

**Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Village Wastewater Committee
Special Meeting Minutes
Friday, December 8, 2023 – 9:00 AM**

**Neighborhood Connections, 5700 VT Rte. 100
Londonderry, VT**

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

Others in Attendance:

Online: Chrissy Haskins (Dufresne Group – Project Engineers), Gail Mann (resident), Emily Hackett (EI - Environmental Engineer – VT DEC), , Susan Westa (Windham Regional Commission)

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 AM

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:

Sue Westa requested time to do an update on the Selectboard meeting attended by Chrissy Haskins and members of the VWC.

3. Approve Minutes of 11/14/23 meeting

Sharon made a motion to approve the minutes of the 11/14/23 meeting. Larry Seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

4. VWW – Discussion

Progress Report: Chrissy Haskins DG - Site evaluations, Timing, descriptions of proposed alternatives, Status of 60%, etc

Plan for January Public Information Meeting #2: Sue Westa, Juli Beth Hines-format, talking points, speakers, video, location, date/time, etc.

Notify Property Owners in both Villages: VWC: distribute/hand out invites, info.

Critical Paths: is project on track? what's new? what's next?

Other

Sharon began the discussion with a review of the meeting topics. Tom mentioned that he had updated the potential site and property spreadsheet this morning and Chrissy mentioned that she had also added the distance from the sites/properties to the village centers so there is an overview of how far each potential site/property is from the service areas.

Tom then asked if the test pits had been completed in the last week. Chrissy said they had not yet been scheduled, but scheduling was taking place with the site engineer. There were four sites slated to have test pits done. Chrissy mentioned that there was a correspondence from one of the four site owners, that suggested that site would have to be pulled from consideration due to the owner desiring to maintain their current use of fields for hay production. This parcel was listed as #5 on the spreadsheet. Chrissy asked for confirmation on their decision and had not yet gotten a confirmation yet. Sharon asked if there might be another alternate property at the end of the road where property #5 is located. Chrissy said that there may be a chance to consider something in that area at a later date, but time was too limited to consider something new and any archeological reviews for test pit locations required the test pits to be dug in the exact location of where the archeological review took place. She mentioned that the requirements make it impossible to relocate the digging even slightly if excavation found a boulder in the spot the review had taken place.

Chrissy said she would update everyone once the test pits had been scheduled and that she was working on the 60% report, having met with Orenco, one of the vendors that provides pre-treatment and liquid only sewer options. They are working on pricing out what they would recommend, specific to the Prouty Town property, sizing a liquid only system to that property and make recommendations for the pump tanks that would have to go in at each property in the service area. She said Dufresne Group had also reached out to Oakson about a drip dispersal system (DDS) at the Prouty Town property and pricing for a DDS there. There will be a comparison to a mound or an in-ground system depending on what is required, in consideration of the borderline soils. Testing will reveal whether the system can or will have to be a shallow, at grade or mound system. Analysis of a Drip Dispersal System will be done in comparison to whatever of those other types of systems is required.

Tom asked about the timeline for the 60% report. Chrissy said she is still on target for the end of December and in consideration for the January 10th meeting. She said the report needs to be out by the end of December so everyone has a chance to review it before the January meeting. Tom asked if there was any specific requirement of time prior to the January 10th meeting to review the 60% report. Chrissy said no.

Sharon mentioned Chrissy's prior mention of her desire to have it done before December 22 because she is on vacation at the end of December. Chrissy said that she planned to complete the report by then, but if for some reason it was not completed by then, she would work to ensure it was done by the end of December.

Tom discussed the plan to have the test pits done the first week of December, mentioning that it had been delayed and that now, there were only 3 sites to do test pits on, due to the removal of #5. Chrissy said that Chris, her stie engineer was scheduling with Hunter Excavating, but did not yet know when they were scheduled.

Chrissy said that assumptions can be made for the 60% report and things can still be priced out for cost estimates and the cost estimates will have very high contingency as recommended by the state currently, because of how project costs are coming in and because bid pricing is reflecting a huge range. She said the contingencies would be at least 30% and ranging from 30%-40%. She said assumptions can be made for the 60% report then adjust them as more complete information comes in for the 90% report.

Tome expressed concern about the timeline and being able to include the sites that still need testing to be included in the 60% report.

