

## **Meeting Minutes for Public Hearing on June 23, 2021**

### **ARP Funding 10:00AM**

**Held at the Sanford Vaccination Clinic, 1364 Main Street, Sanford, ME**

Commissioners Present: Richard Dutremble, Donna Ring, Richard Clark, Al Sicard, Robert Andrews.

County Manager Greg Zinser and Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Linda Corliss were also present.

Commissioner Chairman Dutremble brought the meeting to order. The Commissioners introduced themselves.

County Manager Greg Zinser explained the ARP funding.

Emily Flinkstrom from Fair Tides read her testimony (attached as record of these minutes).

Town Manager Gary Lamb addressed the Commissioners about water district issues. He reminded the Board that most water districts are quasi- municipal entities. We have a water tank idea and issues that John Vacari will be getting in touch with you about.

Janet Drew of York ME addressed the Board and stated that she is looking at having a time for working people to give their input. She added that she is glad that letters have been sent and glad there will be categories. Ms. Drew continued that she feels we should look at Federal plans and looking at public health emergency related projects. She added that everything was covid-related so the themes on how the money can be spent are pretty wide open. York County is considered an affluent area, she stated. Ms. Drew mentioned that she had recently spoken with a Nurse Practitioner who is seeing an increase in cutting in teens. There is extra stress and housing is a big part of it. Communities need help with housing, even climate upgrading for housing, stated Janet Drew. She suggested that maybe a forum is necessary as the continuum of services to support communities and families is key. She added that she is very interested in climate and incarceration. Incarceration does not help the families, stated Ms. Drew. She said to all that she hopes the money will go to concrete help for families. Housing is first and foremost. I have listened to county meetings, stated Janet Drew and money is needed for alternatives to jails.

Paul Schumacher, Executive Director of Southern Maine Planning and Development Committee addressed the Board to inform them that SMPDC is available to help the county if they so desire. His organization has a broad range of knowledge of what is going on in the region. The transportation director and York County Community Action offered assistance with transit planning. We see transit as a need for York County. It is a real need to keep our economy strong. Mr. Schumacher stated that he spoke to Greg (County Manager) briefly about broadband. We are trying to assess broadband needs for the region. We will make that information available. Paul added that he does think it is a good idea to

see where all of the other broadband money is going from the State and Federal before the county dips its toes into it.

Affordable housing is important now, continued Paul Schumacher. It is crucial to maintain our workforce and attract new workers. We will send you a copy of our report on that topic and we would also be available to assist with that if you'd like us to.

Commissioner Sicard asked SMPDC about the dredging equipment that several testified there is a need for. In 2017, you folks did a study, stated Commissioner Sicard. He asked Paul to update the rest of the Commission on where that stands. Also, do you feel the study needs an update?

Paul Schumacher explained that there was an opportunity for 6 to 7 towns in southern York County to jointly buy a dredge. We hired some consultants and it looked like it was feasible as it was on the edge of being cost-effective. There are other issues than just buying the dredge. The Army Corps of Engineers came and did dredge work, so it fell off the radar for some towns but the long term need is there.

Commissioner Clark stated that housing is not cheap and asked Paul Schumacher if there are other funding sources to make the money go further?

Paul replied that the State set aside some money. Maine Housing had some interest in approaching you to have you give them your money to help out. TIF (local funds) for affordable housing are always an option as well as low- income housing tax credits. There are other opportunities to leverage whatever funds that might be available.

Commissioner Clark replied that he would be interested in a program that would leverage funds. Any of these items is going to take more than one pool of funds.

Paul agreed.

Jim Niman, Executive Director of the Sanford Regional Economic Growth Council addressed the Board and stated that Sanford has a 45- mile fiber business communication network. 90 buildings so far of our major employers, city government, schools and hospital are part of this fiber. Our challenge is there are a number of different sources, but, how do we best grow? We learned the importance of high- speed fiber during the pandemic. We are looking to grow that network and connecting to more companies. We are asking for your consideration as you think about how you could leverage the funds with a community, etc.

Housing is another important issue, continued Jim Nimon. Paul Schumacher's group conducted a study regarding the shipyard. We send the most workers to the Shipyard here in Sanford. There is an important project going on that is going to take the leveraging of funds. A mill building that overlooks #1 Pond that has the opportunity to roll out up to 100 units. A critical piece, stated Mr. Nimon, is the issue of leverage, the community will participate. There are the traditional uses of funding through Maine Housing, but, it may not fit the box entirely so are there other funding sources? That is our concern.

Broadband is not a simple process, but you need to start somewhere. Commissioner Sicard commented that Governor Mills has allocated \$100 million to broadband but we have yet to hear any specifics. Have you folks heard anything or have you made a plea to the State?

Jim Nimon replied that we are trying to figure out if there's a "sweet spot" where Sanford could benefit. We are down the road to how do you help us expand this? We have said we would help explain how we had done this using our monies in our community as well as a grant from the EDA.

