

**Town of Londonderry, Vermont  
Village Wastewater Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, May 23, 2023 – 6:00 PM  
Neighborhood Connections, 5700 VT Rte. 100  
Londonderry, VT**

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

**Others in Attendance:**

**In Person:**, Gail Mann (Former Committee Chair), Tom Kauffmann (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).

**1. Call meeting to order -**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 AM

**2. Additions or deletions to the agenda:**

Gail wished to add her speaking later with regard her resignation and her help in transitioning her role to remaining VWC members.

**3. Approval of Minutes:**

Gail made a motion to approve the May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting minutes, as written. Sharon seconded, all agreed.

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

**South Village:**

Chrissy said that she and her designer went to look at two properties as potential sites for wastewater systems, walking one of those properties with the property owner and said there was potential for a 2,500-3,000 gal./day system on the property at a spot that looks good and is sandwiched between two wetlands, which would mean wetland buffer considerations would have to be made there. The requirement is staying 50 feet away from both wetlands.

The other property looked at was the Town owned parcel across the street from the Hearthstone. I was not looked at originally based on it being a distance from the south village, but there is now a need to look further and this property has potential to site a

system. Chrissy was not certain of who would need to be involved beyond the Selectboard to seek permission to do testing. Gail said that the further out of the village we go, the more the piping is going to cost.

Gary said that piping material will add to cost and asked Chrissy what size main pipe would be used. Chrissy responded that the pipe could possibly be a 3-4" pipe, depending upon flow. She said it could be drilled which would hopefully cause less disturbance. In addition, it would be advantageous to try to collocate systems with a few systems in the same area or a large system on a single property, that were farther from the village, it would help to save on costs, which help the economics of running pipe longer distances. Gail asked if being further away meant we could expand our target area. Gary said the collection systems still have to be centrally located for it all to make sense. After the collection systems the pipes are pressurized. Those systems are expensive and spreading them out can cause them to be too expensive, so it may be more effective to not hook up structures along the route to an area where there is more density and need. Chrissy said, if a low pressure liquid only collection system is used, not a gravity system and a forced main pump, we may be able to hook in some structures along the route. If it is a gravity system with forced main pumping, we would not want to break into that pipe to expand number of hook ups. A liquid only sewer could be hooked into anywhere.

Gary asked if the liquid only system meant more cost up front to the owner. Chrissy said it could be a project cost and that there were a variety of ways to do this, including adding a pump to existing septic tanks.

The Hearthstone property was the other property walked in the south village and is across from the Town land dedicated to Clyde Prouty. The owner of the Hearthstone property has some loose plans for the property that the committee would work with. Gail said the owner of that property was open to the potential of placing a system on that property.

Sharon mentioned and asked Chrissy about a property in the same vicinity of the Prouty Town land. Chrissy said her designer had done some testing on some properties in the same area and found the soils were not very good. Chrissy wanted to check with him if the property her designer was talking about might be the same property Sharon was speaking of.

Gail mentioned two more responses about properties in the south village and wish to know more about the potential of siting a community system on their property. Something the Committee will need to follow up on.

**North Village:**

Gail said there were several property owners in the north village who were interested in placing systems on their properties. Gail asked about scheduling a walk with the property owner, soon. Chrissy said she would be out of town for the days mentioned, but that she would schedule with her designer to walk the property with the owner and talk about the

potential sites on that property and answer any questions. He was the person who located where the test pits would be dug on a map of the property. Gail said at least one of the Committee members would be there also, to do the walk. Gail will schedule with the owner of the property. There is one other owner in the north village that needs to be followed up with and Gail asked about the Town owned Custer-Sharp property. Chrissy said the Custer-Sharp property is cleared with regard to archeological review, but the property that still needs to be followed up on, would need an archeological review before test pits could be done. Chrissy asked if the Committee wanted to wait until the other property passed archeological review before doing Custer-Sharp. Gail said it would be good to know the results of test pits on Custer Sharp as soon as possible. Chrissy said the Town would have to hire an excavator to do the test pits or do it through donated services, as was done with the library property. Chrissy said it may be easier to do a single RFP to hire an excavating company to do all the test pits as needed than to do separate RFP's for each property.

Gail said she thought the excavation was a part of the funding for the project. Chrissy said their engineering scope did not include excavation, but that it was a fundable cost.

Gary asked Shane and Tom Cavanaugh if the Town had anyone they worked with "on call" to do small excavation jobs like this, thinking the cost might be less than \$1,000 per property. Chrissy said she thought the cost would likely be under \$2,000. Shane asked Emily if the State would have to sign off on any excavator contract they would make. Emily said she did not believe contracts would have to be approved, but funding would only pay for the excavations where archeological review had been done and the property sites cleared by those reviews. Shane said he thought it might be something the Town crew may be able to do, but believed they were already stretched with projects. Chrissy and Shane will discuss how to move forward with getting test pits done on the Custer Sharp property. Gail asked if the Committee thought it should pursue donated services again or go out to get bid proposals. Gary said the Town and Committee were very grateful for those who donated services previously when time was critical for establishing the viability of a potential site, but thought we should seek proposals, thinking some others may be interested in donating services and thinking not going back to those who donated previously would avoid any potential conflict of interest. Gary thought the RFP's could include a day rate, time and materials and that could be used going forward.

