

# Comptroller Gives Colton \$1M Approval

By LARRY ROBINSON

COLTON - A \$1 million grant earmarked for building new sidewalks and refurbishing a local athletic field in the community has been officially approved for the town of Colton by the State Comptroller's office.

The comptroller's ruling was issued yesterday, the same day the *Daily Courier-Observer* published a front page article aimed at shedding light on the status of the long-awaited funding.

Town officials in Colton told the newspaper earlier in the month that they were unsure of the status of the anticipated state grant which was reportedly secured by former Colton Town Supervisor Hank Ford in 2006.

The \$1 million allocation was the result of a Memorandum of Understanding involving then Gov. Pataki as well as legislative leaders in both the state Senate and Assembly, according to state officials.

Colton leaders first received word of the potential windfall in December of 2006 when Pataki was still in office, but, until yesterday's ruling by the comptroller's office the \$1 million allocation had never been officially confirmed.

The Colton town board, which has already spent some \$20,000 in local money preparing for the grant, suggested at their regular meeting earlier this month that they were unsure when - or even if - the funding would be arriving.

Town representatives had been hoping to begin sidewalk and other improvements with the money this building season.

Jennifer Freeman, a spokeswoman for the New York State Office of the State Comptroller in Albany, said the \$1 million grant was officially approved by her agency yesterday.

She said paper work related to the money will now be sent back to the Department of Environmental Conservation, and that the DEC will be tasked with administering the grant.

"What happens now is that we send the approval back to the DEC," said Freeman. "From our end it has been approved."

The comptroller's decision to formally approve the \$1 million Colton grant is undoubtedly good news for local elected officials, but it does not mean ongoing paper work associated with the project is complete.

Yancey Roy, a spokesman for the DEC, said officials in his agency are now required to enter into a formal contract with the town of Colton before the money can be handed over.

"Essentially the process is fairly routine," explained Roy. "The DEC must now enter into a contract with Colton. Typically it is not days or weeks but probably a few months."

However, he suggested the mechanics associated with entering into the contract should be able to begin immediately now that the state comptroller's office has officially signed off on the \$1 million Colton grant deal.

"The key here is that the comptroller has signed off," said Roy. "If it is not underway now, it will be underway soon."