

Town of Hague
Sewer Asset Management Committee Meeting
6/23/2015

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

Next meeting: Tuesday, July 21, 3 pm

Homework assignment: See action items on page 2. Also, please put **7 pm on August 18** on your calendar as date for public information meeting for sewer district residents (pending Town Board approval). All Committee members should plan to attend this meeting.

Issues discussed:

- Steve noted that insurance is available for the Town for issues such as freeze-ups. He will get more information about it for the Committee.
- Asset Management Plan (AMP): Steve noted that two items still must be added to AMP as required by consent order:
 - 1) "A narrative supporting the criticality and condition assessment" of items on critical asset list. See 4 c) on page 12 of the consent order.
 - 2) "Ranking and prioritization of needs based on the assessment of assets required in paragraph 8 b. herein." However, there is no paragraph 8b in the consent order, so it is unclear what this means.
- We should make plans for which grants to apply for in the future and prioritize them. Committee suggested that Cedarwood be asked to make recommendations on this and work with the Town on the applications. (For instance engineering study of collection system; also see items listed to be kept on radar screen).
- There must be a balance between raising enough money through sewer fees to operate the wastewater system sustainably (including reserve funds, capital improvements, etc.) and not placing an unaffordable financial burden on sewer district residents. Suggestion was made to contact our State and Federal legislators to inquire about programs to help lower-income people with this. This is also a good opportunity to let them know about the status of our sewer system and the actions we are undertaking.

Communication: Committee agreed to ask Town Board to schedule a public informational meeting on August 18 at 7 pm for sewer district residents. Committee members, as well as Steve Grimm and Tom Suozzo should be present at that meeting. The committee discussed what should be communicated. Agreement that the main thing people want to know is the reason for the rising cost of sewer fees. People want to have confidence that we have a handle on costs and a go-forward plan for keeping the WWTP operations and infrastructure financially and environmentally sustainable. Ginger, Jim and Diane will meet on July 2 to start developing a pro forma budget that will also include a five-year capital plan as well as a sinking fund.

Topics for next meeting:

- Set milestones for achieving success in areas that need improvement (identified by Committee at outset as low achievement/high priority). These are Financial Viability, Infrastructure Stability and Product Quality.
- Review pro forma budget (to be created by Jim, Diane and Ginger)

New action items:

- **Steve:** Review Level of Service notes and make comments so they are ready for Committee to finalize at July meeting.
- **Ginger:** Draft letter for Edna to send to State and Federal legislators about financial assistance programs for residents who cannot afford sewer costs.
- **Phil:** Check with Dan Anderson about an hour or cycle meter to use in analyzing issues such as inflow from ground water (see bullet point above about NLGYC and Oliver residence pumps).
- **Edna:** Speak with Cedarwood about narrative about criticality and condition of items on critical asset list (See second bullet point under 'Issues discussed on page 1).
- **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).
- **Edna:** Ask Tom from Cedarwood to put August 18 at 7pm on his calendar so that he can attend the public informational meeting

Open action items:

- **Steve:** Send Ginger a copy of the reporting template created for WWTP staff so that it can be included in the minutes/archives of the Asset Management Committee
- **Steve:** Get info about insurance 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.

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.
- From January's minutes: Brian (from Cedarwood) will also work on listing the required O&M activities that need to be performed, including the frequency with which they need to be performed (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.). This will enable the Committee to create a calendar and populate it with the requisite tasks.
- 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 as soon as possible so that it can be enforced. Currently, it is not clear who is responsible for enforcement. List of items to clarify/add to/amend in sewer law (maintain an ongoing list, adding to it as items arise)
 - 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.

Meeting schedule for remainder of 2015

All meetings are at 3 pm at the Community Center

Tuesday, July 21

Monday, October 19

Tuesday, August 18

Monday, November 16

Monday, September 21

Monday, December 14

Public Informational Meeting (pending Town Board approval): August 18, 7 pm