



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE LAKE LURE TOWN COUNCIL AND UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD HELD WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2020, 9:30 A.M. AT THE LAKE LURE MUNICIPAL CENTER

PRESENT: Mayor Carol C. Pritchett
Mayor Pro Tem John W. Moore
Commissioner Patrick Bryant
Commissioner David DiOrio
Commissioner John Kilby
Shannon Baldwin, Town Manager

UAB MEMBERS PRESENT:
Wayne Hyatt, Chairman
Richard Glassman
Don Cason
John Chapman
Clement Riddle

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:
Keith Garbrick, LaBella Associates
Maurice Walsh, LaBella Associates
Brian Houston, LaBella Associates
Michael Wickner, WithersRavenel
Jay Johnston, WithersRavenel
Freddie Harrill, WithersRavenel
Cameron Patterson, WitherRavenel
Seth Robertson, WithersRavenel/WR Martin

ABSENT: N/A

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Carol Pritchett called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

II. APPROVE THE AGENDA

Commissioner John Moore made a motion to approve the Agenda, as presented. Commissioner David DiOrio seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

III. LABELLA PRESENTATION

Keith Garbrick (Principal-In-Charge), Maurice Walsh (Program Manager/Project Manager and point of contact for various sections of our request for qualifications, and primary point of contact), and Brian Houston (Civil Group Leader/Project Manager) held a presentation on "On-Call Engineering Services" (presentation attached).

Mr. Garbrick provided a background on LaBella Associates stating that they are a full-service firm with a history of 80 years working with NC municipalities. He stated that LaBella will work to solve Lake Lure's complex infrastructure need. He noted they have experts readily available when needed.

Mr. Walsh expressed the need to be proactive and not reactive mentioning that they are looking at solutions that will help the Town in the far future. He explained that the Town's primary challenge is accessing the underwater sewer system. He reflected on the challenges and goals that the Town has with the Waste Water Treatment Plant. He also identified two case studies with similar sewer system challenges; Lake Oswego and Lake St. Louis. He reported that a gentleman with Lake St. Louis has agreed to visit Lake Lure and would walk through the process for accessibly submerged manholes, regardless of who the Council chooses as their contractor.

Mr. Walsh spoke on the Spindale Waste Water Treatment Plant rehabilitation. He pointed out that Kurt Wright, Lake Lure's Town Engineer, is a long-time corporate partner with LaBella. Mr. Wright was brought in for the complex project in Spindale and was onsite every day. The Town of Spindale's budget was severely suppressed and their plant was failing. They had issues with all aspects of their plant and did not have the finances available to spend. Mr. Walsh reported that they worked with the contractors and constructed a plant and had no notices of violations for three years despite the plant's condition. He conveyed that managing expectations is critical when dealing with the public and with the State.

Mr. Houston noted that funding is a concern and provided information on how they have assisted clients with funding in the past. He pointed out that they have an employee who applies for grants for the clients.

Mr. Garbrick stated that they are open to the idea of partnering with WithersRavenel. He added that this approach could assure that the Town has professionals from each firm to assist with funding and technical design solutions. However, he added that they can handle all aspects of the project. Mr. Garbrick highlighted on a few projects they have had in which they have had strong relationships with the State.

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Project Management Success

After the transition from design to construction, what oversight can you provide and what metrics do you use to stay on-time, on budget, and ensure quality work?

Mr. Houston stated that they have five full-time construction inspectors on staff and they generally recommend to have a full-time inspector to monitor the work being done. They have an online document management system to streamline communication called Newforma. They build projects in 3D on the computer. They engage contractors to have an impact on success and make sure that special inspections are happening.

Mr. Houston presented a short video on LaBella Associates. Mr. Garbrick stated that they could provide letters from their clients if the Town would like.

Sewer Collection and Waste Water Treatment Plant Solutions

Relative to the subaqueous collection system and physical/chemical plant, please describe your capabilities/experience and explain your approach to resolving our unique situation.