Gary commented that he hoped we're able to include information on these sites for the 60% report, but recognized the time of year and the situations may leave us with the best all parties are able to complete. He added that in his experience with current work he is involved in, the contingency amounts sound the same and that he has seen contingencies go as high as 50%. He mentioned that the amounts will look big to those seeing the figures and trying to assess, but he thought prices may begin to stabilize and possibly even come down a bit as time goes on. Tom asked if it had to do with the flooding of last summer and everyone being so busy. Gary said that he felt it was more due to the volatility of the cost of materials, due to a remaining shortage of materials and supply chain issues from the pandemic. He gave the example of the cost of a 20FT long piece of orange PVC pipe go from \$15 to \$80. For a large project, the cost effect is enormous and contractors are wary of the volatility and thus are adding large contingencies to their bids. He said that a well planned and executed project should ideally not have any overruns that run into 50% so the high continencies should present less fear of any projects running over bids with such contingencies built in. Chrissy added that the Ukraine war has affected the supply chain as well as electrical supply shortages. She said this would affect control panels for pumping stations. She also said that contractors for all kinds of things, including waste water projects and are so busy now that there is little to no competition for pricing.

Sharon asked if Chrissy has worked with Hunter Excavating beyond what he has already done for test pits at a donated cost, asking what is rates are. Chrissy said that Hunter had put in a bid for the work at an hourly rate and mobilization cost under a Town bidding process. Chrissy said his rate is typical for this type of work and clarified that the costs for construction of waste water systems is what contractors are so busy with that they do not have to be as competitive as they normally might be, with pricing.

Sharon brought up notification of property owners. She suggested it would involve putting a team together to discuss the projects and asked Sue what might be the best timing to do this, based on the information we have and whether it is enough to go ahead right away or

to wait until there is more information. Chrissy responded that it seemed like a good idea to begin to see who would be interested in hooking up to the system, in the proposed service areas for further planning purposes. Tom asked if Chrissy had a map of the property owners that have been contacted about wells or the wastewater project. Chrissy said she had a list of the properties, but did not have the property owner names. Sue said that the VWC had a list of property owner names based on the mailing that was send to them last June in advance of the public informational meeting, then. Sharon said we can use the list to do further contact. Sue suggested that it may be good to do the contact with property owners soon, but also have enough information to be able to answer questions. Tom agreed it would be good to get input and share information with the property owners prior to a public meeting, but that the VWC should have enough information to be able to answer their questions. Sue said the most important thing was to make sure the property owners get notification of the January 10th meeting, then follow up. Tom thought that the notification should express a rough overview of the project and encourage people to attend the meeting to voice their thoughts. Tom felt the mailing should be to all people in the project service areas.

Sue discussed more detail about the public meeting asking Chrissy if the meeting would begin primarily with a presentation by her and asked how long Chrissy would need to present the information. Chrissy responded that yes that it would be her doing the presentation and estimated that it would take her 15-20 minutes. Sue said she would plan on 20 minutes, plus some time for discussion. She asked if there might be a role for Emily Hackett or Juli Beth Hinds during this meeting. Chrissy said Emily will attend online and be available to answer questions about funding and regulatory requirements, but Emily will not be doing a presentation. Sharon asked about Juli Beth, thinking there may be attendees that have not attended any prior meetings. Chrissy said that the meeting would be to fulfill the requirement to provide information at the 60% stage and was not sure if it would be appropriate to have Juli Beth do another presentation within the meeting, as the meeting will pretty much be solely about the 60% report and the report is not tied to what Juli Beth would be presenting. Sue asked if normally it is just the engineers presenting. Chrissy said that there is likely not enough time for Juli Beth to input Chrissy's 60% report information into preparation for the meeting and that she would be best in helping put together some alternative fee structures to any that Chrissy will present in the report.

Tom mentioned that Juli Beth was able to talk about the projects in relation to answering questions about how the project is being funded, how it is being paid for and how is it impacting Londonderry residents and taxpayers and thought if she was available even online, it would be helpful if she could be present on January 10th. Chrissy responded that the VWC would need to consider all the options for how these questions would be answered, come up with what the VWC thinks is best and then make a recommendation to the Selectboard. Tom expressed the wish that a Selectboard member was present at this meeting to hear some of the details being discussed. Chrissy said that she and Sharon had attended the recent Selectboard meeting and the Selectboard had agreed to having two liasons, Melissa Brown and Martha Dale be present at regular VWC meetings alternating

which one would attend, but were not sure either had gotten notice of this Special Meeting of the VWC. Sue said they should be added to our e-mail meeting notice list. Tom said he would be willing to share the spreadsheeting information with them if that was appropriate.

