



Brad introduced himself. This year they helped prepare the preliminary engineering report for the Community Wastewater project. Brad explained the history of the wastewater project briefly and brought the new board members up to date on the project. The engineering report is the basis for state funding the project may receive and has been submitted to the state at this point. The report explored the possibility of using the Maple Shade Town Forest (MSTF) as a disposal site, something the MSTF parcel had been purchased for. Part of the report explored pretreatment options. Once an additional study of the disposal site could be completed and more capacity could be procured with pre-treatment then the Town could go forward. This is scheduled to be done around May. There is also a heavy environmental impact study that needs to be done. Brad highlighted the service area in the report. They have also spent a lot of time looking at funding mechanisms as it is an important, yet expensive project.

Juli Beth was present and had done a lot of the work on the funding for the project. The capacity we are looking at is 12,600 gallons. About 20% would serve the immediate needs of the town such as the Town Office, Library and Brick Meeting House. There are not good options for the town facilities without off site disposal. About 60% of the capacity would be available to connect existing users around the Town Common. About 20% would be available for future uses that need wastewater capacity. It would be the equivalent of about 10 residential units or some residential and some commercial. It does not provide a lot of room for growth but does allow some flexibility. The potential disposal site with pre-treatment at the town forest lengthens the life of the potential system. There is about a 16% cost difference to add a pre-treatment, so not inexpensive, but the extra flexibility for food related uses can be worth a lot to businesses and protects the soil-based system. The total cost would be about \$2.3 million.

Lee asked how many existing residences in the immediate area that would be? Juli Beth explained that the 60% was from existing non-town specific uses while the first 20% was town specific uses. Juli Beth explained the individual town uses are based on building capacity. Bill asked that if the Common Hall and Brick Meeting House are not meeting their capacity on a regular basis why is it given a number as if it is. Juli Beth explained that it is a conservative approach to ensure that the capacity is enough for anything that may occur on any given day.

Bill asked what is the problem with putting in a non-pretreatment system and then in the future if we find we need more capacity we can find the funding for the pretreatment later? Brad explained that there are some systems that work this way, it is not uncommon however it comes with its own issues.

Andre asked if the Brookside Road capacity includes homes to be built or is it based on existing homes? It was based on seven existing homes. Becky Roy thought it seemed that a lot of the properties were town owned. Her concern was that those places, especially the Westford Common Hall, Brick Meeting House, and Library are not used seven days a week. How is the capacity measured for those? This question had been answered previously with Bill. Her other question was how will this all connect to the wastewater treatment system? It was her understanding that it means somehow blasting through the ledges in front of the Westford Common Hall. Brad explained that all of the lines for bedrock removal would all be within the town right of way so they would likely hit rock somewhere, but it would be very unlikely to need blasting. Juli Beth explained the frequency of use numbers. It is set by the state regarding number of seats and number of employees. It is not something we can control.

Dave Baczewski asked if it was possible to set the capacity differently when we know we are not going to be at max capacity at any given time. Brad explained that it comes down to the seats they have counted for those venues and capacity is done by the state. Dave asked if we could remove seats would that bring the capacity back up for future development? Brad said yes, in theory, but capacity is not something an owner of a business is typically willing to give up. In Brad's opinion if we truly have 115 seats those need to be accounted for. Melissa explained that the seat numbers were devised based on fire capacity in the venues.

Vicky agreed that we need to get creative about the capacity limits. Andre understands that the sizing of the system is based on the formula, but his concern is that if we try to lessen the size of the system, but the usage ends up being greater, then we are going to run into trouble. He understands it is expensive to meet for implied and current uses, but he thinks that if the system does not meet future capacity, it overloads and fails, and the remedy would be more expensive to fix.

