

**Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Village Wastewater Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 27, 2023 – 6:00 PM
Neighborhood Connections, 5700 VT Rte. 100
Londonderry, VT**

Village Wastewater Committee (VWC) Members Present: Gail Mann (Committee Chair) Sharon Crossman, Larry Gubb, Gary Hedman.

Others in Attendance:

In Person:, Melissa Brown (Londonderry Selectboard), Stephen Brown (Londonderry Resident), Stephen Bergleitner (Londonderry Resident)

Online: Shane O’Keefe (Town Administrator), Chrissy Haskins (Dufresne Group – Project Engineers), Emily Hackett (EI - Environmental Engineer – VT DEC), Tom Cavanaugh (Chair Londonderry Selectboard), Paul Hendler (Londonderry Resident)

1. Call meeting to order -

Gail called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM

2. Additions or deletions to the agenda:

Gail discussed her search for additional committee members as there remains a vacancy on the Committee. There is an interested person who she believes will be joining. She also mentioned her desire to find someone else to take her place as Chair of the Village Wastewater Committee and asked others to help in her search. She expressed her willingness to help anyone who would be interested in helping with information needed to take over as Chair and in the transition. The VWC had no other additions or deletions

3. Approval of Minutes:

Gail Made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 3rd, 2023 meeting, as written, Gary seconded. All others on the Committee voted to approve.

4. WW Site Selection/Evaluation Plan Updates and Next Steps:

South Village: • Update on library property — Follow up and next steps based on recent hydrogeologist report

Gail expressed her thoughts on the disappointing findings of the second set of test pits and hydrology report on the South Londonderry Free Library (SLFL) property with regard to it only being suitable for a capacity of 2,900 gal./day and how that capacity compares to the economics of the construction of what would essentially be a 6,500 gal./day system and its

operation for the substantially smaller capacity. She mentioned there was a fair amount of work put into working with the SLFL board, the Selectboard and the engineers to come to what has become a disappointing discovery. Although 2,900 gal./day would provide capacity for a number of residences/businesses, the expense of building such a system makes it cost prohibitive. Gail would like to express the Committee's thanks in a letter to the SLFL board for their "unbelievable support" with all they did to accommodate and expedite what needed to be done to establish the information needed to determine the suitability and economics of any systems on their property and thank them for their patience and putting their intentions to sell the property to help raise money for the SLFL, on hold until all the testing, preliminary engineering and economic viability could be completed.

She went on to ask both Chrissy and Emily if there were any sort of metrics to measure the cost effectiveness of wastewater projects.

Gary asked if there was any final determination as to whether to abandon the search on the Library property, by the Committee or the Selectboard. He understood that was still further information that had not been heard with regard to whether any potential alternate design modifications would make a difference to the initial findings of a 2,900 gal./day capacity.

Gail asked if Chrissy could reiterate the initial findings on this second set of test pits and hydrology on the SLFL property and what, if any, alternate design methods might have improved the capacity to make it more economically viable.

Chrissy mentioned that the in-house system designer for her firm, Dufresne Group (DG), had taken another job and that DG had hired a sub-consultant, Chris Penessy (sp) from Manse (sp) Engineering who she said is extremely familiar with most of Londonderry, having done many septic systems designs within the town. She said there would be no changes to the budget for system designs and is working within DG's budget. His estimate of what could be done on the SLFL property was 2,500 gal./day.

