

Town of Hague
Sewer Asset Management Committee Meeting
12/14/2015

Members present: Edna Frasier (Supervisor), Ginger Kuenzel (Town Board), Chris Navitsky (public member), Phil Smith (public member), Diane Trudeau (Assistant Budget Officer), Joe McDowell (Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator), Steve Grimm (Rural Water, Facilitator). Absent: Jim Beaty (public member).

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 13, 2016, 3 pm

Homework: Continue reviewing sewer law

Issues discussed:

- DEC has developed the [Municipal Sewage System Asset Management Guide \(PDF\)](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/101419.html) and will conduct a three-year pilot program with 20 participants to test and improve the guide. See also <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/101419.html>. Steve noted that software has not been selected.
 - The Committee discussed the pros and cons of participating and whether Hague should apply for one of the 20 slots. The pros are that the participating entities will get free assistance from the selected engineering firm. It's not clear how much assistance, however. Also on the pro side, at the end of the three years, the town would have an approved asset management plan. Phil also mentioned that being in the pilot program could be advantageous for getting grant funding.
On the con side, it involves a tremendous time commitment as the Town would have to submit a lot of data. Most of the burden would fall on Diane Trudeau for the financials and Joe McDowell for the sewer system technical data. Edna is concerned that neither has the time to commit to this. Joe and Diane agreed that it would be difficult. There was some discussion about how much help individual committee members could be in collecting data. It seems that, although committee members are willing to volunteer their time, the data collection might be something that really needs to be done by Diane and Joe.
 - The Committee decided that it would be a good idea to apply to be part of the pilot. There's no guarantee that Hague would be selected as one of the 20, since many have applied. However, the application is fairly easy to fill out. Edna will bring the issue to the Town Board so that they can pass a resolution authorizing the Town to submit an application to be part of the pilot.
 - Chris and Ginger will work on filling out the application. The due date is January 20, 2016.
- Steve left a copy of the Utility management certification study guide with Edna and suggested that all Town Board members should at least read through the booklet. Edna said she'd let the other Town Board members know.
- Review of sewer law – The Committee began reviewing the existing sewer law and had several suggestions for removing or changing wording. Ginger will incorporate those changes and send to Committee members. The Committee will resume its work on this at its next meeting.
- Issues that need to be addressed: Who is the enforcer – ZEO (code enforcement officer) and/or plant operator? The Committee agreed that the plant operator identifies a violation and passes it along to

the ZEO for enforcement. It must be a partnership. We should make this clear in the law. Diane said this is how it used to work, but maybe it's not working that way now. Forms exist for this.

- Grease traps in restaurants and motels with housekeeping units – Need to look at whether language exists about this in the law. If not, we should add it.
- Issues raised about sewer law at November meeting or prior:
 - Steve noted that we might want to add language about the need for rigid insulation of pipes.
 - Should we add language in the law to require periodic pumping of septic tanks at properties where pump is installed in septic tank? Suggestion was made to perhaps require pump-out of septic tank any time that the pump fails. Jim also suggested that we could require adding cement blocks to septic tanks so that they hold less effluent. Law should state that installation in septic tanks would not be allowed in the future, but existing ones are grandfathered, subject to the regulations stated above.
 - Commercial: Need regulations for grease traps.
Joe suggested requiring preventive maintenance for grease traps – for instance, pre-season. Steve noted that this then also needs to be part of the enforcement provisions.
(From October meeting: Consider adding language about grease traps to Section 808: provide specs that are based, for instance, on seating capacity, number of fixtures putting wastewater into sewer, etc. Committee also discussed whether commercial establishments need different pumps than residences have. If so, who pays the difference? All those in sewer district or the commercial establishment owner? Or is it a shared cost? Who pays if pump-out is required because of excessive grease? Sewer district or property owner?)
 - From October meeting: Question arose of who is responsible for the tank that the E-one pump is in. This should probably also be clarified in the sewer law.
 - From October meeting: Clarify in the sewer law the roles of operator and ZEO. Both have distinct roles here. Operator has the technical expertise to identify violations. ZEO has enforcement authority.
 - Section 1001 of sewer law addresses Enforcement Response Plan. We should take a look at what we have in this regard. Diane sent this plan out to members of the Committee after the October meeting.
 - Permitting process for installation / enforcement of the process
 - Who owns the valves connecting the homeowner's lateral to the sewer main?
 - How to handle cost of grinder pump replacement (sewer district or homeowner?)
 - Suggestion was made to check NYRWA forums to see if we can network with other towns regarding provisions of sewer law.

New action items:

- **All Committee members** – Continue reviewing sections of sewer law, so we can continue the discussion at January meeting.

Open action items:

- **Steve:** Provide information to the Committee about insurance that is available for the Town for issues such as freeze-ups.

- **Cedarwood:** Obtain a quote for fixing the SCADA system. There will be two parts to the quote: cost of a quick fix and cost for a longer-term fix.
- **Edna/Diane:** Ask Tim Costello to check pump stations at NLGYC and Oliver residence as pumps were off for a week or more after a power failure. (Done?)
- **Jim:** Talk to Edna about reaching out to Ticonderoga Supervisor/WWTP staff about developing a checklist for e-one pump issues when problems are reported. Perhaps they have a checklist, or would like to work with Hague to develop a list that both towns could use.
- **Edna:** Speak with Cedarwood about making recommendations on which grants to apply for in the future, helping us prioritize them and working with the Town on the applications. (For instance engineering study of collection system; also see 'radar screen' items).

Keep on our radar screen:

- Apply for grant to update infrastructure documentation and have GPS mapping done of collection system. DEC will require maps of Hague's waste water treatment collection system as part of the asset management plan. Steve's organization (Rural Water) provides GPS mapping services. We should also have as-built plans, which currently do not exist, as far as anyone knows. Suggestion was made to apply for a grant to get the mapping and documentation done.
- Tracking WWTP employees' time spent on various tasks, based on the following categories: collection system, plant O&M, homeowner calls. Best way for employees to track this is a daily journal that they keep with them.
- Ongoing communications: Develop communications materials for sewer district residents to ensure they have information about work of the Committee, the status of the plant and what is being done to address the issues. This will enable residents to understand the sewer rates and why they are increasing, and give them confidence that their money is being well managed.
- There is some documentation at the WWTP and also at the Dodd Hill pump station. It seems like these might be the only copies. Diane noted that we should have copies made to keep in the vault at the Community Center.
- Hague Sewer Law needs to be reviewed so that it can be enforced. List of items to clarify/add to/amend in sewer law (maintain an ongoing list, adding to it as items arise). See also page 1-2 of these minutes.
 - Permitting process for installation / enforcement of the process
 - Who owns the valves connecting the homeowner's lateral to the sewer main?
 - How to handle cost of grinder pump replacement (sewer district or homeowner?)
 - Enforcement of law (who is responsible?)
- Consider study of collection system (infiltration, freeze-ups, location of valves). Current study is only for plant and pump stations.
- From May meeting: Jim suggested that the Sewer Asset Management Committee could offer support to plant staff, for instance if operator trainee needs someone to go along to speak with homeowner. Or Chris or Jim or another Committee member could stop by the WWTP occasionally to show support, find out how we can be helpful, etc.
- Create database of grinder pumps, with detailed information.

Next meeting:

Meetings are at 3 pm at the Community Center

Wednesday, January 13, 2016