Mr. Walsh stated that he views the subaqueous sewer system and WWTP as two, related issues. Looking at different process/options, the WWTP has to be designed to complement the final goal for the subaqueous sewer system. Looking at the INI information is critical to move the plant back to a biological process as one phase. Then they will look at rehabilitation replacement of the subaqueous sewer system. They have to answer questions that go into funding and planning prior to the design.

Chairman Hyatt asked about converting what we have to biological and if they have given any thought to this. Mr. Walsh answered that one of the things in the asset management mindset is utilizing the existing facility and maximizing the Town's assets, if we are able to. He added that a condition asset of the existing plant is needed to see what can be kept and used to reduce overall costs.

Securing Large Revenues

Given the enormous costs associated with our infrastructure/facility repairs, how can you help the Town of Lake Lure secure revenues needed to meet these costs?

Mr. Garbrick stated that if there is a viable project, the funding shows up. He mentioned that regulators do not want to put municipalities in a situation where there is no solution and noted that this is not a single source type of grant or loan. He pointed out that a lot of agencies are moving away from grants. He stated that there are a number of calls that can be made to representatives to get their attention on the project.

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Mr. Glassen pointed out that there are more houses on the lake with septic systems than are connected to town sewer. One of the goals is to figure out how to encourage people to participate in a sewer system to find additional revenue that the Town needs. Mr. Garbrick stated that the first step is communicating the issue, the detrimental effect this has on the lake, and the benefit of being a part of the system. He noted that they have done this type of plan delivering with municipalities to educate people. He stated that the second part is identifying revenues, which is difficult, because there is more flow than users. Those two things in conjunction with new technologies can help.

State Agency Relationships and Coordination

What could you do to assist us in improving our relationship with State agencies so that the Town of Lake Lure transitions from a "Worse in Class" to "First in Class" success story?

Mr. Garbrick stated that they have partnered with other firms when it benefits and makes sense. Their goal is to do what is best for the Town. They have not partnered specifically with WithersRavenel but they have a relationship with Schnabel Engineering.

Commissioner DiOrio asked if they have worked with DOT. Mr. Garbrick stated yes, they have worked with and are licensed with DOT. They already have relationships established with NCDOT.

Mr. Glassen asked how they think the Town staff and UAB could affectively help accomplish a successful project. Mr. Garbrick stated that they are only one piece of the team. The experience and history that Council and UAB helps contribute to this project. Ongoing interactions and meetings help with this experience. A communication piece needs to happen daily to keep people involved on the status. Their role is to support and add to the existing team; they are a component with resources and are an extension of staff.

Mr. Cason asked, on a scale of 1-10, how they would rate the Town's issues that they know about and how they would rate their company with the ability to get to a conclusion and resolution for a sustainable project.

Mr. Garbrick stated on the information they have, they would put the Town at an eight (with 10 being a critical) noting they have significant challenges ahead of them. He stated that he would rate their company a 10 mentioning that they can absolutely facilitate this project to move forward successfully.

Town Manager Shannon Baldwin asked about partnerships and asked to give a feel on what they feel a partnership with SDG would be moving forward, if chosen. Mr. Garbrick stated that he has known Kurt Wright for about 20 years and has a great professional and personal relationship with him (SDG Engineering). He stated that Mr. Wright has great relationships with the State and can handle any problems that may arise noting that he is an independent critical eye to see what is happening overall. Anything that benefits the Town would be considered.

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Mr. Baldwin explained that the Town has worked with previous firms, has complex challenges to address, and no engineer on staff to work closely with in the past. He pointed out that the Town has started to begin commitments to have an engineer on staff for these complex challenges. He asked what they could propose to help the Town stay on top of the issues and the costs. Mr. Garbrick stated that there may need to be a period of time when the Town and UAB feels comfortable with the firm engaged. He mentioned that oversight is critical from the UAB and Town's perspective that they have the best interest of the Town. A critical eye watching over the Town may be a necessity for some time until the Town feels comfortable with the firm. Mr. Walsh stated that he would be the liaison with the Town. He stated that, if partnered with SDG Engineering, he would report to both Kurt Wright and LaBella. He has worked with Kurt Wright in the past and did not foresee any challenges working with him. He noted that Kurt would have the Town's best interest as the primary goal.