To give an idea of what a 2,500 gal./day system could serve, Chrissy said such a system could serve up to 9 residences, but reiterated that there was a mixed use capacity need in the south village that consisted of underserved and floodplain properties. She said that based on prioritization from preliminary needs assessment, the fire department and a house next to it, two properties) which both fall in the floodway, were top priorities. Others that would likely be high on a list for need would include, another commercial property and several other properties connected to local or government services to the community (Post office, Library and Town Offices). She said with the estimated capacity those prioritized properties would take of the 2,500 gal./day, there would be enough remaining estimated capacity for three residences. Based on a 2,500 gal./day system, the rough estimated annualized capital and O&M (ongoing maintenance) costs, divided by the number of potential hook-ups served, would be approximately \$1,600/year for a residence. She

further discussed how that relates to the “affordable rates” calculations that the Water Investment Division (WID) uses. The WID uses 1-2% of median household income. For Londonderry, the high end would be about \$1,100/year. She that cost also assumes that all the capacity of the system is used and the total capacity (every gallon) is being paid for.

Gail asked if cluster systems might add enough to balance out the costs. Chrissy said the difficulty with developing cluster systems is finding a willing landowner who has a large system with extra capacity or land to build a system that others would be willing to hook into. Emily added that the purchase of the SLFL property is a Town decision ultimately and based on what the VWC recommends to the SB, based on what the findings have been and the projected cost of this system vs. it’s affordability. Gary asked if the cost of the SLFL property could be spread out over time. Chrissy responded that she included the requested price for land acquisition in all the figures she used. The others were the construction cost, contingency, project engineering, project administration, legal, the portion of the planning advance that needs to be paid back. She then took those costs and applied the 90% ARPA funding and 100% forgiveness on the final design engineering and spread them out over a 40 year loan then added operation and maintenance (O&M) and a reserve, to come up with the \$1,600/year costs.

Emily added that she was not sure a 40 year loan was possible, but was sure a 30 year loan was. Chrissy said that a 30 year loan would cause the annual costs for such a system to be \$1,800/year.

Melissa Brown had several questions. She asked if there was a threshold on gallons/day where a project system becomes unviable because of the cost/gal. or annual cost to those who hook into the system. She also asked if the property were owned by the Town, how would that affect the cost or would it make the system fall within the “affordable” range?

Emily clarified that property acquisition with grant funds would only include the appraised value of the property. If the owners of the property wanted more than the Yellow Book appraisal, the Town would have to come up with the funds to pay the difference, potentially adding costs to the Town that are not covered by the ARPA funds. She said all projects across the state where properties need to be purchased the Yellow Book appraisals are under the asking price. This makes the use of property already owned by the Town where viable, advantageous with regard to overall cost of the projects and also helps the acquisitions timeline. Chrissy added that having to construct a 6,500 gal./day system in order to only get 2,000 gal./day capacity, hurts the cost effectiveness. Where the soils would allow a 6,500 gal./day system with 6,500 gal./day capacity, the cost effectiveness is much higher.

Melissa asked if 6,500 gal./day systems was the goal. Chrissy responded that the 6,500 gal./day figure was the cutoff for various types of permitting. If we go over 6,500 gal./day systems, the isolation areas around the systems become much larger and there is a greater risk of impacting nearby wells, there is a requirement to build two leach fields instead of a

single system. With a single system there is only a requirement to have an area large enough to accommodate a replacement system or a mound system. She added there is also an entirely different permitting process and regulatory program for systems over 6,500 gal./day. With the right property a larger system can be done. Sharon asked if something like an affordable housing project were to be built on the SLFL property, if that would have an impact on the affordability of a system in that property. Chrissy responded that the system size and capacity would not change and the housing units would likely use all of that capacity. She was not sure of the number of housing units needed to make an affordable housing project viable, but her recollection was 20 units, so there would be no advantage to a system or its cost by doing a housing project there.

Gail reiterated her concern that the SLFL property had been key to the south village project as far as a potential site and wanted to know what it means to the project now that we know it is not a viable site and asked Emily where this puts the project and what is recommended. Emily responded that the Committee keep moving forward and keep searching for viable properties. Gail mentioned that she had spoken to an interested property owner in the south village off of Rte. 100. Chrissy said her design engineering consulting had located a promising site on the west side of the river which would be about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the south village center. That property would be added to the list of potential properties in both villages, slated for outreach inquiry. She mentioned that it was a property where there may be potential to go with a system that was greater than 6,500 gal./day which would put that system into the indirect Discharge Program. She said she had looked at the other potential site mentioned and the lot size would not allow for a very large system. Tom Cavanaugh said he knew of several potential sites to look into, also on the west side of the river. (Londonderry Inn, former barn location above it and Fergus Smith's property, Bungalow Road).