Chrissy said as many Selectboard members as possible should try to attend the January 10th meeting, in addition to having a liaison at regular meetings.

Sue will contact Juli Beth to see if she can attend the January 10th, 2024 meeting online. She said that someone from the VWC should do an introduction and overview, then proceed on to Chrissy's presentation of the report, saying she thought an hour should be enough time to complete the meeting, unless there was a lot of discussion. Sharon asked if Gary would be willing to do the introduction and overview based in his excellent job at the prior informational meeting. Gary agreed and said this meeting would be more technical and streamlined than the prior meeting and that the 60% report should be made available for any member of the public who wishes to read it. Chrissy said that it would be available for the public to read. Tom asked if Chrissy might have a talking points handout for people to refer to and make notes about on key topics or key information. Chrissy said she did not normally do so, but could put together something, possibly even the slides from her report presentation that people could take with them. All agreed that the slides of the Powerpoint would make a good handout and Tom suggested possibly putting two slides on each page and printing double sided so the handout was not too large. Chrissy said he normal printing was 3 slides per page and would check to see if she could change it, but all agreed, three slides per page was fine.

Sue confirmed the planned time for the meeting was 6:00 PM, January 10th at the Town Office (Twitchell) Building. She asked about equipment confirming that an "Owl" and screen were available and remote online participation capacity. Sharon confirmed. Sharon said with the use of the meeting room and the VWC board located on the riser/stage, there is capacity for 60 persons and printed information can be placed on tables in the hall outside. Sharon will ask Heather Stephenson to help set up the equipment for the meeting. Sue will create a flyer that can be displayed and distributed before and after the holidays. She asked if refreshments were desired again and the VWC thought it would be good to have something there and keep it simple without too much.

Sharon asked about how the flyers would be distributed physically and online. Sue said the flyer would be posted on the Town website, the WRC webpage for Londonderry and to a Town e-mail distribution list, the library and other places in the north and south villages and if there is a means to get it to all the village residents, it would be a good. Sharon asked if both village residents should be sent the flyer or just the south village. Sue asked Chrissy if the north village will be included in the report. Chrissy said cluster systems would be discussed at a high (more general) level, but not in as much detail as the south village community systems, but said both villages will be included in the report. It was recommended to distribute the flyer to residents in both villages. Gail Mann suggested a press release be done as well, placed in the Chester Telegraph and the Vermont Journal.

Sue asked what might be the best time to do the press release thinking that people will be busy during the holidays and may not notice it as well as they might if it was put out right after the holidays. Gail said it was important to check the deadline requirement for each newspaper so the press release was submitted in time, ahead of the meeting, but after the holidays. Gail asked if we wanted to post it on social media, thinking Londonderry Community Forum on Facebook. Larry asked about the Front Porch Forum. Larry will check into how to post on Front Porch.

Discussion turned to the critical path. Sue said she believed all appeared to be on track. The attendance at the Selectboard meeting to discuss the January 10th meeting and their upcoming participation for the purposes of decision making has been completed. The next item was to complete the 60% engineering report by the end of the year. The third item was the public meeting on January 10th, 2024. Once the 60% report has been completed the VWC should begin to look at alternative fee structuring and wastewater ordinances, using models from other towns to aid in recommendations for how to shape Londonderry's. Juli Beth had suggested using the town of Westford as a model. Tom asked if we might be able to use Westford's model and edit it to fit Londonderry's specific situations in order to save time and not reinvent the wheel if there are elements that would apply to Londonderry. Sue asked if we would still be holding our regular meetings on the first Friday at 9:00 AM and third Tuesday at 6:00 PM of every month and the VWC responded, yes. Sharon said if there was something urgent, a special meeting may be necessary.

Sharon asked about using Westford as an example considering their recent bond vote. Sue believed it was not completed. Chrissy said that Emily could give a better idea of what occurred in Westford. Emily joined the meeting and said that many things were different in Westford than what is going on in Londonderry and said that the results should not be a concern for Londonderry. She mentioned the issues in Westford were not about wastewater as much as other things.