Bob asked based on the 42 units if there have been any estimates of what the annual operating costs would be? Juli Beth explained that the annual cost was \$29,000 for a system with pre-treatment. That is based on experience with other similar systems, and we would have a contract with the pre-treatment company, which is about \$7,000. She explained that the system is not incremental, it cannot be divided per household as there is infrastructure that needs to be in place regardless. The number of users comes into play when you figure what each individual user would be asked to pay.

#### **NORTHERN BORDER REGIONAL COMMISSION ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT – LETTER OF INTEREST**

Seth Jensen from the Planning Commission was present. Seth explained that one of the ways to make the system affordable for the Town and for users is to go after several funding resources that are available. The Northern Border Regional Commission is specifically for providing funding for northern rural communities. This is a letter of interest. It does not commit the Town to an application but does open the door and gets us on the radar of different funding opportunities. At this time, the Planning Commission suggests submitting a letter of interest for the Community Wastewater Project targeting the maximum awarded amount of \$500,000 based on pieces of the project the Planning Commission feels fit the criteria. They have asked for \$459,000 that would be part of a funding stack. This brings it into the more affordable range for the Town, with the understanding that the Town's part would need to be put before the voters. This is due March 26<sup>th</sup> so it would be prudent to decide.

Lee thinks this is a prudent way to proceed. We need to keep these options open even if the voters decide to not go forward with the project. Dave Baczewski made a motion to submit the Letter of Interest, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

#### **BOND VOTE LETTER OF SUPPORT - DRAFT**

George Lamphere of the Planning Commission was present and explained that part of the process is to also be prepared for when we begin to submit applications for funding, not just for Northern Borders, but for others as well. The Selectboard has been asked to consider committing to a bond vote with the community. This is not intended to be a rush or push as it does not say that there is a bond vote for a given amount, just that the intent is there, and that the Selectboard is willing to hold the vote if we get to that point. It is also something that would go to Northern Borders with the application if we decided to apply and a similar document

would likely to go to other funding sources we may apply for. Juli Beth explained that these letters are helpful to funders to see if there is a local appetite.

Andre Roy asked for confirmation that it does not commit us to a bond vote, just that we are interested in one, so it does not corner us into doing it. That was correct. Andre asked that it is implied that user fees cover a portion of the cost, so how would those fees be set for the first year? Juli Beth explained that the fee is set by the Town, and it is based on equivalent residential unit, a flat fee per single family. It would be known what that estimate is prior to bond vote. Vicky asked if the letter of interest indicates a date for a bond vote or that it is just general? Bill believed it was for Town Meeting Day next year. Melissa explained that this did not need a motion yet, but around mid-May would be a timeline.

Seth wanted to explain the timing of the May 2022 date in the letter that Bill had referenced. It is because if a grant is awarded, funds need to be committed by the following September and the next time a regular election would be happening would be Town Meeting 2022. If the Northern Borders grant is NOT awarded, that timeline may not be the timeline recommended, but for the Northern Borders grant this will demonstrate that the Town, if awarded, will take the steps necessary to see if they can provide the full match. He understands it is a tight timeline.

#### **NORTHEAST SITE SOLUTIONS & WIRELESS REAL ESTATE – CELL TOWER INQUIRY**

Brad Gorham was present. Wireless Real Estate developed a program where residents can identify where they are having cell phone coverage issues. Last year it was run in Vermont, and they saw a large cluster in Westford. They are hoping to collect data in town so that the Town will have the information it needs to potentially go forward with a cell tower and increase their cell coverage in town. Carol Winfield explained that several years ago the Westford Common Hall was approached by one of the local cell companies about putting a cell tower in the steeple; they are still considering this option.

Melissa had spoken with John Farrell earlier and they had discussed putting a cell tower on town property. Is that different? Brad explained that he did not know any carriers that would be interested in building a tower in town, so it is not necessarily premature to talk about that, but a survey can more easily help us get carriers interested. Bob Bancroft had been approached recently from a company about putting a tower on his property but had not heard much since this past November. Andre Roy asked if the survey would encompass all the carriers and if it came back that there was a need for a tower, would it serve all the various servers of cell phones? Brad confirmed yes.