Recommendations were to pursue the properties mentioned and some additional ones on the east side of river, north of the village center. Gail asked how far that was from the village center. Chrissy said the distance was under a mile. Gail asked what they do to the price. Chrissy presented various options for how to reduce the cost. She said options could include a forced main, pressure collection or liquid only sewer which would allow the pipe to be drilled which would save on the cost of ripping up pavement. She added that as distance increases systems like drip dispersal systems can save costs that can offset the cost of being further away from the village center.

Gail asked about the Town owned "Prouty Park" with regard to distance. Chrissy answered that in addition to the floodplain and floodway, the soils that are out of those areas do not look good for soil based systems. She mentioned that Enman Engineering had researched a centralized treatment plant on that property a number of years ago.

Gail summarized by saying further investigation of the properties mentioned should be undertaken.

Sharon asked if any properties on the south end of the village had been looked at. Chrissy responded that she looked at properties down Main Street and down Rowe's Road and nothing looked very promising. She looked on the west side of the river to the south of the village and was concerned about steepness of the slope as well as potential brownfield remediation and what was being remediated would need to be known. Gail said the south end of the village might be best for cluster systems as the property owners seem willing to do something in that part of the village.

Sharon asked if any testing has been done in that area and said there seemed to be 10-12 properties in that area and there may be some potential there. Chrissy mentioned one property that was just to the east of the library land, she had looked at with Chris Campany. She said it was directly east of the SLFL land and was a good size parcel that appeared to have better topography. (Wiley, Swinburne, Lancaster) interested parties that should be interested.

Gary said that we should formally rescind our interest in the SLFL property so they can move on. Shane agreed it would be good to write a thank you note to them for closure and to let them know we appreciate their patience and accommodation to gather the information needed to make a final determination.

North Village: • Parks Board/Pingree Park — Selectboard recommendation regarding joint meeting • Custer-Sharp Property: Next Steps • Evaluation of alternative sites status report • Status of soils testing

Gail went on to discuss the potential meeting of the various boards, committees and the Planning Commission to come to some decisions and agreement on Pingree Park (PP) and asked if there was any clarification on when a meeting could or would be held. There appeared to be some misunderstanding about scheduling the joint meeting.

Melissa reiterated her directive that she wanted the Parks Board and the VWC to come to some understanding to work together, rather than being at odds and then move on to a more inclusive meeting to gather public input. Tom Cavanaugh said he believed the format and who was to be facilitator and where it was to be located had already been hashed out in the last SB meeting. Gail felt that the public meeting was not necessary if it had already been decided that Pingree Park was not to be considered. If that were the case she asked the VWC should just let Pingree Park go and move on. Melissa responded that could be the case and asked what was the number of gallons we would be looking of at Pingree Park. Sharon and Gail responded that the VWC does not know what the potential capacity might be at Pingree Park, because the test pits have not been able to be done at the Park to determine this without approval to go forward with doing the test pits.

Gail asked the question if the Parks Board would allow the test pits to be done and asked Chrissy how many test pits would need to be dug. Chrissy said it would entail digging four to six test pits.

Stephen Bergleitner believe that the Parks Board had not finished their opinion as a Board, saying he was thinking they would rather not see the Park be considered, but said from his own personal position, he would like to see the success of the wastewater project overall. He went on to say he and the Parks Board did not want to be the ones to make the decision about considering the Park for siting a wastewater system and doing test pits. He said they felt they wanted to have the public make the decision, even though the Selectboard would still be the ultimate decision making body.

