

**Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Village Wastewater Committee
Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 19, 2023 – 6:00 PM**

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

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

Others in Attendance:

Melissa Brown (Londonderry Selectboard), Martha Dale (Londonderry Selectboard)

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

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 PM.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:

No additions or deletions.

3. Approve Minutes of 12/08/23 meeting

Sharon made a motion to approve the minutes of the 12/08/23 meeting. Gary 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 meeting with introducing the presence of Melissa Brown and Martha Dale, both members of the Londonderry Selectboard (LSB). Martha said that she and Melissa would be alternates in attendance at the VWC meetings in order to provide more immediate and direct communication with the LSB as its requirements to make decisions on how projects will proceed, become imminent.

Chrissy began reporting on progress with the 60% report, saying that submittal of the report by the end of the month is on track. She was hoping to complete it by the end of this week to complete it before her planned vacation time.

She said additional test pits had been done last week, with the exception of property #8 on the list Tom Metcalfe had compiled of properties slated as potential wastewater system sites, requiring and still needing test pits. Work on property #8 test pits was not done due to running out of time and sunlight needed to be able to proceed with them. A rescheduling was plan for later this week or possibly next week.

The Custer-Sharp Town property test pits had been completed. The results which are not final until further study, suggest the potential for a small mound system, in the approximately 2,000/day range.

Parcel #10, in the south village across the river from Main Street. It was found to be unsuitable based on a significant amount of groundwater found when the test pits were done. Chrissy explained that the area was found to be very wet when staked out and that the soils presented evidence of mottling, which indicates high groundwater.

She continued to describe the properties that showed promise as alternate sites, stating that for the south village, the “Prouty” town owned property and property #2, which is near the “Prouty” land and a privately owned property. The 60% report will show concepts and cost estimates for those sites.

In the north village, the Custer-Sharp town-owned property, the property across the river to the south and the property off of Hell’s Peak Road which has not yet had test pits completed on it. She said assumptions will be made for the 60% report. All three of those will have concepts and cost estimates done. She mentioned that as discussed in prior meetings, with the VWC and with the Selectboard that at the State level there is a concern that the north village projects, would not be able to get to the point of construction to meet timelines. Emily Hackett and Lynnette Claudon from the State suggested that Londonderry look at cluster type systems be investigated in the north village as an option to progressing projects there. Chrissy said that her preliminary findings on cost estimates for community systems in the north village are looking to be expensive and suggested the recommendation in the 60% report would be to go to cluster systems.

She said she is more than halfway complete with writing the whole alternatives evaluations.

Sharon asked if this was for both villages, Chrissy responded, yes.

Melissa Brown asked if cost estimates for the north village are directly connected to the amount of money that has been allocated to the north village. Chrissy explained that the report will put together the cost estimates for everything and compare it to what sort of funding is available through the ARPA money, estimated to be \$3.9 million for the north village, which is intended to cover 90% of the project, if not less, depending upon the cost estimates. Once cost estimates are more detailed, an evaluation will be done of what, inclusive of the ARPA funding, the cost to users will be. The typical “user” would be a single family residence, called an “equivalent dwelling unit”. Analysis would be done to figure out what the cost to an “equivalent dwelling unit” would be, taking into consideration the capital costs and the operation and maintenance of the system. That information provides what is needed to determine the affordability of the system.

Melissa asked if the Selectboard would need to make a decision as to what steps to take based on the 60% report. Chrissy responded that in the 60% report there will be the evaluation of the project and a recommendation for ways to proceed. To proceed forward the Selectboard would need to accept the report and further discuss the recommendation, if required, then come to an agreement to move forward to completing the 90% report. The recommendation does not have to be accepted and comments can be made, but the recommendation in the 60% report will be enough to move forward with.

Melissa also asked about discussion in the Selectboard (SB) meeting earlier this evening in which it was believed the SB needed to make a decision by the end of the year as to continuing forward with any part of the north village project, based on their understanding that the north village project is less viable and that ARPA money for that would be allocated to another town. Emily Hackett said that Melissa was correct, saying that she had a meeting with Shane O’Keefe, the Londonderry Town Administrator and it was discussed that by the end of January the State would like to see a proposal or solution to the north village to look at cluster systems, where landowners surrounding the location of any cluster systems need to buy-in to those systems making them more complicated to complete than standard decentralized community systems. She said the State is at a critical point regarding the north village, in comparison to the south village where there is high confidence in a viable project where construction could be completed within the ARPA timelines. The State also feels that two projects for one town may be too much for a town to complete within the given timelines for the ARPA funding. The State would like to see a project completed and the south village has the best chance of success. As such, it may be better to give it the attention it needs for the success of the project. She said the south village grant had been completed and sent to Shane and the Town for review. She asked if any questions have come from any review, thus far. She reiterated that the State did want to hear how the Town would like to proceed regarding the north village, by the end of January.

