Waldoboro EDA Cleanup of the Former AD Gray School

**Applicant Eligibility:**

The Town of Waldoboro is an officially recognized municipality within the State of Maine. As noted in Section III.A. of the provided EPA documents, a municipality is an eligible entity for applying.

**Previously Awarded Cleanup Grants:**

The former AD Gray School (56 School Street, Waldoboro, ME, 04572) has not received EPA Cleanup Grant funds in a previous year.

**Expenditure of Existing Multipurpose Grant Funds:**

The Town of Waldoboro is not involved in an EPA Brownfields Multipurpose Grant program.

**Site Ownership:**

The Town of Waldoboro has been the sole owner of the former AD Gray school (56 School Street) since purchasing it from the local regional school system (RSU 40) in 2008. As of the date of submission, the Town of Waldoboro is the sole owner of the project site. If awarded the grant, the Town of Waldoboro will retain ownership throughout the implementation of the Brownfields Cleanup Grant funds to address the issues on site.
**Basic Site Information:**

A. The name of the site is the former AD Gray School.

B. The address of the site is 56 School Street, Waldoboro, ME, 04572 (Map and Lot U4/ 63).

C. The current owner of the site is the Town of Waldoboro.

**Status and History of Contamination at the Site:**

A. The Town of Waldoboro conducted a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Review through the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission and Ransom Consulting LLC. This review was done on June 12, 2020 and will accompany this application. The report found lead as the only contaminant of concern identified in the soils with levels of concentration that exceeded the Remedial Action Guideline (RAG) set by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP). There are also traces found on a nearby One-Room Schoolhouse on the same property; however, the focus of the funds would be for the former AD Gray School.

B. The building was originally used as a high school since it opened in 1936. The building has been used by RSU 40 until closing in 2008 and moving to a more accommodating building. The building, since 2008, has been used for a haunted house but has remained primarily dormant. There was an attempt to convert the building into a community center, but the support was withdrawn. Recently, there was an attempt to convert the building into senior housing, but an engineering report—which will also be provided with this application—found the building to be structurally unsound and would not be feasible to convert.
C. As previously stated, the site has had a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Review conducted by a certified environmental engineering consultant (Ransom Consulting, LLC). A copy of the report will be included with the submission of this application. The application will also include the engineering report by SRG Engineering, who conducted the engineering study on the site.

D. The site became contaminated due to the standards at the time the building was created in the 1930s. Lead paint, asbestos, and other hazardous materials that were noted in the environmental assessment were commonly used products when the building was originally built. The Town was going to cooperate with the next potential buyer to clean out the materials, but the engineering report has made all potential buyers choose to not convert the building.

**Brownfields Site Definition:**

A. The former AD Gray school is not listed or proposed for listing on the National Priorities List. The Town was informed by the State of Maine Historic Preservation Office that the site would not be eligible for placement on the National Registry due to the changes already done on site.

B. This site is not subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative orders on consent, or judicial consent decrees issued to or entered by parties under CERCLA.

C. The site is not subject to jurisdiction, custody, or control of the US Government.

**Environmental Assessment Required for Cleanup Grant Applications:**

A copy of the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment is provided with the submission of this application.
**Enforcement or Other Actions:**

As previously stated, due to the structural engineering report by SRG Engineering, the Town will be using the full funds to demolish the school to improve safety in the neighborhood. This is a decision by the Town of Waldoboro Select Board. There are federal funds (Land, Water, Conservation Fund) associated with tennis courts that were built in the back of the property, but that developed location will not be involved with the Brownfields funds. There are no known ongoing or anticipated environmental enforcement or other actions related to the site for which Brownfields Grant funding is sought.

**Threshold Criteria Related to CERCLA/ Petroleum Liability (Hazardous Substances):**

The Town of Waldoboro is exempt from CERCLA liability.

**Other Considerations:**

The Town of Waldoboro recognizes the “Other Considerations” noted in the EPA guidelines (CERCLA Section 128(b) Enforcement Bar, Disposal of Municipal Solid Waste at Contaminated Properties, Liability Protection for Emergency Response at Contaminated Property, and Institutional Controls).
November 29, 2021

Waldoboro EDA Cleanup Hardship Waiver Request

Cost Share

If a waiver is not granted, the Town of Waldoboro would have to receive permission from the residents to bond the 20% match of the total project.

Explanation:

The Town of Waldoboro is seeking a full exemption from the 20% cost share match of this program. It would be difficult to verify if the project could proceed without the waiver being requested. As previously noted, the Town would have to receive permission from the residents to bond the 20% match or to include the $90,000 in the upcoming Fiscal Year Budget, which requires approval on the June 2022 Town Meeting. Having this line item would be difficult in the upcoming year as the community is also involved with contract negotiations for increasing wages for the Public Works Department, Transfer Station, Police Department, and Emergency Medical Services. The Town of Waldoboro is also normalizing the budget to pre-COVID standards for other Departments that received a decrease in previous years. Lastly, the Town of Waldoboro—according to the most recent American Community Survey information—has the following challenges facing the community:
1. Unemployment Rate: Of the 4,338 reported persons in Waldoboro aged 16 and older, there is a reported 2,274 residents that are part of the civilian labor force. The American Community Survey’s most recent 2019 information (pre-pandemic) stated that Waldoboro had an unemployment rate of 2.4% with a 1.4% margin of error. However, the community was reported to have 1,216 residents (50.6%) receiving Social Security.

2. Per Capita Income in the past 12 months: $29,097

3. Data demonstrating underemployment (less than full-time): According to the 2019 American Community Survey, the median earnings range for full-time, year-round workers would be from $43,351 to $44,450. Compared to the Income and Benefits for total households, there are a minimum 943 households (39.2%) who fall below those median earnings.

4. Disasters/ Emergencies: The Town of Waldoboro—like every Maine community—has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as it impacted the already restrained tax base with a lower tax intake and higher expenses for emergency services.

5. Closure or Restructuring of industrials firms: The Town lost the Sylvania industrial plant in 2006, and the owners have officially donated the property to the Town in 2021. This site provided a high number of well-paid jobs for multiple shifts in the area, and has devastated the area’s income levels.

6. Exhausted effective taxing and borrowing capacity: The Town of Waldoboro already has a high tax rate compared to the immediate area in the Midcoast, with a mil rate of $18.20. The Town has had to take out loans and borrowing for capital projects to improve the equipment for our emergency services and other Town necessities.