for next Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. Copies of the ordinance are available on the town's website or at the Selectmen's Office.

Finalize the plans for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Ribbon Cutting Ceremony scheduled for Wednesday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am at the Treatment Plant. We have heard back from a number of people who plan to be in attendance. Rob Larson said Wright Pierce will be taking care of refreshments. We will get a plaque ordered this week.

New Business:

Rob explained the reason we are asking for another \$10,000 for the Wastewater Asset Management program. Rob said we had originally secured an asset management grant of \$28,700, which documents our wastewater assets. We now have a dollar value of our assets that services Whitefield. DES requested that the engineering company do more than what was originally outlined, and they are coming back to the town to ask for an additional \$10,000 in costs incurred. They are asking that we cover the expenses of \$10,000. Rob is bringing it to the board tonight to see if the Board will approve it. Rob said that he has the money available, \$10,000 in the sewer contingency fund budget. Rob said we get a tremendous value out of it, and he is asking the board to approve the \$10,000 out of the sewer budget. Rob said part of the request was to do other parts of it including horizontal assets as well as vertical assets. Shawn said he feels it is better to get it done now rather than later. The Board approved the \$10,000 additional expenditure for the Wastewater Asset Management program.

Carroll & Marion Rexford attended the meeting to discuss their concerns with the traffic on Colby Road. There are dynamic changes that are happening on Colby Road, which is a gateway to the airport, industrial park, cherry mountain park, the landfill. It is a busy town road. It has a posted 30 mph speed limit. There is a sign that says “no thru trucks” but it doesn’t delineate what the truck is. There is the activity from the commercial businesses, the gravel pits. Marion said that Colby Road is becoming a thoroughfare. Google now has Colby Road as the fastest route to get to the Berlin/Gorham area. They are seeing tractor trailers, class A motor homes, trucks with toy haulers and it is continuous all day long. Marion said all the residents have the same concern with safety. It is busy town road with cows and small children, and more residents, and someone who recently purchased a property is going to have horses, trucks are coming in and out of the pits, a lot of soon to be houses, and Forbes farm equipment for mowing. Marion said the traffic comes down the hill, and it does say 30 mph and by the time they hit the bottom of the hill they are going 45 mph. There are no lines on the road and people are passing cars on that road. Their driveway is a blind driveway. Marion was wondering if the town has any jurisdiction with the google maps. The major concern is with traffic and safety. Marion said the Police Department is going to do more patrols. Marion was wondering if there is some way to improve the signage on that road. The road conditions are going to deteriorate. Whitefield is a small town, and we are fighting hard to keep the town roads in good shape. 20 cars can go by in a 15-minute time frame. Hopefully there is something we can do. The tranquility of the road is gone. Hopefully the town can help. Could there be some no passing zones and would appreciate increased traffic patrols by the Police Department. Carroll Rexford said that we see more traffic in a day than they used to see in a month. There is also an increase in building in that area. Butch feels hopefully something can be done. There is the “No Thru Truck sign”, but define what that means.

Ken Lang said he lives at 256 Colby Road, which he has owned since last year. He said you can sit there a few minutes and 20 cars go by very fast, from 18-wheelers to the campers, 5<sup>th</sup> wheelers. Ken said he has seen people who walk on that road, but he wouldn’t do it now. It is too dangerous. Ken said he doesn’t have anything to compare it to before because he has only been there a year. Carroll Rexford said it is not the local residents who are driving fast. It is people passing through all hours of the night. Local truck traffic is very careful and goes slow.

Rob Larson said in talking with the large bicycle contingency that works out of Littleton they are getting established, and that corridor is on google maps for their bike paths. Rob said the road has deteriorated dramatically since last year. Rob said he can’t wait any longer on that road for repairs. Marion said it is scary when trucks pull out and pass you. Rob doesn’t know what our influence will be on google maps. Peter has noticed the increase in traffic when he goes to the transfer station. There are a lot of people on that road who have not been on that road before. Peter said he shares their concerns. What can we do about it? It is a town road that we have to maintain and with the increase in traffic, our costs to maintain the road will increase as well. Peter doesn’t know if we can do anything with google maps, but we are certainly willing to