Sharon said the Londonderry Selectboard has been made aware recently of their need to prepare for decision making. Emily said that Westford did not need to borrow money, but held a bond vote on a very low amount, relative to what some other towns have needed to borrow, when they were required to borrow money. She said that unless Londonderry needed to borrow money for the project, a bond vote would not be necessary. Sharon said the Londonderry Selectboard often went to the community to try to establish what the level of support for any large decisions that come before it, would be. Sharon did not know whether this would take place for this project. Emily responded that based on the granted funds for the south village, there may be enough to pay for the south village project, using the projected cost for Westford's project that was slightly larger than Londonderry's south village project (based on what is known so far), which was about the same amount as the granted funds for Londonderry's south village project. She said depending upon what is found going forward, if the cost for the Londonderry south village project was covered by the grant amount, only the 10% match would have to be paid for. She said there was still some information needed regarding land costs and about specifics of how the Prouty park

property would be handled. She added that most towns were not doing referendums on whether to go forward or not with a project, but said it was the town's choice to do so or not. She also said it would be good to have the referendum vote, if that were the choice of the town, sooner than later because it would affect the timing for any bond vote that may also be needed, again depending upon whether a bond vote was necessary. This, keeping the overall timeline and deadline dates for completion of steps related to the grant funding.

Tom was curious about whether the Town is willing to do something like a bond vote for major projects that are critical to the Town. Emily added that from her perspective that the south village project had a better reception by the residents than the north village. Sharon said that most of the discussion in the south village was about water and water testing and that more needs to be done to discuss wastewater with south village residents. Larry asked and Sharon agreed that some south village residents and business owners had expressed a need for wastewater in the south village. Sue said there had been communication with the south village residents about the wastewater project. Sharon said nothing had been done directly.

Sue wanted to discuss the WRC website page that is dedicated to Londonderry's wastewater project, and whether a link to the GNAT recordings should be included. All agreed it would be good to have the link on that page. She said Juli Beth had mentioned some things that should now be removed from the page, including the Pingree Park alternative, outdated material and she suggested the ARPA table be replaced with the critical path. She also suggested that the Warren, VT case study might confuse people. Sharon questioned whether the Pingree Park material should be taken down or left in place, but strike it out. Sue thought leaving it up might create confusion. Tom said that if the Town had made its decision, it seems best to remove it.

Sue said the only remaining agenda item would be the recent Selectboard meeting. Chrissy reviewed what they discussed with the Selectboard, including the critical path and timelines going forward and the importance of the Selectboard becoming knowledgeable about what is being presented in the 60% report and their being ready to accept the report to indicate support for moving forward with the project, saying there would be no actual commitment to go forward with the construction at that point. She said the Selectboard in general indicated that because they formed the VWC as a formal committee, that was their support for the project. She felt that were listening to and were interested in what they were hearing. Tom asked if there was any discussion of policy and ordinances with regard to their having to be decided on as an upcoming issue for them. Chrissy said they did bring that up and how it will start with the VWC looking at various options for user fees, capital costs for construction and what an ordinance would look like and how the VWC would bring recommendations to the Selectboard as well as how ultimately, the decisions would have to be up to the Selectboard as they have the responsibility to make those decisions. Emily reiterated that this is how other towns have proceeded. Chrissy said that she wanted to discuss how the VWC needed to begin talking about how to begin putting this information together to make recommendations to the Selectboard. Sue asked if the VWC first needed

the 60% report. Chrissy said that Juli Beth could help before that by providing some examples where the numbers could be changed, once more information is received, to be specific to Londonderry. Emily agreed and added that Juli Beth is the most knowledgeable on a variety of means to do ordinances, fee structures and more and what other towns in Vermont are starting to decide. Sue will contact Juli Beth in that regard. Tom said he would like to see at least three models from other towns in Vermont to try to establish which might be the best fit for Londonderry and to show as comparisons for the one finally selected for Londonderry. He added that we also need input from property owners who would likely be users and consideration of all potential aspects of the project. Emily said that in her experience, trying to keep the project affordable has been important and something the VWC should keep in mind.

Tom said the project is really a synergy between planning commission, the local needs and environmental health. He spoke about how to connect all these various aspects and asked if they can be included in the report. Chrissy said she can provide various sources of funding, but that she does not know all of the funding resources available beyond what is directly applicable to water and wastewater, for things like housing and economic development. She says she knows some of them. Tom suggested that if she knew any of them, it would be helpful. Chrissy said she knew of one through ACCD (Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development) that would provide some funding for water and wastewater if the project would be adding jobs and adding affordable housing that met the definition of affordable housing. Emily said that she believed that specific grant program was ending on December 15th 2023. Sharon added that the application was a large one. Emily also said that the \$3.9 million grant may be enough to cover the cost of the project, considering the slightly larger project of Westford projected cost was \$3.8 million. She said that would not be known until the 60% report cost estimates for Londonderry were known.