Mr. Glassen asked if there would be any issues with the UAB overseeing things since this is what this group was formed to do. Mr. Walsh and Mr. Garbrick stated they actually encourage the oversight of the UAB. Mr. Riddle asked if they do all permitting in the office and Mr. Walsh stated yes.

Project Management Success

After the transition from design to construction, what oversight can you provide and what metrics do you use to stay on-time, on budget, and ensure quality work?

Mr. Garbrick stated that it comes down to a good working relationship with the people. He conveyed that they are always there as a resource even if the Town doesn't select them.

Mayor Pritchett called for a five minute break.
The meeting resumed at 1:00 p.m.

IV. UAB & TOWN COUNCIL DISCUSSION

UAB members held a discussion on LaBella's presentation. Mr. Glassen felt that one of the issues is going to be how to encourage people to get off of septic and on to a viable sewer system, especially those directly on the lake. Commissioner Moore noted that all septic on the lake will fail eventually and will then need to connect to town sewer. He felt that those customers to-be should be paying a fee each month. Offering a reduced tap fee early on might encourage a number of people to tap onto sewer. Mr. Glassen mentioned that the UAB could help educate and persuade property owners to connect. Mr. Cason felt that people would want to help with a solution if they understand what will happen in the future if something isn't done. Mayor Pritchett liked the idea that UAB members visit new homeowners and new home construction sites to speak with the property owners and educate them on the Town's sewer system.

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Mr. Baldwin highlighted on some key aspects of LaBella's presentation. He stated he felt that LaBella clearly understands the issues the Town faces, specifically with sewer, and that communication is important. He felt it was very positive that LaBella was willing to partner even when they may not have all of the solutions or answers. The case studies they presented shows their abilities to combat multiple challenges and shows that they have a good relationship with DOT and can work with DEQ. They demonstrated that they clearly understand the need to use existing infrastructure as much as possible. Commissioner Kilby asked about LaBella's rates and Mr. Baldwin pointed out that their rates would be attached to the contracts.

The boards recessed for lunch and resumed at 12:30 p.m.

V. WITHERSRAVENEL PRESENTATION

Michael Wicker, Jay Johnston (Utilities Project Manager), Seth Robertson (Funding and Asset Management Director), Gary Warner (Director of Parks and Recreation), Freddie Harrill, and Cameron Patterson (Public Sector Services Director) with WithersRavenel held a presentation on "Lake Lure On-Call Professional Services" (presentation attached).

Mr. Patterson introduced the project team and provided an overview of the company. He stated that WithersRavenel is a full-service consulting firm who also offers financial services. They are an on-call consultant and are experienced with on-call contracts. He provided an overview of their current contracts with local governments across the State. Keith Pugh will serve as the on-call contract manager. He is out of the Asheville office and is a retired city engineer. He will be the primary point of contact to allocate their resources to service the Town to make sure that projects are successful.

Mr. Warner explained that they are placemakers and are fully dedicated working in the public realm, noting that a great public realm can drive economics to bring people to the community. Their planning and design approach is community center based. They have a very detailed, collaborative, comprehensive approach. He stated that they look at implementation strategies to get things done. He noted that the challenge in this community is getting people to come back year after year, and getting people to move and retire in Lake Lure. Mr. Warner provided an overview of a few projects WithersRavenel was involved with in other towns.

Mr. Johnston stated that they will work in conjunction with Schnabel and will communicate with them as the project moves forward. He reported that the four initial goals they would focus on are to repair the aging dam, cease notices of violation and renovate the Waste Water Treatment Plant, reduce inflow/infiltration in the subaqueous collection system, and plan for the Chimney Rock State Park egress. He mentioned that they would use a deliberate and systematic approach by building and strengthening regulatory relation, securing funding (existing and for additional funding), and to develop a strong technical approach. He noted that they have 187 years of cumulative experience with their project team staff.