Shane suggested lining that up and having bids by the Selectboard's June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Sharon and Gail asked if this would be done for each property and Shane responded that it would seem preferable to find one contractor who could be on call to do test pits as needed. Gary suggested that the RFP's should included a timeline for any work to be performed within a certain number of weeks or days from when a request to do the test pits came in. Shane agreed. Shane said he would put together a scope of services for Gary to take a look at.

Gail brought up a previously discussed property in the north village which would be a great potential site for affordable housing as it is close to town. As the owner had plans to build a home on the property, they wished to have that as a consideration in a purchase price for the property, which they would sell. A fair market value on the property was found to be \$250,000. Larry asked if the owner had any interest in constructing his home and doing an expanded system on the property. Gail said their thoughts were to sell the property for the wastewater project or the combined wastewater/affordable housing project or to retain the property for their own purposes. Chrissy said the soils on the property had been tested by the owner of that property and said to be good, but perhaps not as good, according to her system designer as he would say they were. She also said the cost of the property may preclude the affordability of a community wastewater system. The thought of the Committee was to put that property aside – for now. Gail will contact the owner.

Shane said that there were some funding opportunities that would be opened up with the inclusion of affordable housing on the property. Gail said that the owner was told by his own consultant that the soils were very good and had the potential for a large system and asked if there was any way we could verify that. Chrissy said test pits would be the way to verify, but that different people doing test pits are likely to come up with slightly different results. Sharon asked if we should do test pits on that property. Gail said maybe they could be done at the same time as Custer-Sharp? Shane said the issue would be having an archeological review done on that property, as it has already been done on the Custer-Sharp property. Gail tried to establish whether we should continue to pursue more test pits on that property which would mean scheduling an archeologist to do a review prior to doing more test pits. Two were done for the property owner, Chrissy said more would have to be done for a larger system. Gail said she would contact the Housing Committee to see if they wish to pursue housing on the property and she will contact the owner to let them know where things stand. She said that this may be an adjunct project while the VWC focuses more on properties already in the process.

## **5. Public Outreach and Prioritization of Deliverables**

Gail spoke to some confusion on a poster about the June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting with regard to location of the event and the QR code. Someone had sent a copy of the poster to Shane explaining it was confusing as there was some reference to the Depot and Town Hall (intent is to hold the event at the Town Office Building) and that the QR was not functional. Gail spoke to Sue Westa recently who said the QR code was operable to the correct location, so the only correction needed was regarding deletion of the reference to the Depot. Sue Westa was not present at the meeting to explain more. Gail will work with Sue to make corrections. We may have to re-mail. Postings around town had not yet been made, so correct versions can be posted, once they are available. Gail said the last post in the series was posted on social media and that they would begin to be repeated after this last was posted. Another posting will be done to announce the open house at the Town Offices on

June 10<sup>th</sup>. Gail said the views were about average, but there were people looking at the facebook page and pages associated with it.

Gail went on to talk about the September event suggesting the dates of Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> or Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> based on lining up Julie Beth Hines and getting on her schedule. It was decided to aim for Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. Flood Brook School would be the location.

Tom Cavanaugh asked if other Commissions, Boards had been asked about this meeting. Gail responded that they will be, but that the Parks Board appeared to no longer be a stakeholder since the thought was moving forward with Pingree Park was stalled or no longer an issue. Gary explained that several meetings prior discussion was about doing the test pits at the Park prior to doing the public survey the Parks Board wanted to do, so that everyone knew beforehand, that Pingree Park was or was not a viable site for any wastewater systems. If it was determined that it was not, then there would be no need for further discussion or consideration. If it was viable, the Town would know to what extent. Because the decision is ultimately up to the Selectboard, there appeared to be some confusion about the path forward. There was discussion of doing a test pit map, but it appeared to get lost in the confusion over next steps. Tom said he had not heard a vote on whether to proceed or not, he didn't know how it was left. Gail and Sharon said that there was confusion and some controversy over whether there was permission to do test pits. Tom said he thought that the Committee would get a map of the test pit locations to the Selectboard. Gary and Chrissy did recall that discussion. The Committee was unsure of where the ball was dropped, but that the Committee would pick it up again. Chrissy would get the necessary information to the Selectboard. Shane said that the archeological review would have to come first, if the Selectboard decided to go ahead with the test pits. Chrissy said the archeological testing was running about \$2,700 per property. Tom reiterated that ultimately, all decisions were up to the Selectboard and that any information about test pits should come to the VWC, then to the Selectboard, via Shane. It was decided to get the necessary information to the Selectboard for their June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting so they could make a decision as to whether to move forward with doing the test pits.

