

Town of Hague
Sewer Asset Management Committee Meeting
3/9/2016

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

Next meeting: Monday, April 11, 2016 at 3 pm (see page 4 for complete 2016 schedule)

Homework: Continue reviewing sewer law

Action items:

- **Steve** – Ask Jamie Herman to revise energy-efficiency audit report to reflect Ambit rebate.
 - **Ginger** – Continue pulling together communication materials to share with residents
Update system management improvement plans (financial viability, infrastructure stability, product quality)
1. Hague is looking for funding to help implement the recommendations in Cedarwood’s 2015 engineering report. If we do not get grant money, the Town would need to look into a bond because the costs would be too high to be covered simply by increasing the sewer user fees. Gretchen Pinkel from Rural Water Development, Water and Sewer Loan Program, was present to speak about funding opportunities for the Town.
 - Applications for loans and grants are accepted by her organization throughout the year.
 - Hague does not qualify for grants because the Median Household Income is too high in the sewer districts. However, we could qualify for a loan. Loans are for 38 years at 3-1/8% interest.
 - We would need to submit a preliminary application, which helps determine eligibility. This should include the professional engineering report (PER). Gretchen will send the Sewer Asset Management Committee the checklist of what her organization needs to have included in the PER.
 2. Edna reported that she spoke with Jeremy of DEC after the last Sewer Asset Management Committee meeting and he said that our chances of getting the WQIP grant would not be any better than last time (when it was rejected) if we resubmitted with additional information. Thus, Edna felt that it was not worth the time and effort to resubmit. However, she has been trying to contact Jason to update him on this, and has not yet been able to reach him.
 3. Communications materials for residents of sewer districts about the work that the committee is doing, milestones and progress made. Items to include: Mixers (saved \$50,000 by acquiring high-quality used mixers); getting closer and closer to meeting SPDES permit levels; seeking ways to increase efficiency and save money – including doing some repairs in-house, grants, develop/adhere to preventive maintenance schedules
 4. The committee continued its review of the sewer law.

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.
- NYSERDA provides rebates for equipment that improves energy efficiency. Determine the process for getting this rebate: select a VF drive that is energy-efficient and call NYSERDA to ask if it would qualify. Joe knows a person at NYSERDA named Kathleen, when we are ready to make the inquiry.
- 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. Include energy-efficiency audit in these communications.
- 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.
- Consider study of collection system (infiltration, freeze-ups, location of valves). Current study is only for plant and pump stations.
- From May 2015 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.

Issues to address during review of sewer law:

- 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. Forms exist for this. **To do:** Jim and Ginger will talk to Tim Costello to determine what process has been in the past, and what forms exist. Create a flow chart.
- What is 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?)
- 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.
- Should we 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 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. Do 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?)
- Who is responsible for tank that the E-one pump is in? Clarify this in the sewer law.
- Section 1001 of sewer law addresses Enforcement Response Plan. Review what we have in this regard. Diane sent this plan out to members of the Committee after the October meeting.
- Who owns the shut-off (curb stop) and check valve connecting the homeowner's lateral to the sewer main (i.e. at property line)? Also, who owns controller and cable? Who owns housing/tank for e-one pump?
- How to handle cost of grinder pump replacement (sewer district or homeowner?)
- Check NYRWA forums to see if we can network with other towns regarding provisions of sewer law.
- Should we disallow pumps in septic tanks? For those that are already installed, consider making these be changed out when there is a property transfer.
- Ask attorney about language to include regarding new users paying capital costs (i.e. if a property is subdivided or if district is extended)

Next meetings:

Meetings are at 3 pm at the Community Center

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| Monday, April 11, 2016 | Thursday, September 8, 2016 |
| Thursday, May 12, 2016 | Thursday, October 13, 2016 |
| Thursday, June 16, 2016 | Thursday, November 10, 2016 |
| Thursday, July 14, 2016 | Thursday, December 8, 2016 |
| Thursday, August 18, 2016 | |