investigate that. There are all of these other navigating aids out there too. Peter's question for Rob and Shawn is can we put up signs that say no thru traffic, and if we do who is going to enforce that? Can we at least put up additional speed limit signs and no passing signs on the road? Shawn said there is an ordinance on that road that says no thru trucks. Shawn said it used to be heavily enforced. Shawn agrees we should get the Police Chief involved and increase patrols. Shawn said we should try to delineate with a weight limit and keep that road more intact. Rob asked is there a requirement for a yellow strip? Shawn said you have to have at least an 8-foot lane. We can explore that. Butch said he believes it is a Class V Road. John said he feels that road markings would be very effective, as well as additional signage. John would recommend the striping especially because it stands out. Would a weight limited sign affect the businesses on that road? The road is deteriorating at the bottom of that hill. Marion said the DPW crew does a good job with the road in the winter. Can you put up local traffic only? Who is going to enforce that? Rob said he can submit to google map restrictions whether it be no passing, weight limits, no thru trucks.

Sondra Brekke asked about the striping. Once the road is fixed, people will go faster on it. Double yellow lines will stop people faster than signs.

John Tholl made a motion to approve the Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of September 13, 2021. Shawn White second. Roll Call Vote: Tholl: Yes; Corey: Yes; White: Yes. Motion passes, 3-0.

Fire Chief Ross asked the Board if it would be ok to purchase a chassis for an ambulance out of the Fire Department Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve Fund. We are going to be looking for a new ambulance at next year's town meeting. There is currently a 32-week lead time for the chassis. Once you get the chassis, it will be 120 to 180 days to get the box on. Just trying to get a jump on it, and we not sure what the prices will do. The Board is authorized to expend from the Fire Department Equipment Replacement Capital Reserve Fund. We would be just purchasing the chassis out of that capital reserve fund. The cost for the chassis is \$52,000 and that is all he wants now to get a jump on it. \$200,000 is the cost for the body and everything to go with it. This ambulance has been out of service 10 times this year, and the longest for a month. Been on 81 calls with this ambulance, and 17 of them we have rolled both ambulances. The Board said they do not have a problem with this.

John Tholl made a motion to authorize the expenditure from the Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund to buy a chassis for the ambulance. Shawn White second. Roll call vote: Tholl: Yes; Corey: Yes; White: Yes. Motion passes, 3-0.

Chairman Corey opened the CDBG Project Overview Public Hearing at 7:18 p.m. Chair Corey introduced Karen Geraghty from Northern Community Investment Corporation to explain the project.

Handouts for the public hearings are available on the Selectmen's table.

Karen gave a brief General Overview of CDBG:

Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities through the NH Community Development Finance Authority. Up to \$500,000 annually is available for economic development projects, up to \$500,000 for public facility, up to \$500,000 for housing projects, and up to \$500,000 for emergency activities. Up to \$25,000 is available per planning grants. Municipalities are eligible to apply for a Microenterprise Assistance grant without having it count against the town's cap for any other CDBG projects. All projects must directly benefit a majority of low and moderate income persons.

Karen gave a General Overview of the Project:

This is a proposed Planning Grant application to the Community Development Finance Authority for up to \$25,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to plan for increasing the capacity and services provided at the Whitefield Public Library.

No match funds are required. The funds will be used to complete (1) an assessment of the existing conditions at the library (2) create preliminary architectural/engineering designs and (3) to establish cost estimates for the project.

This project conforms with the Town of Whitefield's approved Housing and Community Development Plan's goals, most notably: 1. Encouraging growth in commercial and industrial sectors; 2. Promote adequate social services for residents, and 3. Seek to strengthen employment opportunities by supporting job retention and creation efforts.

Karen asked for further questions or comments.

Courtney Vashaw, Librarian, said she sent an email to Karen explaining what their capacity is and what they would like to be at. This funding will assist with an assessment of the library, preliminary architectural/engineering designs, and establishing cost estimates for the project.

Peter Corey said the Board received a letter from Claire Houghton, which was read and is attached as part of these minutes.

A motion was made by John Tholl to close the Public Hearing on the project portion of the CDBG block grant hearing. Motion was seconded by Shawn White. Roll call vote: Tholl: Yes; Corey: Yes; White: Yes. Motion passes, 3-0. First public hearing is closed at 7:26 p.m.

A motion was made by John Tholl to open the second Public Hearing regarding the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan at 7:27 p.m. Seconded by Shawn White. Roll call vote: Corey: Yes; Tholl: Yes; White: Yes. Motion passes, 3-0. The Public Hearing on the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan opened at 7:27 p.m.