Gary asked if we would do some outreach to the Chester Telegraph and others to get the word out. Gail will do some press releases by this Friday.

Gary mentioned that he thought the Committee needs to engage business owners. Gail said that the difficulty has been finding a place to gather. Gail had a few ideas for locations, Sharon, had some additional ideas.

Larry said that It still may be a good idea to engage the fire departments and others suggested that we see how things go with the open house. It may still be a good idea to engage the fire departments, after the open house.

Gail suggested a list of people to gather for a business owners engagement. Gary said it might be best to go door to door to get business owners to sign up for an engagement. Gary said he visits Jelly's often and Sharon said we need to find a way to get Ed Brown involved and talk to the new Coffee Bar/n owners, even though they have their own system planned.

## **6. Update**

Gail asked about any updates on the drinking water testing. She said we need a list of those who still need testing. Sharon said she asked Chrissy to provide the list and said that she and Rich Phelan are ready to do as they did before, where Rich will gather the tests and Sharon will take the tests to the State lab. Chrissy said she was waiting to hear from the State as to whether there was still funding to do the testing or not, as the testing was done through a funding program for residential water testing presented by the Department of Health. The contact person has changed and Chrissy is waiting to hear from them about whether this water testing would still be funded.

Gail spoke about the idea of doing a tutorial and when to do it, with discussion about what a wastewater system would look like, etc.

Discussion turned to using what other Towns have done. Gail said other towns may have more information on how they set up their projects. She mentioned that some of the questions asked at the Edge Hill Road discussion were very good and could be used going forward.

Gail asked if there was anymore about updates. Sharon asked if we did an update on the Committee's engagement with the Congregational Church. Gail said it was well received and that some good discussions were had and good questions asked. All Committee members attended and commented that it was a good chance to talk to people and hear what their thoughts were. Gary added that there was some positive feedback. Sharon said each engagement presented something to use at the next.

## **7. New Business and Considerations**

Gail spoke to her resignation, saying she felt badly about doing so, but felt she had become a lightning rod by people who were not positive toward the wastewater project and did not wish to be so anymore, but wanted to be considered a staff person for the VWC to work behind the scenes and with stakeholders and to do PR. She said she would be happy to hand off and explain things to anyone who is willing to take over being chair of the Committee and going over the details of the project. She mentioned that she thought discussions surrounding Pingree Park created some animosity toward her and felt that it

was good that someone else would take over being chair as she felt the project was so very important for the Town and she didn't want the negativity she thought was being directed toward her, to be brought to the project.

She said her biggest concern was that people who would not be hooked into the system believed that they would be paying a lot for the project and one of her continued goals was to make sure there was a way the cost to anyone not hooked into the systems would be paying minimally. She said other towns had managed to come up with ways to keep costs between \$1 and \$10 per \$1000 of assessment, by keeping the bond payments as low as possible.

She said that water quality and a healthy environment was of utmost importance saying she suffered from health concerns coming from a polluted lake environment where she grew up and this is why she wanted to help the town with this project.

All other members of the Committee thanked Gail for all of the hard work and extensive time she has put into being Chair of the Committee and hope and gratefulness that she can help the Committee retain continuity.

Gary asked Shane how the Committee moves forward without a chairperson. Shane responded that the Selectboard would not choose the chair, the Committee would and that people to fill vacant spots on the Committee are already being advertised for.

Shane suggested that the first order of business for the next VWC meeting would be to choose a chair. The Committee discussed where the next meeting should be and decided to continue to meet at Neighborhood Connections until the AV online meeting system at the Town Offices are up and running and ready for meetings to be held there.

Gail agreed to do the next meeting agenda and provide other paperwork for the Committee and its next meeting.

Tom Cavanaugh said he would be glad to post the agenda for the Committee if he got the agenda in time.

**8. Public Invitation to Speak (5 minute limit per person)**

Tom Kauffmann said he had no comments, but to thank the Committee for all the time put into the project.

Sharon asked Emily one last question regarding how Emily thought the Committee's work was progressing and whether we seemed to be on the right track.

Emily responded that the Committee seems to be on the right track and is making forward progress which is of main importance. She thanked Gail for her time as Chair and encouraged the Committee to move forward with focuses now being in getting test pits down and finding some viable properties for potentials system. Gail asked how soon the grant writer would be done with the actual grant and Emily responded that it should be soon and that the writer was waiting on some things from her, for completion

9. **Adjourn:**

Gail moved to adjourn. Sharon Seconded

All approved to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned at 7:01 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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