Vicky thinks it is great they are offering to run the survey for free and is curious where the firm makes their money. Brad explained that the survey is free and explained they do not make money, they are simply interested in what effect this sort of survey would have on rural areas in Northern New England with the carriers. The value to him is to understand what his platform can do and help people get coverage.

Mark Drapa was present. He explained there are many notable gaps in coverage in Westford and that a survey like this would be helpful in helping Westford validate the data that many people in town know to be present. He would be curious to learn more. Brad asked Mark what he wanted to hear about. Mark wanted to understand the logistics, what does the survey look like, how much sample size is needed, do we receive the data, and how do we communicate the validity of the survey to carriers?

Brad explained that the survey is a blank map that is submitted by individuals voluntarily. He would provide the town with the maps, etc. The value of the data is still something he is looking to understand.

Lee thinks this is a good cost for the town, free, and does not see a reason not to do this as he would be very interested in seeing the data. Bill agreed with Mark that the poor coverage even affects those traveling through the town. Bill would love Mark's committee to tackle this task as they had done so with the Public Wi-Fi.

### **CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING REQUEST FOR WASTEWATER AND 1705 VT RT 128 PROJECTS**

George Lamphere explained that he thinks the most important part of this is that this is an opportunity they did not realize existed until a few weeks ago, thus moving quickly. There is not a lot of turnaround time but what they are seeking is for the Selectboard to support this effort and apply for this funding with a motion. They are still in the process of putting their documents together and they would pull together a cover letter signed by the Selectboard that would go along with their survey.

The Town received a communication from Congressman Welsh's office about a survey they were inviting communities to participate in. They will take the data from the survey and upload it to their system and through the House of Appropriations Committee they will review them; some will get funding and a lot will not. The feedback the Planning Commission has gotten talking to those familiar is that they are very encouraged by the readiness of our program and the structure and preparedness of where we are currently. The Planning Commission are going to be putting together two asks, one is for \$1.1 million for the wastewater project, and the other would be an ask of \$800,000 to support brownfield remediation and culvert relocation costs associated with the 1705 redevelopment. George is not certain what is going to happen at the 1705 property, and they are still looking at that but regardless the brownfields remediation and culvert replacement are needed so this helps the longer view. The deadline is Wednesday of next week and they have two surveys to complete which both are on their way to completion.

Juli Beth explained some background on such funding. The opportunity that was announced allows each congressional representative to nominate up to 10 projects for funding. The projects must be at a point where the funds could be expended by the end of FY'22. Westford is at a point where if the Town were to move ahead with preliminary engineering, congressional funding could greatly enhance the affordability of the wastewater system project. We are at a very good point now.

Bill had no feelings between if it was a special meeting or just have the Planning Commission sign. Vicky asked if Juli Beth could clarify if the ask of the Selectboard is to make the application and what does that process commit the town to? Juli Beth explained it simply nominates the wastewater project and 1705 as a community project for federal funding. Andre Roy asked with this type of funding and the reality that we have to spend the funding by end of FY'22, is that the town or federal fiscal year? It was the Federal.

Bill is inclined to hold a special meeting so the Planning Commission can get the documents together and so the Selectboard has time to think about what has been presented. Dave thanked everybody. He thinks the proposal is well researched and well thought out and there is little risk to Westford as we need this funding. He was supportive of moving forward. Lee

felt similar to Dave. He does not see much downside to putting our name on the list, the funds can certainly be put to good use, and we should be pursuing this.