Gail said that the test pits can all be dug, the testing done and be filled back in, in a single day.

Larry reiterated that before we are able to fully know whether there is any viability to locate a system and what the potential capacity of any system that might be viable would be, by completing the testing (which involves doing the test pits) there was insufficient information to ask anyone to decide whether a system should or should not be considered at the Park and that if the testing were able to be completed, it may show there was not sufficient viable capacity, making any further discussion or asking the public moot. He said that if it showed a sufficient capacity system was viable, then everyone would have the necessary information needed to come to a decision as to whether PP should be considered or used to locate a system.

There was discussion about whether the public would want to have the test pits done and concern about the number of test pits and where they would be dug. Gary went explained their size and the process of digging them, collecting the information about the soils and ground water levels and then filling them back in and seeding them all in one day. Melissa reiterated her concerns about the number of test pits where they would be dug and that the decision would be made for a lot of people. Gary said that the flood plain of Utleigh Brook disqualified some areas of PP for consideration and thought that if the potential test pit locations could be located, it might help with the decision to allow the first step to gathering all the information needed for anyone to make an informed decision about whether any system and what size should be considered for collocation of a wastewater system. Gail spoke to the idea that the goal of the VWC is not to take anything away from the Park, but to first see, with all the information we can gather, in hand, whether a viable sufficient system is possible and where it might be located, if a collocation is possible so that the Town is able to satisfy both benefits to the needs of the Town, the recreational aspect and the wastewater needs. Without the full information in hand a vote by the people of the town or a decision by the SB, is not a fully informed vote or decision. Sharon spoke to and reiterated the same issues and concerns of the VWC. That without complete information, a vote or decision, is not a fully informed vote or decision.

Stephen Bergleitner said if the VWC could say the same to the residents asking them about doing the test pits and they agreed, he felt the Parks Board would agree with their decision. Once again, the VWC reiterated that without the test pits are dug the information they

reveal gathered and filled back in and reseeded in the same day, with a table sized patch of disturbed and reseeded soil being the only indicator they were dug. Without them, no one can say whether any system is viable. Once they are dug the information gathered and they are filled back in and seeded, then the basic questions that everyone is asking about, can be answered as to whether a system is viable, sufficient, where it might located, the size and more detail about the capacity. Without that information, a decision by anyone, is not based on being fully informed. If the information gathered from the test pits shows there is no sufficient viable capacity, then the matter of whether a system should be placed in Pingree Park is moot and no further discussion is needed.

Stephen Bergleitner said we all want the town to remain vibrant, take advantage of a once in a lifetime grant and to see the town thrive and said he was speaking for himself, not the Parks Board, saying his interest in being present at the meeting was to learn more about the process. Gary suggested that if Chrissy were able to provide a drawing locating test pits and some text to describe their size, the information they provide and the process of digging them, gathering the data needed about the soils and water levels from them, filling them back in and reseeding them, it would help people understand what they are, how minimally disruptive they are and how they are important in having more complete information to make any further decisions, based on knowing as much as can be deemed from them, about any wastewater systems, their capacity and viability. Melissa agreed and voiced her concerns that in the process of presenting information about potential test pits and their location, something be added to cover any potential further exploration (test pits) beyond what those located, if the project engineers thought any additional test pits may be needed beyond the five or six that were suggested in this meeting. Her concern was based on what has already been discussed as a change from a potential site in a wooded area of the park to discussion of test pits around in a different part of the Park.

Chrissy explained why up to six test pits may be needed. If looking for the potential to build a system large enough to fill fulfill something like a 6,500 gal./day capacity, test pits are needed to cover the area that a system might be located in. She also spoke about the intent of any wastewater system design in the Park being to work around or where possible, integrate the system with existing or planned recreational activities, where possible. She said in trying to work around or integrate (where possible) existing uses and activities, any system design would not be as linear in nature as other designs. It would still be one system, but less consolidated. She also said depending upon what the test pits show, system designs could make an effort to work around existing ball fields and other facilities.