Karen Geraghty from Northern Community Investment Corporation introduced the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan Draft. The Plan outlines measures, under the

Uniform Relocation Act, required for CDBG projects that involve any displacement or relocation of persons (or businesses), if the Town were to undertake a CDBG project which involved displacement or relocation they would follow this plan. The plan outlines the measures they would take to find comparable, suitable housing for persons (or businesses) displaced or relocated. For this project, no displacement or relocation is anticipated, but the plan must be adopted in the unlikely event that displacement takes place.

Karen asked for questions or comments.

It was asked how the library impacts displacement and relocation. Karen said that because this is a feasibility study on what the library wants to do, there would be no displacement or relocation of residents or businesses. CDBG always look to make sure the projects in community development don't have an adverse effect on housing. If there is any impact on housing, there has to be a plan in place to take care of that. Peter said we had to update our plan, which needed to be updated.

A motion was made by John Tholl to close the Residential Anti-Displacement & Relocation Assistance Plan Public Hearing at 7:29 p.m. Seconded by Shawn White. Roll call vote: Corey: Yes; Tholl: Yes; White: Yes. Motion passes, 3-0. The Residential Anti-Displacement & Relocation Plan Public Hearing closed at 7:29 p.m.

A motion was made by John Tholl to open the third Public Hearing regarding the Housing and Community Development Plan at 7:30 p.m. Seconded by Shawn White. Roll call vote: Corey: Yes; Tholl: Yes; White: Yes. Motion passes, 3-0. The Public Hearing on the Housing and Community Development Plan opened at 7:30 p.m.

Karen Geraghty from Northern Community Investment Corporation introduced the Housing and Community Development Plan.

The Whitefield Housing and Community Development Plan sets the following goals to address development concerns for the Town:

Goal 1: Promote a varied stock of safe, sanitary, decent and affordable housing for persons of all age and income groups. (Short-term and Long-term goal)

Goal 2: Encourage economic development activities to increase quality commercial development with a focus on expanding and retaining employment opportunities for residents. (Short-term and Long-term goal)

Goal 3: Upgrade and expand municipal services and systems to meet the changing needs of the community. (Short-term and Long-term goal)

Goal 4: Preserve and promote the town's historically and culturally significant structures. (Short-term and Long-term goal)

Goal 5: Promote activities that protect the health and safety of residents and visitors. (Short-term and Long-term goal)

Goal 6: Promote adequate health and social services for residents. (Short-term and Long-term goal)

These goals are consistent with the Town of Whitefield's Master Plan and local Ordinances.

As a matter of policy, Whitefield will minimize the involuntary displacement of households from their neighborhoods.

Any federal CDBG grant funds awarded to address any of these goals shall be expended consistent with national objectives and shall, at a minimum, provide improved housing in accordance with section 8 standards, be used for public facility projects, employment opportunities, or feasibility studies. All CDBG funded projects, shall primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons or households, and shall not benefit moderate-income persons to the exclusion of low-income persons.

Karen asked for questions or comments. There were no questions or comments.

John Tholl made a motion to close the public hearing regarding the Housing & Community Development Plan at 7:33 p.m. Shawn second. Roll call vote: Corey: Yes; White: Yes; Tholl: Yes. Motion passes, 3-0. The public hearing on the Housing & Community Development Plan closed at 7:33 p.m.

Public hearings are closed at this time.

Chairperson Corey said he is recusing himself on the vote for the submittal of the CDBG application as he works for NCIC, the agency assisting with the application on behalf of the town.

John Tholl made a motion to approve the submittal of the CDBG application for a Planning Grant application for up to \$25,000. Shawn second. Roll call vote: Tholl: Yes; White: Yes. Motion passes, 2-0.

John Tholl made a motion to adopt the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Shawn second. Roll call vote: Tholl: Yes; White: Yes; Corey: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

John made a motion to adopt the Housing & Community Development Plan. Shawn second. Roll call vote: Tholl: Yes; Corey: Yes; White: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

John made a motion to authorize Judy Ramsdell, Town of Whitefield Administrative Assistant to submit the application and sign or execute any and all documents necessary to effectuate the

potential CDBG contract. Shawn second. Roll call vote: Tholl: Yes; Corey: Yes; White: Yes. All in favor 3-0. Motion passes.

John Tholl made a motion to enter non-public session pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II(e) and (l) at 7:36 p.m. The motion was seconded by Shawn White. Roll Call Vote: White: Yes; Corey: Yes; Tholl: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

The Board adjourned from non-public session at 7:49 p.m. John Tholl made a motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Shawn White second. Roll call vote: Tholl: Yes; White: Yes; Corey: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.