Lee McClenny made a motion that the Selectboard authorize the Planning Commission to submit Westford's projects to the federal government for funding as the opportunity has come available in the recent days. Dave asked if the motion was just for the wastewater or for the 1705 project as well. Lee explained that it was his understanding that the 1705 items needed to be done regardless as there was a brownfield issue there. George explained that the two different projects are separate requests, but the program is very clear that we must tell them which project is our priority. So, getting one would not inhibit one. Bill asked if the Town could spend money on the 1705 property if we do not own it? Mark Letorney, who has worked on the 1705 project, explained that the culvert involved the municipal properties and the common. The brownfields are part of the town revitalization as development of that property is not possible regardless of ownership without remediation. The site work that we proposed to do in developing the property is directly linked to the corrective action plan, so we are sort of partnered with that. If the Town does intend to use the 1705 property for municipal expansion or even revitalization it is indeed connected to the town. The Planning Commission are looking at the TIFF in the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee. If the governor's project TIFF goes through, Westford would be a candidate to be awarded a TIFF and have the adequate means to repay that TIFF and we would have some development component. If we just had wastewater, users would need to be plugged in to create stimulus to our grand list. The projects are separate but incredibly related.

Melissa explained that the 1705 project is still in its early days and is a bit of a wildcard. She will have more information in the next month on how it is going to look to proceed with the brownfield cleanup. We are just starting the RFQs to help with the preliminary site engineering and then we will know if it is a wise decision for the Town to be involved in the future development of the property. With the ask it is more that the money is there right now, and it is a project we are pursuing. We would need funds regardless of if we wanted to bring it to fruition. Bill is becoming inclined not to apply for both. He is concerned that if we apply for an \$800,000 and a \$1.1 million grant, they will give us the \$800,000 as a concession because we could not give them the \$1.1 million, especially knowing that we would not be able to spend the money if we did not own the property.

George responded that the one thing we have to do with this is we have to state which of our projects are a priority so that mitigates some of that. The reason the requests are different is also because these requests would go through different sub committees that would advance the projects/agendas. Juli Beth explained that the Town in making two requests must prioritize a request 1 and a request 2.

Dave Baczewski made a motion that to approve the Planning Commission's request to move forward with the two separate requests, one for the wastewater for \$1.1 million, and one for the 1705 project at \$800,000 and that we clearly define that the wastewater is our priority and include a cover letter explaining how the two projects are separate, but related, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0

Bill thanked Juli Beth and Brad for their time this evening.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Dave talked with Alyssa Black regarding the American Recovery Act. There is a lot of money flowing into Vermont that could be used for infrastructure projects and is another potential funding source. This is something Dave feels we should stay on top of.

**COMMUNICATION**

There was no communication.

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE/PAYROLL WARRANTS**

Greg Barrows, Treasurer, went over the accounts payable and payroll warrants. Selectboard members will come into the office to sign off on the warrants.

The Board discussed moving the highway accounts payable/payroll warrants and budget status report to the Highway Section so John will be present to answer questions. The administration warrants and budget status report will remain under the Treasurer section.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Cleary, Chair  
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy  
Assistant Town Clerk/Minute Clerk

**GUEST LIST**

Buddy Meilleur, LCATV  
Vicky Ross  
George Lamphere  
Melissa Manka  
Dave Lavallee  
John Farrell  
Caroline Brown  
Brad Washburn  
Carol Winfield  
Gordon Gebauer  
Juli Beth Hinds  
Andre Roy  
Mark Drapa  
Bob Bancroft  
Seth Jensen  
Becky Roy  
William Blair  
Brad Gorham  
Mark Letorney

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.  
ROAD SCHEDULE  
March 12, 2021 – March 25, 2021**

Work to be done

- Grade roads when weather permits.
- Repair soft spots in the roads.
- Start work on the new chloride trailer.

Work completed

- Graded most of Old Stage Rd., Woods Hollow Rd., Cambridge Rd., Plains Rd., Learned Dr. Brookside Rd.
- Fixed potholes and soft spots on many roads.
- Hauled in gravel for mud season.
- Had an electrician repair/ replace all exterior lights at the shop and change several outlets.

Approved at the 3/25/21 Selectboard Meeting.