

**Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Village Wastewater Committee
Meeting Minutes
Friday, July 7, 2023 – 9:00 AM
Neighborhood Connections, 5700 VT Rte. 100
Londonderry, VT**

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

Others in Attendance:

In Person:, Chris Company (Executive Director, Windham Regional Commission)

Online: Chrissy Haskins (Dufresne Group – Project Engineers),

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM

2. Additions or deletions to the agenda:

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

3. Approval of Minutes:

Sharon made a motion to approve the June 2, 2023 meeting minutes, as written. Gary seconded, all agreed.

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

South Village:

Chrissy said that all known potential sites as of this meeting were awaiting archeological review and reviews are scheduled for August. She will be here through the reviews and then test pit digs and information gathering for them. Her wastewater engineer is on vacation at some point in July, but will also be back in August to conduct tests.

She said there were several properties in what is still considered the south village, one of them Town owned that appear to have good potential, at least one of them with a potential for doing a larger system on it. There is one other potential property where property owners would like to know more about test pits, before giving the go ahead to proceed with them. Chrissy will put together a package of information that we could also use in the continued search for potential sites. Chrissy also reported that the site of one interested property owner in the south village did not turn out to be suitable for a variety of reasons.

North Village:

There was discussion and questions about Pingree Park and where things stand as to whether the Village Wastewater Committee can or cannot move forward with test pits in order to have move definitive information for all parties to be able to make an informed decision regarding whether, beyond preliminary findings, what the feasibility of any wastewater systems would be, on that property, what their design might look like and what their capacity would be. As far as the Committee understood, the Selectboard wanted the Parks Board and VWC to meet and discuss. The Parks Board wishes to do a survey asking the community if they want any community wastewater systems located at Pingree Park.

Larry mentioned that the VWC is constantly asked questions about its work. How many systems would there be, how much space will each take up, what is their capacity, how much will they cost are common questions. Larry asked how is the VWC able to provide this information before the steps that need to be taken to determine some of this information is undertaken? The VWC is only asking to be able to do the test pits at Pingree Park as part of the gathering of information that would inform all parties of the preliminary information needed to answer some of the questions many have asked. Without the information the test pits would provide, no one knows for certain whether any systems are even viable at Pingree Park. If the test pits show that no systems are viable, then any survey or further discussion is moot. If the information from the test pits show viability for any systems, their size and capacity, then there can be discussion and a survey by the community, who is also better informed, by the information gathered from the test pits, as to what any systems might look like, their capacity and possible costs.

The VWC has already had Dufresne Group put together and submitted information on test pits, to describe how they are done and the timeframe needed to do them, as well as filling in and reseeded their locations once the information has been obtained. Sharon mentioned that no survey has been worded, but it may ask people if they want test pits done at Pingree Park, which would be asking people to make decisions without as much information as they could have, without a great deal of disruption at the Park in order to obtain that more detailed information.

The Selectboard wishes to have a survey that is impartial. The VWC is not sure how a survey without critical information or information that may render the need for a survey moot, might be impartial. The planned meeting of all official bodies of the Town and the public on September 19, 2023, was deemed to be the place to have people ask questions and if the SB and Parks Board wish to do a survey without test pit information prior to or during this meeting, it is not a VWC decision, but a Selectboard decision.

Chrissy said there is one more site in the North Village that still needs public outreach. The owners have been away and in order to find out more about the potential of a system on the property, Chrissy needs to obtain permission to walk the property.

Sharon mentioned another property in the North Village that had interested owners. Those owners requested a change in the location of the site of a potential system. She asked what the result of inspection of their chosen location was. Chrissy responded that there were several factors at the new chosen location that made it unsuitable. There was a pond above and wetlands in the area without very good drainage.

Chris Campany asked if the VWC had put together an information piece on not just what test pits look like, what they are for and how long it generally takes to do them, but how they fit into the planning process and provide critical information for being able to proceed to the next steps which include soil capacity that relates to system design and capacity which relates to system cost. Without that information, answering questions about what the total capacity of the cumulative systems in each village are, where and how far piping would have to travel between these system and the properties they service. It also provides a rough look at each village's network of systems and further design as to pumping, pipe size and how to shape the management of each villages overall capacity.

Sharon said that it would be helpful for people to know more about the steps and process, so they can better understand that without these upfront steps being taken, it is very difficult to answer the most common questions.