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Mr. Wicker stated that they are aware that the Waste Water Treatment Plant is non-compliant and the Town is receiving violations. Therefore, one of their initial goals is to work with the State for a plan of action and inspection in order to resolve the problem and stop enforcement actions. He noted that they will take a look at the timeline and give an opinion of the last Engineering Report within the next three weeks. In addition, during that time they will need to inspect the Treatment Plant, interview staff for their input to evaluate a problem, and seek solutions. He felt that one advantage would be to get water samples to look more into water chemistry in order to know what happens to the waste before it comes in. He noted that they would be meeting with the Board of Infrastructure and Board of Resources on January 29th. Following that meeting they can begin to revise the Engineering Report if deemed necessary. He then briefed on alternatives the Town could consider including a biological treatment plant, a physical/chemical treatment plant, innovative technologies, and decentralized treatment.

Mr. Johnston provided an overview of the Town's subaqueous collection and conveyance system pointing out that there is not another one in NC and not many in the US. The system is 90 years old and the condition is unknown. Lowering the lake level reduces the flow to the Treatment Plant as much as 56%. Options for evaluation include smoke testing, CCTV, digital scanning, manholes (which brings metering into play), and AIA funding possibilities. He noted that once the condition is known they can start to scope the repair and replacement techniques. Technical alternatives (repair/replace options) include repairing manholes, joint wrapping, CIPP lining, HDPE replacement, focus on trenchless technologies, work potential while the lake is lowered, and coordinate with dam repairs. He pointed out that they have the capability to do survey related work with drones, laser scanning, and sonar capabilities.

Mr. Robertson mentioned that WithersRavenel has more than \$290 million in SRF grants/ and loans for 94 projects in NC. He briefed on their methodical funding approach. He then provided an overview of the SRF project and the potential project schedule. He noted that engineering alternatives need to be evaluated in order to maximize available funding and to achieve the best possible terms (30 years).

Sewer Collection and Waste Water Treatment Plant Solutions

Relative to the subaqueous collection system and physical/chemical plant, please describe your capabilities/experience and explain your approach to resolving our unique situation.

Mr. Warner explained that their approach starts with knowing the history of Lake Lure and he noted that they have already begun reviewing engineering reports. He stated that they have tons of expertise in treatment. He felt with good evaluations, recommendations and a lot of deep thinking, the sewer system could remain in the lake. The Town continues to receive Notices of Violations as a result of the Treatment Plant not treating the water sufficiently. He stated that available funding is probably perfectly viably applied to a Waste Water Treatment Plant project noting that the Town needs a funding strategy to help an evaluation of the collection system. Mr. Warner expressed that renovation of the Plant could be a hybrid of a physical/chemical and biological approach, dependent upon how much INI can be eliminated. These things have to be

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considered during evaluation. He suspects a hybrid approach to start and then moving towards a biological approach. Mr. Wicker mentioned that the issues with iron and sludge at the Plant need to be addressed. Mr. Robertson commented that the number one focus is getting back into compliance.

Securing Large Revenues

Given the enormous costs associated with our infrastructure/facility repairs, how can you help the Town of Lake Lure secure revenues needed to meet these costs?

Mr. Robertson explained that it is important to understand what the needs are to plan a CIP overtime, to know how much money will be needed for projects, to know the impact of projects, and to know what funding sources are available. There are limits on what an individual funding source round can do. Good planning is needed to keep with good timing.

Mr. Glassen questioned how to encourage people to tap into the Town's sewer system. Mr. Robertson replied that the Town could make it mandatory or could charge an availability fee if residents do not wish to hook up to town sewer. He stated that more people may be interested in tapping into town sewer if they are required to pay a fee if they do not.

State Agency Relationships and Coordination

What could you do to assist us in improving our relationship with State agencies so that the Town of Lake Lure transitions from a "Worse in Class" to "First in Class" success story?

