Wolcott Village Wastewater Committee Meeting

Wolcott Town Office and Zoom

April 16, 2024

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

On Zoom: Tricia Follert, Emily Hackett, Achouak Arfaoui, Forest Anderson

1. **Introduction; Review and Approve last Committee meeting minutes**
   Reviewed previous April meeting summary. Linda motioned to approve, Tricia second. Motion passes.

2. **Continued Discussion and Updates on Bond Vote and School Vote processes**
   Elliot and the School attorney are working on the wording for the school vote. The required Informational Session for the town bond vote will be at the school on June 4 at 5pm, for about 45 minutes (including questions), and then the School vote will follow at 6pm. The Info Session will have to include the bond article, and can also include the scope of presentations that have been shared with the community to date.

   The bond article and warnings were read aloud and reviewed by the Committee. Errors and requested changes will be sent to the bond attorney to update in advance of the Selectboard meeting on May 1.

   Continued outreach was also discussed. The info session will be included in front porch forum posts up until June 4. At least one post will be dedicated just to the votes being in 2 separate parts, and remind folks of the option for an absentee ballot. The Committee can pick up completed ballots from voters. A paragraph will be drafted about the school siting, as well as health/safety discussion covered in the School Board presentation in December. The outreach group will revisit the talking points document.

3. **Updated Wastewater System Capital Costs from Stone Environmental**
   Updated project costs were provided, with options for 20% and 30% contingencies. The construction costs of the project increased slightly to accommodate flood resiliency measures, such as flood proofing the STEP tanks.

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There was a slight reduction in costs due to a portion of the force main being located out of the roadway, and 6 less properties to be connected. The drip dispersal system cost didn't change too much, and what was once a stream crossing became an additional bridge crossing. There was also a small increase in engineering for standard State "fee curves." The new estimated cost of the project is 4,424,230.00 with a 20% contingency. A new Engineering Services Agreement to come.

4. **Continued Discussion on the Distribution of Costs and Bond Vote**

Some project funding updates were provided. The Town was invited to submit a full NBRC application, but won't receive a potential notice of award until late June. Additional State ARPA funding is also possible, but will not likely know before September. The Committee was reminded that a bond will only be needed if the Town needs to incur debt. A bond will not be needed if additional grants and funding come in.

Birchline Planning, LLC reviewed the updated cost spreadsheet. Different bond vote amounts and their impact on users fees and payments were observed. Rate options were explored, including differential rates for residential and commercial users. Fixing the residential rate will shift costs to the commercial users and Town tax base. The Committee can decide on fixed rate amounts for users, but shift user rates/amounts once additional funding comes in.

The options for bond vote amounts were discussed. A 30% contingency would support uncertainty of cost estimates. Stone Environmental and LCPC have experience with volatile environments for labor and construction costs since the COVID-19 pandemic. LCPC gave an example about their Smuggler's Notch project.

Linda motioned for a project cost with 20% contingency, with a recommendation for a bond vote to raise $1,124,230.00 as a maximum amount. Bruce seconded. Motion passed.

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