



more formal decision on this to help keep things transparent. Koi explained she thinks we have a funding source (Northern Borders), and based on what has happened in nearby communities, they will be willing to work with us even if the project changes. Ultimately, they want projects completed.

Bill also would like a more formal vote. He does not have a particular objection with the pre-treatment but was concerned with the yearly expense of the system. Seth agrees with Bill, we are in an awkward position where the timing of this application is before when we would do the next phase of soil testing to see how much capacity the pre-treatment will add. Regarding the annual cost if the pre-treatment system allows enough additional users, specifically commercial users, it is possible the calculation will work out so it is not more for the individual taxpayer, but the Town will not know that until the summer.

Mark Letorney explained that there is no doubt there is a funding gap in Vermont and we are trying to raise two to three million dollars' worth of funding for this system. The state has eight million dollars waiting to be obligated to infrastructure projects in small towns. Westford is well primed to receive those funds. The big municipalities are also gunning for these funds because of their aging infrastructure. Word has been received that the ARPA money, including the eight million dollars, will be contributed specifically to rural municipalities. The Planning Commission is working strategically to put Westford at the top of the list for the ARPA funds, signing on to Northern Borders shows that Westford is committed to a municipal wastewater system. There is no way the Town could bring this to the public and hope to have a wastewater system approved unless the bond and the operation and maintenance costs are realistic. That is why Westford must get as much of this money as we can. We can never ask the Town for more money than it can afford so if Westford does not get the funds, the project will not move forward.

Lee asked what is the realistic chance we will get two million dollars? Mark could not answer that, but Westford is the only small village wastewater system in the state of Vermont that is near shovel ready. It all depends on how the legislature wants to spend the money.

Nanette thanked the Planning Commission for their hard work on this daunting task. She asked what happens if the voters do not approve a bond vote? How much money would the Town be out if that happened? Koi explained that if a match is not secured the funds would simply be relocated elsewhere. Currently they are using the Planning Commission special project funds and money from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) for brownfields and planning grants.

Lee asked when it would be reasonable to hear back from the state on how much money Westford might get out of the ARPA funds? It occurs to him that it will be a lot easier to sell the project to voters if we know that amount. He does not think a bond issue is a done deal.

Bill would prefer if the Board can push off deciding on this until the next meeting, so they have time to digest the information. Both Lee and Dave are in favor of the project, but they also agreed that they would prefer more information and would like to tighten the processes between the Planning Commission and Selectboard before it is brought before the voters. It is the right project for Westford, we just need to set things up for success. Dave however was comfortable deciding tonight. Lee thinks more Selectboard and Planning Commission integration on this is needed, a subject that will be addressed later in the meeting. Lee was also comfortable making a decision tonight.

Lee McClenny made a motion that the Selectboard approve an application to the Northern Border's Regional Commission (NBRC) in an amount up to \$459,000 for the future wastewater system for the Town of Westford and designate Bill Cleary to have executive permission relating to the signature of all documents associated with the submission of the application as well as future NBRC contract documents, should the project be selected for funding, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS**

The Selectboard and Planning Commission discussed meeting times between the two boards. Some items could be handled in a regular meeting, but subjects requiring longer discussion are better suited to special meetings.

#### **REOPENING OF TOWN OFFICE**

Nanette explained that she looked at the Vermont Forward Plan for reopening. Reopening the town office falls within group A which is for low contact. This would allow people to come in and drop off taxes or dog licenses for example. Town staff currently working in the office are vaccinated. If we open residents would be limited to the counter and any researchers would still be limited to one at a time by appointment. She feels it is time to open back up, it would be easier for office employees if we did so. Bill was in favor if the town employees are comfortable. Dave was in support as was Lee. No motion needed.

#### **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Cleary, Chair  
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy  
Assistant Town Clerk/Minute Clerk