Mr. Harrill reported that he has close relationships with the Speaker of the House, the Senator's office, and with the Board of Transportation mentioning that contact will be needed with these people at some point.

Project Management Success

After the transition from design to construction, what oversight can you provide and what metrics do you use to stay on-time, on budget, and ensure quality work?

Mr. Johnston pointed out that they have a regimented procedure for construction tracking. He noted that they have funded projects for years and are very familiar with SRF requirements.

Commissioner DiOrio asked what resources WithersRavenel has to approach dredging and the issues with the Dam. Mr. Johnston stated that the Town is in great hands with Schnabel Engineering regarding the issues with the Dam. Mr. Patterson noted that they have partnered with Schnabel on other dam projects in the past. Sam Ravenel's specialty is in storm water and he is a dam designer. He mentioned that they have a remote controlled sonar device that they can use to get a bathymetric topography to help with a plan to remove sediment. Mr. Warner noted that they have experts available if they are needed.

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Mr. Cason asked, on a scale of 1-10, how they would rate the Town's issues that they know about and how they would rate their company with the ability to get to a conclusion and resolution for a sustainable project.

Mr. Warner did not feel the Town had an uncommon issue with infiltration and rated it a one, mentioning that every town has inflow and infiltration. However, there's only one similar collection system in NC and very few similar ones in the nation. Therefore, he stated that he would rate that issue as a ten. He noted that it is going to take good thinking and planning to formulate the right approach.

Mayor Pritchett called for a five minute break. UAB member Clement Riddle noted he had to leave the meeting early and documented his recommendation to UAB Chairman Wayne Hyatt.

VI. UAB & TOWN COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Town Council and UAB members ensued in a lengthy discussion of the two firms and their presentations. Mr. Glassen noted it would be best to choose a firm who wants to understand the problems before coming up with a solution. Mr. Baldwin suggested choosing LaBella as the primary engineer and WithersRavenel for the financial piece. Public Works Director David Arrowood noted that in his opinion based on the presentations and his experience working with both firms, he felt LaBella Associates should be the lead engineer. Mr. Baldwin pointed out that a separate contract would be needed to use WithersRavenel as the financing firm.

Mayor Pritchett called for a five minute break for Town Council. UAB members continued their meeting to discuss a recommendation of a contractor for engineering services and financing.

VII. UAB RECOMMENDATION TO TOWN COUNCIL

Members of the UAB unanimously recommended appointing WR Martin as the financial firm and LaBella Associates as the on-call engineering firm to design the water and sewer. Chairman Hyatt documented that board member Clement Riddle, who left the meeting early, was in approval of this decision as well.

Mr. Givens asked if the engineering firm appointed would be utilized for dredging and other functions other than just the water and sewer piece and UAB members stated no. Mr. Baldwin explained that we want a firm to do everything to stop the multiple RFP's. Commissioner Kilby suggested that two contracts could be approved; LaBella for on-call engineering and WithersRavenel for financing.

VIII. COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR

Commissioner Kilby made a motion to appoint LaBella Associates as the on-call engineering firm and to appoint WithersRavenel as the funding firm. Commissioner DiOrio seconded the motion. Commissioner Moore amended the motion adding that appointment of the two firms are subject to an acceptable contract signed by the Town Manager. Commissioner DiOrio seconded and the amended motion carried 4-0.

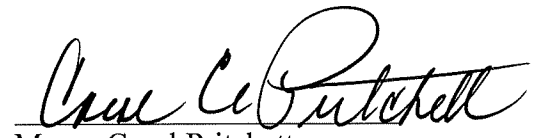
Mayor Pritchett noted that the contract needs to be signed by January 14th.

ADJOURN THE MEETING

With no further business, Commissioner Patrick Bryant made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:05 p.m. Commissioner David DiOrio seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

ATTEST:


Michelle Jolley,
Town Clerk


Mayor Carol Pritchett