Martha mentioned two upcoming Selectboard meetings, on the 8th and 22nd of January, 2024. She said that Emily's explanation clarified some additional time from the end of this year (2023) for the SB to make a determination about the north village. She also asked if the south village got a go ahead as being viable and a project that should be moved forward, could Londonderry still keep the north village project option viable for some smaller amount of funding, once the 60% report and evaluation of the north village project is done. Emily said that by the end of January, the State would like to see what the proposal and costs might be for the north village. She said that if something like a singular small decentralized community or a cluster system might be viable for either design or completion, rather than numerous cluster systems, there may be a means to retain some ARPA funding for that once they see what the estimated costs would be. She said all ARPA money needs to be reallocated by the end of 2024. In addition, a new legislative session will begin and they will be looking at which projects are viable for the same purpose of reallocation, stating that it is important to make decisions about the north village soon.

Sharon said the VWC has noticed that some north village residents have become more engaged about wastewater after some recognition that the south village project is more viable and want to know more about prospects in the north village. She suggested that the VWC may want to resume or continue with small gatherings to provide information to north village residents even with the knowledge that funding may be limited, there may be more people interested in cluster systems than known, even if it was only to get to the planning and design stage. Emily agreed and said a different means to figure out a way to pay for construction, could come later or even commensurate with the planning and design stage, but reiterated time is of the essence with these considerations.

Patty Eisenhour asked the VWC to clarify the two systems being discussed and whether the funding covers costs for both. Emily responded that funding is for a "community based solution", saying that unfortunately there appears to be a lot of high groundwater in the north village. This makes finding viable sites for larger systems that would treat more than a few properties adjacent to a single property, difficult. It also makes finding enough capacity in mound systems difficult. Small cluster systems where properties adjacent to the property a cluster system is located, may be more viable, but require property owners to agree to using the system. All users of any type of system have to be located within the designated village centers and buffers. The wastewater systems themselves may be located outside of the village centers and buffers, but user's properties must be within.

Sharon asked Emily to remind everyone if businesses are eligible to hook up to these systems. Emily responded that any property located within the village centers and buffers can be connected to the system. She gave the example of several businesses being able to find a property to locate a system that was cost effective, they would be eligible for funding. She also reiterated that the difficulty with cluster systems is that all property owners around where a system is located have to agree to hook in to it, making the process more complicated.

Martha reviewed the coming procedure for the SB where they will first receive the 60% report that will provide information for the SB to make determinations from cost estimates, whether the Town would need to borrow money and determine how much money the Town would like to be able to use for the north village, in consideration of it not getting the full amount originally slated, based on difficulty in meeting all the requirements for full funding. Chrissy affirmed. Sharon reminded everyone about the public meeting on the 10th of January 2024, where the 60% report will be presented and discussed. Chrissy added that getting the 60% report out as early as possible would allow not only the VWC and the SB to review it before January 10th, but Londonderry property owners and residents to review it, so that they may formulate questions to ask at the meeting.

Patty had another question regarding the effort to move structures out of floodways - is there funding for community systems and cluster systems, out of the designated floodways. Larry explained that there is funding for this, but for Londonderry, because of the complication of getting agreements from the necessary property owners and because of funding timeline constraints, the north village may not find that all work required for the planning stage to be completed for all potential cluster systems, to move on to the construction phase, is possible. Emily clarified that ARPA Village Water and Wastewater Initiative is focused on designated village centers and their buffers and are created by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (VACCD), which is different than Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program, a loan program, which Emily's work falls under. She said other sources are completing their grant funding timelines for this type of work and that the ARPA funding is unusual in that it is not likely to be seen again in the amount of dollars currently funded, for a very long time.

Larry asked about future prospects for funding of this type. Emily responded that she was not sure. She added that in the world of clean water the funding is different than wastewater systems funding. With regard to drinking water it is completely different. She said in the clean water programs, this amount of funding was unheard of, saying the last time something like this current amount of ARPA funding may have happened many years ago. She said funding like this is not seen very often, especially for the amounts seen from ARPA. She said that using what funds might be available to maximize planning and design in the north village would be very helpful to forwarding a project toward construction, even if funding needs to be in the form of a loan.