Gail mentioned that if any system is found to be sufficient and viable, and is ultimately found to be approved by citizen survey, the SB on its own or the survey influence on the SB decision with their having the final decision making authority, there may be a good opportunity, with fundraising to do improvements to the Park in coordination with construction of the wastewater system. While the ground is disturbed to construct the wastewater system, then reclaimed following that construction, with funding from another source, additional improvements could be made to the Park at the same time or

construction of facilities that the wastewater system would fit around could be done, so as to complete numerous tasks at the same time, reducing repeated construction periods and disturbances to the soil.

Gail mentioned the advantages of the newer technology of the drip dispersal systems that provide a lot more flexibility in a system's design. Gary recommended adding information about these systems to information about the test pits.

Stephen Bergleitner said he wants to know more. Melissa said she thought it might be a good idea to have someone from the Parks Board on the VWC or a SB member.

Larry added that in consideration of all we are discussing, if collocation is able to happen at Pingree Park, the ARPA funds go further on the construction end of any projects, because the Town does not have to use ARPA funds to purchase property or easements. This provides the best use of the grant funding, if it becomes apparent there is the potential to do so, by collocation and satisfying not just one use, but two uses on one piece of Town land.

Stephen Bergleitner indicated that if all the information that we have discussed is gathered and brought to the public and they see a reason to collocate a wastewater system at the Park, he believed that the Parks Board would go with what the public decided, but reiterated that as a Board, they did not want to make that decision for the public.

Gary suggested that perhaps a motion might be put forth that would recommend moving forward with test pits to gather the information needed for everyone to make informed decisions as to the viability, the capacity and the potential location, with the provision that any nothing found as to the viability of a system would be binding to any requirement to construct a system, without approval based on what the Selectboard chooses to base their final decision upon, be it their own as they are authorized to do or be it based on public vote or other representative measure of public opinion.

Shane commented that the decision to do the test pits should be solely up to the Selectboard and not something that would be put to the residents to decide. He said the place for townwide vote would be for a bond vote for the Town's portion of the ARPA funds 10% match. He said to hold a townwide vote for the decision to locate a wastewater system at Pingree Park, assuming viability, would be to offer some direction to the board as to how the community may feel, but the decision is ultimately, still up to the Selectboard to make.

Melissa added that she thought the best bet for the town would be to provide education materials about what we have discussed because of her observance that she and only a small number of people outside the VWC, Town and State officials associated with the projects and their funding and the consulting engineers, were present at the meeting and that many people were not getting their information directly or from attending meetings or

they were getting bad or wrong information and making their own decisions without really understanding fully.

Gail mentioned that discussion of public outreach was going to come next. She said to finish up with discussion regarding the north village, that the Custer Sharp Town property was on hold pending archeological review so the test pits can move forward once the review has been done. Gary has worked on an inquiry letter to send to potential site property owners to see if they may be interested in discussing the possibility of siting a system on their property further. Gail was concerned about crossing the river and any added costs. Gary said that any system would likely have to cross some stream or river because of the geography of the north village. He gave an overview of the proposed inquiry and how it felt it was important to provide enough information for a property owner to know what the inquiry and the project was about. He said properties that inquiries would be sent to are not named to protect their privacy. He and Sharon said there were about 5 properties identified to send the inquiry letters to and hope to get them out very soon after the VWC had approved them. He said if anyone on the VWC personally knew any of the property owners they may want to call or send an added not with the inquiry.

Gail suggested that just the VWC should be made aware of who the property owners were to protect their privacy in this initial stage and until they are ready to discuss further and have their names mentioned.

Sharon said a phone call and note added to the inquiry letter and information packet would be good, expressing why they are receiving the letter and packet and gratefulness for their consideration of what it is asking.