Kevin Roche, President of Save our Shores, Saco Bay read attached testimony. He added that their funding request is only 4% of the monies received from the ARP for the County. People flock to the beach in York County. It is a working beach. Saco is a vibrant fishing community and harbor.

Commissioner Sicard said to Mr. Roche that he (Mr. Roche) has been active in this for a long time and this problem is not new. Eight or nine towns were listed off as needing a dredge. If you're given the keys to a dredge boat tomorrow, how would you get these towns to kick in and make this an ongoing venture? We don't want to expend money and have this fall down.

Kevin Roche responded that he has told all entities that we have to know who is paying the staff that is going to operate the dredge. This request (for ARP funding) is for the capital. Then, we have to have each town and city know who is getting that operational cost on there. I am confident that the money will be coming back to cover the other costs. Mr. Roche suggested the Commissioners look at Barnstable, Mass. model.

Commissioner Sicard asked if there is any State money available?

Kevin Roche responded that, yes, the word leverage has come up. If we have the dredge, he stated that he believes the State would help. One big issue is the living shore lines that need to be built up. That does not rule out bringing in localized sand to where it came out. Two or three Bills just passed that incorporate the priorities of living shore lines. We will work with the State, replied Mr. Roche.

Commissioner Sicard asked, " you don't think they'll take the lead?"

Kevin replied that we are going after everybody 100%. Then, we can all win. In Barnstable, the Governor was very proactive at the time. In the end, the county is the one that pitched in.

Pat Fox in Saco has cleared the table for a very difficult beach management plan, stated Mr. Roche.

Chief Roger Hooper addressed the Board to speak on three topics. First, he echoes Mr. Lamb's topic on water capacity and maybe doing some improvements on the smaller districts. Water has a huge impact on fighting fires.

Chief Hooper continued that there has been a lot of discussion on broadband. One of the things that is missing is that Broadband wireless is critical to our first responders. Real time connectivity increases our ability to treat our patients expeditiously.

Thirdly, Chief Hooper recommending conducting a study of the effect of COVID 19 has had on our fire and EMS . In this county, many agencies staff with per-diem.

Megan Gene Gendron of the York County Shelter Programs addressed the Board and read her testimony that she stated she will submit in writing, also. She is recommending that the goal should be to create a York County safety net of services utilizing services that are already available in York County.

Transportation is often a problem. Part of our proposal is around creating this county wide transportation system with York County Community Action who have 50 years of experience doing this. We should create a transportation system that loops around the county and stops at various service

provider sites everyday. Also, our hope is, continued Ms. Gendron, that all of these agencies will take a coordinating approach. A major missing piece (in York County) also is a medical detox program that would include transportation. We currently have the only licensed psychiatrist on staff in York County that could develop the detox and treatment services. Executive Directors of each one of these agencies will be contacted to build out this coalition, stated Megan.

Tracy Geer, State Representative of House District 9 approached the Board and stated that she is here today to listen. She commended the Commissioners for holding the public hearings for this unprecedented situation for lots of funds coming into the State. Representative Greer asked what is the process that we will see going forward. How will needs be evaluated and what process will the Commissioners use to prioritize?

Representative Greer stated that she is hearing a lot of great information from folks today on overarching goal that we share across the County. We've heard a lot about housing and transportation.

There are a lot of potential recourses and partners for the Commissioners. As a resident and State Representative, she stated that she is interested in seeing how the Commissioners will use the available resources to spend the money. Representative Greer added that she would be happy to participate in any type of forum. As a State Representative she stated that she offers her assistance for any needs and opportunities for additional legislation.

Commissioner Dutremble responded that this is an ongoing process and the Commissioners will determine how things are categorized. It's going to take a little while. Rules are changing every week.

County Manager Zinser added that during the month of July, we will start assembling in broad categories. Some projects won't meet the criteria even though every project is worthy.

As we begin to assemble, continued County Manager Zinser, one of the themes today is housing, workforce housing. If that is a category that the Commissioners decide to approve, they'll have to discuss how they obtain stakeholders.

As it pertains to leveraging available resources, it really is going to be dependent upon the categories the Commissioners select. Some organizations have asked us to just hand over money, stated the County Manager. He added that the allocation of funds lies strictly with the Commissioners. They will make further decisions on what groups they need to engage.

Please give us something in writing by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Waterboro Town Manager Gary Lamb replied that the guidelines state (one has) until July 16th for comment.

County Manger Zinser replied that Mr. Lamb is referencing the final rule. We are now operating under the interim rule.

County Manager Zinser stated but, that is a good question. At what point do we want to close down our public comment. He added that he is suggesting here today, get us something by July 1<sup>st</sup>. We will probably have to send out a notification that on a day certain we are done accepting comments.

The County Manager advised all to follow York County's website so they will know when we are discussing and the packet will be online.

Commissioner Sicard added that it helps the Commissioners to have as many specifics as you can.

Meeting is adjourned at 11:07 a.m.