Martha asked if Chrissy might be available for the January 8th SB meeting to answer questions. Chrissy said she was available.

Sue Westa began review of plans for the January 10th, 2024, 60% report public meeting. She said the focus of the meeting will be on the 60% report and that Chrissy and Emily will be in attendance. She said unfortunately Juli Beth Hinds would not be available to be present. She said the flyer about the meeting was sent out to the VWC last week, with hopes it has been distributed by Londonderry and the Committee. She said the press release has been prepared and is ready to send out. Date location and time are all set as

well as the equipment for remote attendance. Sharon will bring some refreshments for the evening. Larry asked what time the VWC and presenters should be there to set up for the meeting. Sue thought if everyone got to the Town Offices at 5:30 PM, that should provide enough time for setup.

Sharon asked if Chris Campany (Executive Director of the Windham Regional Commission (WRC)) would attend the January 10th meeting. Sue said she would ask if he might be available.

The planned time for the meeting was an hour. Chrissy said she wanted to devote more time for questions after her presentation than to the presentation itself. She thought an hour should be enough time.

Marth asked Chrissy if she had any testimonials from other projects where people have commented on the value of municipal wastewater to their community and/or to them personally, either as a property or business owner. Martha praised how Juli Beth Hinds was able to relate these kinds of projects to the community during the last public informational meeting in October. Chrissy said that many of the similar projects in the rest of the state are in the same stages of planning as Londonderry, so it may be difficult to find testimonials to completed projects. Emily also spoke about various other projects and how Waitsfield does not have a community system, but rather a number of cluster systems and is now going through the process of going to a community system. She reviewed what stages some towns similar to Londonderry are currently in and said there are not really any completed systems to draw testimony from. Juli Beth spoke of Waitsfield's cluster systems which might be helpful in discussion of the north village, but stressed that the 60% report public meeting is required as part of the overall funding process, but for the required environmental review, to present the alternatives to the community, then to discuss the recommended alternative.

Sharon mentioned the most often asked questions about these projects from people who ask: "Why do I need it", "how much is it going to cost", how much is it going to raise taxes" are the most common. Larry said that the VWC will be working on how to answer all of these sorts of questions in order to provide a recommendation to the SB. Juli Beth Hinds will help with that and Chrissy said the report will have some information broken down by dwelling unit, but will make some assumptions based on what funding is available versus how much the project is estimated to cost and present scenarios of what costs would be if just users are paying for everything or if all the costs are spread across all taxpayers, then additionally how it might look if certain parts are paid for only by users with all taxpayers sharing the capital or some other costs. She said Juli Beth will have additional options on how to structure costs and payers with regard to available funding.

Gary wanted to take information on Custer-Sharp test pits to the Conservation Commission. Chrissy said she did not have the test pit logs, but cited that the system would likely be a mound and there was approximately 30" to the water table or ledge. Basically, a fairly small

system. Sharon mentioned that there are a fair amount of properties adjacent to that property that might be interested in a cluster system. Chrissy said that for the number of users and piping them all to the system the costs may be too high/per user.

Emily wanted to check in about the ARPA Grant and make sure it had been distributed to the VWC and the Selectboard to review for the south village. She said it should be reviewed before the next SB and that she would make herself available to answer any questions then.

Sharon asked about VWC getting handouts to property owners in user areas and will begin on that work. She also asked about other critical path items.

Sue said most was covered, but that the VWC should review the ordinance that she had sent from Westford about wastewater so Londonderry could begin to formulate its own.

5. Next VWC Meeting

The next meeting would be Friday, January 5th, 2024 at 9:00 AM Neighborhood Connections

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

6. Adjourn:

Sharon made motion to adjourn, Larry seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Larry Gubb
Secretary, Village Wastewater Committee

Approved _____.

Village Wastewater Committee

Sharon Crossman, Interim Chair

Link to AV recording of December 19, 2023 meeting below.
Topic: Village Waste Water Study (Gail Mann- 802-856-7669)
Date: Dec 19, 2023 06:04 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

You can copy the recording information below and share with others

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/A_b8iHIWAlt52oBwjLeR-AQH06414ZsWJiSdNGmr8wSWF8wT4K3YMqe_L4YYW4Ns.M8xPrh6cTVQzn63K

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