Tom Metcalfe asked if we might be able to provide even a very rough range of costs, possibly based on the capacities we need and a very rough ball park figure of constructing systems on a gal/square foot basis. He thought this would be helpful to satisfy what most people want to know. What is it all going to cost? The VWC knows it is not possible to detail this, without completing the planning stage, but it would give people something to grasp, as the VWC continues to work gather the information needed to provide more detail about costs.

Chris Campany mentioned that there is another question to consider regarding what the cost of doing nothing could or would be, if current businesses cannot expand and there are few places for new or rebuilt businesses to locate, but for development of locations outside of the floodplain. Those who would develop new structures outside of the floodplain and affordable housing need to be able to make the numbers work. If there are municipal services and infrastructure, like wastewater, it helps the developers cut their costs and increases the chances they might do a development in a place like Londonderry. Otherwise they look first for places that have wastewater infrastructure, making it very hard for Londonderry to compete. He suggested that we might survey or put together information that may have already been gathered about immediate needs, future needs and the effects of doing nothing vs. what challenges might be solved by taking this project to completion. He mentioned some up and coming issues that may or may not affect Londonderry when it comes water and wastewater and certain chemicals found to be circulating in the environment.

Gary said the State has already begun to monitor some of these chemicals in public water supply systems, but is not yet doing so for private wells unless a situation occurs that discovers a problem. Chris said schools present a specific concern and that more generally, septic and well overshadowing can be a problem. Gary said that requirements for testing don't kick in until a water system serves 25 or more persons for 60 or more days. School system requirements are higher and municipal water systems, even higher. Chrissy said that food service establishments have higher requirements as well as testing by the Department of Health. She said staff shortages for testing mean some places are not tested, as they should be.

Chris Campany added that our outreach information should include reasons for considering wastewater systems. Septic/well overshadowing and listing potential limitations to the Town, businesses, residents and residential needs like affordable housing.

Larry said that we've been losing businesses across several decades and they are not being replaced. To redevelop or replace some of these lost businesses, there will be a need for water and wastewater and some properties do not have the property area to do replacement systems if their existing system fails and some may not have the required separation between their well/water supply and septic systems. Sharon said that people are claiming they do not need wastewater systems. Chrissy said that lending institutions may not ask how a property's water and wastewater situations are configured, so in many cases it is buyer beware.

5. Public Outreach and Prioritization of Deliverables

Sharon spoke about the June 10th open house and that it did not attract a lot of visitors, but of those that did come to find out more, there were some who expressed being surprised to learn something new and more than they were hearing from others. Some visitors did not seem to express any change in what they believed was occurring. Sharon asked if another open house should be held before the September 19th meeting at Flood Brook School. The VWC was not definitive in their thoughts, but felt it may be better to wait until the September 19th meeting.

Tom Metcalfe said that the most common questions he has heard are what are the costs, how will the Town pay for these systems and how will the systems be organized and managed. He said it is important to try to get some of these questions answered as soon as we are able. Without being able to obtain all the information needed on where the systems can be located, the size and capacity of the systems, answering these questions has to be in rough estimation form.

Chris Campany said that Juli Beth Hinds should have pricing on many systems in different locations and be able to provide some insight into costs for communities similar to the size of Londonderry and provide more detail on these types of systems.

There was consensus that September would be a good time to hold the community and official bodies, meeting as children will be back in school. Chrissy suggested having a planning session in late August to nail down what everyone is doing

Tom asked about the timeline for this year. Chrissy explained that any property purchases needed to be completed by the end of this year, easement purchases would need to be completed by August of 2024, so it is critical to determine what properties would need to be purchased, as distinguished from easement purchases so efforts can be concentrated on property purchases, first. She said preliminary estimates were maxed out. ARPA funds represent 90% of the total costs, up to the \$7.9 million total for the two villages. For ARPA funds, the Town would need to raise 10% of the ARPA funds and any costs that would be above the \$7.9 million. She said other sources of funding are available to pay for costs above that. Chris Campany suggested speaking to Adam at SeVEDS regarding Northern Borders grants. Chrissy said that Northern Borders grants are very competitive and they need to know how and when the ARPA funds are used and how and why the additional funds would be used and needed. Chrissy said any grants that might be based on increasing jobs would need have business owner partners commit to hiring more people. There is a 20% match of projected costs needed. An Economic Development Administration grant can pay up to 50% of costs.