Gail said it should be presented in some official way possibly on Town letterhead. Gary suggested doing certified mail so it is known that they received the inquiry. The timeline suggested for getting the inquiries out, once the VWC finalizes any edits, would be within a week and Gail mentioned trying to follow up close behind within a week or so.

5. Public Outreach and Prioritization of Deliverables

Gail said she has the Second Congregational Church and Edge Hill Road in the north village lined up for small gathering outreach meet and greet discussions about the projects in each village. Gail asked about what might be a good way to approach getting the word out, whether through post cards or something more official looking on Town stationary. Stephen Bergleitner said he thought a card would be best. Others thought a combination would be good. Gail will speak to the Windham Regional Commission (WRC) will handle the mailing as part of their outreach contract.

Sharon is waiting on the committee at the Baptist church which decides when might be best to do a gathering to talk about wastewater. Gail asked about residents at the south end of

Main Street in the south village about a gathering and who might host one. She said the meetings would plan to be pre-dinnertime around 5:00 PM with refreshments and tidbits. She said Kathy Mosenthal is ready to host and her gathering might give some good insight into what sorts of questions people might commonly ask. Gail was going to ask WRC to do some poster board to display information to try to eliminate the need for computers and screens.

Larry said he has been in contact with the fire departments and has heard back from Jim Ameden of the Phoenix Fire Department and all they need is a date. He has not heard back from the Champion Fire Company in the south village and will reach out again. Gail said that Sue Westa of the WRC recommended doing something like an open house at the Friends of the West River Trail railroad depot with easels and poster boards. Gail mentioned that Kathy would like a small presentation as people seem unaware of what is going on with the projects.

Gail looked at the timeline suggested for outreach put together by the WRC. Mid-April was suggested for the Depot gathering. Gail said with school vacations it may be better to wait until late April. She noted that WRC had included a townwide public outreach meeting in the timeline which might take place at Flood Brook School. Saturday April 29th was suggested and agreed that on or around that date would be a good time to aim for. The meeting between the public bodies in Londonderry was also on the timeline. Gail suggested that she, Sharon and Gail can work on scheduling smaller property owner gatherings. Gary mentioned the Farmer's Market and doing a table there at the opening of Memorial Day, using posters, flyers, food, stickers and more. Gail mentioned the LOGO done by WRC that could be used.

Gail mentioned what she has sent to everyone via e-mail that will be distributed online and elsewhere. The goal is to do two postings a week and rotate the information.

Gail asked for comments on the brief informational piece and mentioned Tom Metcalfe has been very helpful in editing and commenting.

One important point was to rebuild the business tax base from what has been lost, if not expand it so the tax burden can be spread across a wider base and these decentralized wastewater systems are critical to that effort. She continued to run through the various key points and have the Committee members comment. With these edits and suggestions and added information and examples of what some other similar size communities have done the piece can be set to go for a final version to be used for outreach.

Sharon had some envelopes to send out information once the materials are ready to send out. Gary presented some comments on the key points that included not commenting on specific businesses in a positive or negative light. Tom Cavanaugh agreed and requested that we do not make such comments.

6. New Business and Considerations

Stephen Bergleitner commented that this sort of information is really good to present to the public.

Sharon commented that this is great to have because we have been slow to get accurate information and that we did not have good information to present and were waiting on the steps that needed to happen to provide us with that information.

Melissa agreed the information is important to get out to take away a lot of question mark and build confidence in what is being done and open up more conversation

7. Pubic Invitation to Speak (5 minute limit per person)

Gail asked if there anyone wanted to make additional comments. Hearing none, she moved to adjourn.

8. Adjourn:

All approved to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 PM

The next regular meetings of the VWC will be **the first Friday of every month at 9:00 AM** and **the third Tuesday of every month at 6:00 PM**

Respectfully Submitted,
Larry Gubb
Secretary, Village Wastewater Committee

Approved _____.

Village Wastewater Committee
Gail Mann, Chair

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