

**TOWN OF RYE – TAP GRANT COMMITTEE
MEETING
Wednesday, October 18, 2023 – 2:00 p.m.
Rye Town Hall**

Present: *Chair John Loftus, Victor Azzi, and Town Administrator Matt Scruton*

1. Call to Order

Chair Loftus called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Discuss Final Interviews

Town Administrator Matt Scruton noted that he sent an email to the Committee after speaking with Leah Savage. He had made a statement at the previous meeting indicating that it appeared that Wright-Pierce had the most LPA experience in N.H. This was an opinion he formed based on the materials and presentations. He would like to withdraw that statement, as some of the relative experience listed may not have been directly on N.H. LPA projects. It's not clear to him which firm has the most direct LPA experience in N.H. The records from NH DOT don't support any particular firm having the most experience. He reiterated that he withdraws his statement from the previous meeting. He continued that it's clear to him that all three firms that have applied have applicable LPA experience. This is to the Town's benefit with any of the three engineering firms selected.

Chair Loftus pointed out that Wright-Pierce has a lot of LPA experience, but most was in Maine. He doesn't believe that SLR has done an LPA project in N.H. BETA has three active LPA projects in N.H. There were also some differentials between how many licensed LPA people they have on staff. He continued that the LPA part, in regards to keeping track of the process, might have more to do with the Town during the construction phase versus the design phase.

Administrator Scruton read a letter from Leah Savage, dated October 13th:

Reviews and scores should be based on the interviews themselves, and not how comfortable the Committee was with each firm. Just because a consultant firm has experience with N.H. LPA projects, does not mean that they did an outstanding job on each project. Also, engineering firms recently have had a lot of turnover. So, just because the firm has a lot of experience itself, doesn't mean the staff that completed the work is still on staff with the firm or will be working on this project. As for a firm who may or may not have had any actual LPA experience, DOT does not discourage against using them. When more firms are utilized and more consultant firms understand N.H. LPA work, the more competitive this process becomes for the firms involved, and the better end product municipalities are likely to have.

Member Azzi commented it's important that the firm have LPA qualified people. It's also important that they have LPA experience as a firm. It's important for the Committee to know what kind of LPA experience each firm has in various projects. There's one firm that has experience in this town in water and wastewater treatment systems, but not anything related to transportation. It's a matter of forming opinions that are cognizant of that. He reiterated that it's important for the Committee to know the qualifications of the people, qualifications of the firms, and experience of the firms in regards to work related to the particular project Rye has in mind for the TAP Grant, at this time.

Chair Loftus agreed. He noted that each firm has completed projects. If the project has nothing to do with the work being done, it could probably just be used as a reference. There are also the individuals' resumes and this would give an indication on the types of projects they've done and what their positions were. The booklets also list the people in each firm who are LPA certified. He used this information when ranking the firms, along with the PowerPoint presentations from the final interviews.

In looking at the references for SLR and Wright-Pierce, Administrator Scruton noted that they're very positive and reflective of the other records received for all three firms, as there hasn't been a bad reference check yet for any of the firms. This supports his belief that any of the three firms would potentially be a good fit for the community and this project. He pointed out that there were good reviews for BETA also. All three firms had positive references and communities have said that they would gladly work with the firms again.

Chair Loftus agreed. He commented that Leah Savage told him that Rye was fortunate to have three good firms interested in the project.

Member Azzi commented that all the firms are qualified in certain areas, not all of them are qualified in all areas. He pointed out that he knows some of the firms and some of the people. He also specifically knows some of the projects. He has been on committees with some of the people and know their qualities. He can't erase from his knowledge, or opinion, things that might go beyond the information that might be available to the other two judges in the room.

The Committee will continue to work on finalizing their final evaluations and submit the forms to Lydia Tilsley and Janice Ireland. Member Tilsley will be doing the initial compilation of the ranking and Janice will confirm the numbers. The numbers will be sent directly to Leah Savage at the State. The Committee has until noon on October 23rd to get the forms completed.

3. Other Business

None

Motion by John Loftus to adjourn at 2:17 p.m. Seconded by Matt Scruton. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F Ledger