

Village Wastewater Committee Meeting Minutes

Wolcott Town Office and Zoom

Tuesday, January 2, 2024

5:00PM

In Person: Jim Ryan, Linda Martin, Allen Carpenter, Bruce Wheeler, Peter Lazorchak, Seth Jensen, Tori Hellwig

On Zoom: Tricia Follert, Maria Stadt Mueller, Nathan Kie, Emily Hackett, Achouak Arfaoui, Juli Beth Hinds

1. Welcome & Introductions; Public Comment (5:05)

One change to the agenda, to add an update about CWSRF priority list application. Bruce motioned to approve the minutes. Tricia seconded. All in favor.

2. School Board Vote on the Wastewater MOU and June 11th votes

The School Board voted yes on 12/20! Signing the MOU is a big threshold for this project. The document will be amended to hold the school harmless for well impacts and testing. Elliot Waring was sent updated MOU and Stackpole and French have been reviewing. Linda will confirm with the full Selectboard whether they are comfortable with that, or if the Town attorney needs to review. Selectboard meets again 1/3.

All votes for this project are scheduled to be on July 11. There will be a town vote and a school vote.

3. Update – Outreach subcommittee

Tricia provided an update about the work done between meetings. The subcommittee met last week and started to put language together about the project, including talking points for what we want to emphasize with folks in town. We all need to be on the same page with messaging. Points include building the community (how & why), how other kinds of businesses could move in with livable wages, how the funding is coming together. Need to get folks talking about the project, its importance for the Village, and the opportunity for Wolcott. Small web updates have been made. A refined cost estimate from Stone is expected before Town Meeting Day to help with outreach about the project.

4. Planning for Public Outreach Session

The subcommittee is interested in holding a public presentation meeting. February is too soon. Town Meeting Day is the goal, to have a booth and advertise the committee meeting and public presentation. The March committee meeting will be changed to March 12 to accommodate Town Meeting and the presentation session. The March meeting will be abbreviated to accommodate ~1hour public presentation. A news story in the News and Citizen will be organized to hit the press in advance of both of these meetings. The

subcommittee will continue to meet to develop content and structure of the public presentation.

5. Grants Update

The Wolcott project is technically eligible for up to \$4million in state ARPA funding. In addition to the \$2.56 million already awarded, an additional \$1.5 million was requested. If this is granted, and the CRRP grant is awarded, the capital cost of the project would be covered and the Town could avoid any borrowing all together. The outcome of the additional ARPA request is dependent on state goals and other projects. DEC will not be able to make any decisions until the current IUP round closes, no exact timeframe, may not know until after June but before end of 2024. The Wolcott PPL application should be strong.

There was discussion about whether the Town will need to go out for a bond vote, in addition to the school vote, on June 11. A bond would be needed for any amount of money. Given the possibility of not having results of the additional ARPA request before June, a bond vote is likely. The committee will need to confirm the bond vote schedule, and help that inform an outreach schedule. LCPC is going to confirm with DEC whether there could be contingency language in the bond vote language, and continue to look into other funding sources.

6. CWSRF Project Priority List Application

Needs to be submitted by January 16, and will need to be discussed during an upcoming Selectboard meeting (1/3). The Selectboard needs to confirm that the project will continue with “business as usual.” Failed (not “failing”) systems would strengthen the application and give it more points. Specific properties do not need to be identified. What constitutes a failed system for the purposes of this application was discussed. DEC and other partners present said it could be damage to major components, system is beyond repair, ponding/surfacing effluent, or a threat to a drinking well.

7. Updated Service Area Map

Map minorly updated from the Preliminary Engineering Report. Stone changed the color of the parcel lines, and included additional properties at the south end of School Street. There was discussion around the Lamoille River side of Route 15 at the end of the proposed force main, and whether to extend the force main a bit farther, but it was ultimately not included. A motion was made by Tricia to approve the service area map as depicted in the map drawn on 01/02/2024. Linda seconded. All in favor.

8. Ordinance Development

The committee continued discussions from previous meetings about the criteria to be included in the draft ordinance. Jule Beth Hinds provided a brief description of what typical ordinance language includes. Typical ordinances are cut and dry, that properties must connect if there is a system failure and no on-site remedy. Most systems are also prohibited if they are created/increase into a WPA. Wolcott will consider whether to take a stringent approach of connecting in the service area no matter what, or determining some “opt out” criteria. The committee will continue to consider these policy decisions about the criteria.

Overall, the cost of the system is supported better with more connections. There is no cost to hook up at the time of construction.

At the February meeting, different maps will be considered, depicting 100-year, 500-year floodplains, river corridors, federal v. state maps, etc., to help decide what map to reference in the ordinance criteria. The committee will also continue to discuss other factors in order to opt out of the system such as lot size, potential documentation requirements (i.e., permit in hand?) or demonstration of a fully-compliant system (by a certain date?), and whether the right soils exist on site to support a septic system.

Meeting Adjourned (6:58)

Next meeting date: February 6, 2024 at 5:00PM