Chrissy added that the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program grants also required a commitment to providing the affordable housing and jobs stated that would be added as part of the application. She mentioned for one project, a letter was required from a builder to add jobs as part of the application.

Gail asked for clarification on the money provided in the grant. That is was \$3.9 million for the south village, not \$8 million. Emily iterated that it was \$3.9 million for each village and that what is not spent in the north village, will go somewhere else. The south village, would be eligible for its cap of \$3.9 million based on it going to construction. Tom suggested that this would be good to have in the report to clarify what is happening, going forward, with discussion of how some funds can still be used for planning in the north village. Emily was unsure, because of ongoing discussions with her team as well as with Shane O'Keefe (Londonderry's Town Administrator), how much would be allocated to the north village.

Sue asked if Emily knew when discussions with Shane would take place. Emily said hopefully in the week following. She said some money would be available for planning and design, but possibly not for construction, under the worse case scenario. She said if it was

known some surrounding landowners were willing to commit to something like a cluster system at the Custer Sharp Town property, then some money may be allocated for construction of a cluster system there, but she was unsure. Chrissy gave some examples of what sorts of agreements and arrangements would have to be made in order to plan, then construct systems in time to meet the timeline deadlines. Sharon asked about whether there should be continued inquiry to property owners in the north village to see if some might agree to a cluster system arrangement? Emily said this would not hurt, but that all money has to be reallocated by the autumn of 2024 and then spent by the autumn of 2026.

Sharon said that from various community outreach meetings in the north village, even with very preliminary information there was greater interest in the systems by attendees than there was before these sorts of meetings. She also discussed the meeting earlier that week with the Selectboard and whether there may be a way to get the Selectboard to express more support publicly. She expressed that while some members of the Selectboard seem interested in being more involved, there does not appear to be an overall expression of support and her thought was to see if there might be a way to get them to do so, but without suggesting they were already committed fully, but that maybe it would be helpful to the town, assuming all the numbers worked well. Chrissy said she thought that the Selectboard expressed support, but ultimately it was the Selectboard's decision to decide to express support more publicly. Gary expressed his thoughts that he was not sure how much that would affect overall support. Larry said that another way to approach the same might be to ask residents who may be in favor of the project, to let the Selectboard know in some way, by writing or in their discussions with any Selectboard members or in a Selectboard meeting or a VWC public meeting. Sharon felt that not knowing whether the Selectboard expressly feels the project would benefit the town right up until the last minute, may not be as supportive to the VWC as might possible to be helpful to the VWC.

Gary added that mixing this with targeted outreach to those who would likely hook into the system who saw it as a positive, would be helpful for the Selectboard to gauge community support. Sue added that sharing the information from the January meeting to further discuss with them would be helpful. Gary suggested that we might add to all the public outreach a note asking anyone in support of the project, to contact the Selectboard. Sue said there is a receptacle to receive e-mails with thoughts on the project. Sharon said that encouraging people to express their support will add to what is normally and mostly people expressing otherwise.

5. Next VWC Meeting

Chrissy added that the Selectboard mentioned trying to stick with regular meetings and not have a lot of special meetings in lieu of regular meetings.

Gary asked if we can announce more than one meeting at a time. Sharon said we have done the same thing for the Planning Commission.

Tom asked if every committee in the town has to post their own notices and if the town could collect all the agendas and have someone post them at one time. Sharon responded that the difficulty would be some randomness to meeting schedules.

Sharon said she would ask Heather to arrange for a regular announcement that could be adjusted as needed.

The next meeting would be Tuesday, December 19th at 6:00 PM Neighborhood Connections

The next regular meetings of the VWC will be **the first Friday of every month at 10:09 AM** and **the third Tuesday of every month at 6:00 PM**

6. Adjourn:

Tom made motion to adjourn, Sharon seconded. the meeting was adjourned at 10:51 AM

Respectfully Submitted,
Larry Gubb
Secretary, Village Wastewater Committee

Approved _____
Village Wastewater Committee
Sharon Crossman, Interim Chair

Link to AV recording of November 14, 2023 meeting below.

Topic: Village Waste Water Study (Gail Mann- 802-856-7669)

Date: Dec 8, 2023 08:57 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

You can copy the recording information below and share with others

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/ObKBPUJ6iVeku4rCZ8hnA9kV7l0w_Ae4sZwYiu3WHmC98aDSAnOyQ_EVR0LBRAjV.F8EuhUomG_J1OHil

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