Larry reiterated that even if the total cost of the projects (north and south villages) was \$11 million, with the ARPA funds granted, Londonderry begins with a \$7.9 million dollar advantage that most communities do not have as a starting point. The Committee agreed that this was an important factor, as such an opportunity is highly unlikely to be seen again and based on preliminary analysis of the needs for our community, the town received the opportunity to receive these funds, nearly 1/3 of the \$30 ARPA funds received by the state for wastewater projects.

Tom Metcalfe asked what are the needs of businesses in Town. Larry responded that the shopping plaza businesses are all set SoLo restaurant in the south village has its own system but there appears to be need at the south village post office, the Town Hall and the Corner Store. Nearly all the businesses in the north village on Main Street/Rte. 11 appear to have a need, for either public water or public wastewater. Chris Campany asked if we have information on the various businesses in town and said that most towns had some level of information on businesses and their situations. Chrissy said it would be good to have businesses express their needs.

Chris Campany reiterated that affordable housing developers find it very hard to make the numbers work where there is no public wastewater and that Londonderry is competing with places that do have public wastewater when it comes to trying to attract developers of affordable housing. Chrissy added that this also applies to elder housing.

Both Sharon and Chrissy talked about what property purchase and easement documents would look like. Sharon has spoken to Shane to get an idea of what they would entail and

Chrissy has reached out to Emily Hackett (EI - Environmental Engineer – VT DEC) about how property purchases and easements can be arranged. Easements can be donated or sold and ARPA funds can cover the cost of easement purchases, but a bond vote is required if the project goes to construction.

Sharon will report progress to the Selectboard at their next meeting and asked about whether Pingree Park should be a part of the report. Chrissy said she would like to be able to do test pits prior to any meeting with the Parks Board, the Selectboard and other Londonderry public bodies. She reiterated that if the test pits show the soils do not provide good and sufficient capacity, there would be no need to have a meeting to discuss whether any wastewater systems should be installed at Pingree Park. Tom Metcalfe asked if there were any way to scale back the number of test pits so that the Parks Board might be more amenable to doing some test pits. Chrissy said she is willing to work with the Parks board, if they have a plan for what they would allow. Tom said he had met with the Parks Board, but said they had ideas of what they would like to do, but do not yet have a plan. Sharon spoke of comments that she had heard relating to fear of wastewater systems being “squishy” and “smelly”. Chrissy and Gary reiterated that a squishy or smelly septic field or wastewater system is not functioning properly. The advantage a municipal system would have over individual property owner systems is that it would be regularly maintained and monitored. Chris Campany said that with other funding, drainage, if needed for the ballfields could be done at the same time any wastewater systems were installed, assuming soils were suitable and systems at the Park, were given the go ahead.

6. Update

Sharon asked about updates on water testing, test kits and restarting the testing. Chrissy responded that the bacteria test kit have expired, but they could be returned for replacements. Chrissy is seeking 9 replacements. Chris Campany asked if the water testing also included salt content testing. Chrissy has a list of what things the water is being tested for (need to obtain from Chrissy to add to minutes) Salt was not on the list.

Gary mentioned that a proliferation of water softeners in town would likely show a high salt content in the water. Chrissy said that because of this, it is important to test water at sources prior to any treatment.

7. New Business and Considerations

Sharon asked if there was any word from Emily Hackett. Emily had not gotten an e-mail about the previous meeting as others had not, even though it had been warned and posted.

The Committee had discussed scheduling regular meetings a number of months prior and those meeting days and times have been included as part of the minutes. There was a

suggestion to also add them to the agendas. This can be done. Chrissy said she would not be available for the August 4th meeting.

Tom asked if we had a task/action list, which has not been part of our meetings to date, other than what is recorded in the minutes as who would take what actions. Chris Campany asked if he could be a part of any discussions with the BDCC (Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation). He also asked if the Londonderry Selectboard would be interested in developing with the Selectboard a calendar of points where they need to make decisions. Sharon asked if Chrissy could put together such a calendar for Chris to work with the Selectboard. Chrissy said she could do so.

8. Adjourn:

Tom made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

All approved to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM

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
Sharon Crossman, Interim Chair

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