

Special Meeting
Water Commission Minutes
8/23/2021

Members Present in person: June Heston

Members by Zoom: Bard Hill, Fran Huntoon, David Sander

Absent: none

Staff Present in person: Josh Arneson, Town Manager

Staff Present by Zoom: Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent

Others Present in person: Jack Linn, Steve Palmer; Green Mountain Engineering (GME) the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15

Others Present by Zoom: Ashley Lauke; Bond Bank

Called to Order: 6:00 PM

1. Welcome by David

Public Comment- None

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda - None

3. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a. Review of items related to the Gateway Sewer Expansion Project

1) Follow up on estimate of private costs which will be incurred by individual properties to connect to public sewer system

Josh reported:

- that he, Kendall, and Steve Palmer from Green Mountain Engineering, prepared estimates based on a residential building, using 210 gallons of water per day, 100' from the public line, the first estimate included a pump, storage tank, control panel, and alarm, those items are estimated at \$2000, electrical materials at \$500, plumbing materials -including the piping to get out to the public line at \$1500, and installation of everything including excavation at \$4000 with the total estimated cost coming in at about \$8000. Josh said it is hard to get an estimate that would work for everyone and each property owners cost would vary based on their individual circumstances and that this was the best estimate that could be determined.

Discussion included:

- that David said that the estimate above did not include subterranean ledges or obstacles, that it was just an estimate for labor and materials for a typical installation with a typical installation having no exceptions that would need to be worked through.
- that June asked if the estimate was for a water meter and did not include a wastewater meter, Josh replied that the estimate described was to connect to the public system only and metering would be discussed in the next item. June asked if the meter was not part of the cost, Josh responded that the costs were separated out for the sake of conversation because there are a few different ways to do the metering.

- that Bard commented that he thought the soils in that area and the topography would make it unlikely that there would be ledge but acknowledged that it was possible to have there be a large rock or item buried that would be an obstacle that would need to be dealt with. David agreed that it looked like it was sandy soil but you never know what could be.
- that Fran noted that this would be the typical cost for a residence outside the mobile home park since there is currently only one connection point for the mobile home park and that the mobile home park has their own connection system inside the park. Josh responded that currently the mobile home park residents connect to a septic tank that would be connected to the public line so the mobile home park would not need individual hook-ups. Kendall added that the only thing the Town would be requiring is a pump large enough to get waste into the force main per engineering specs. June asked if that was a different pump than was discussed for residents, Kendall said it will depend on the size of the pipe.
- that Bard said the owner of the mobile home park has attended several meetings where he described the infrastructure within the mobile home park, and that he would address anything within the park and the estimate provided would not be costs to the mobile home park residents with any costs to the residents of the mobile home park being determined by the mobile home park owner. June said Mr. Brown, the owner of the mobile home park, has said he was not inclined to invest in the Town going out to the mobile home park, she said she would like to know if this project was contingent on completing three phases and if it is, and we have been told that he would not be investing in that, then what do we do. Bard responded no, phase three does not have to happen.
- that Bard said there is some uncertainty about any federal funds that may show up and whether the extension would be eligible for those funds so there are things we do not know yet and could tip the scale.

2) Follow up on estimated cost of wastewater meters and installation

Josh reported:

- that working with Kendall and Steve Palmer from Green Mountain Engineering, the cost of a water meter was looked at and an assumption was made that a water meter would be installed at the same time a resident was hooking into the system, and if the meter or wastewater meter were installed afterwards there would be additional excavation costs. The water meter and remote meter costs would be approximately \$250, valves, connectors and miscellaneous materials and installation is about \$750 bringing the total estimated cost for the water meter would be about \$1000.
- that the cost for wastewater metering was looked at. There would be a meter pit, sump pump of about \$1000 as well as wiring, conduit and telemetry of about \$500, the wastewater meter is \$1500, the installation of all items is about \$2000 for a total estimated cost to install a wastewater meter of \$5000.
- that one thing that came up was that we are monitoring everyone else's wastewater based on water usage and billing them that way, that if we monitor these people's wastewater only, that residents that are monitored and billed by water usage where they may be watering their garden or washing their car so the water would not be going into the system, but they are billed as if it is. Josh thought this should be considered when deciding.

Discussion included:

- that Kendall said that the water meter installation would not require any excavation and could be done at any time.

- that Bard asked about metering the water supply since the Town would not be providing the water, he wanted to know what the Town's authority was to require metering of a private water supply, maintain them and have access to them. He wondered if another town had done this and if there was precedent for doing so. Josh responded that he had an email exchange about it with the Town attorney, he thought it could be accomplished by putting together an agreement that would include hooking up to the system and monitoring their water supply. The attorney thought it would be \$3-500 to draw up the paperwork, then we would get people to sign it. Kendall said the Town used to monitor the Creamery well before it got ruined so the precedence is actually in Richmond for monitoring a private water source. Kendall said that once hooked up to the system there is access to the entire property as stated in the Water/ Sewer Ordinance. Bard said that there was a grey area where we are requiring people to hook up but they could choose to pay the fee without hooking up because they might not want to hook up to the sewer and/ or not have their water metered.
- that Bard wondered if it would be less expensive for the Town to purchase the meters in bulk to bring the costs down. Kendall replied that by Ordinance the resident has to purchase the meter from the Town already then they are responsible for the installation.
- that Fran asked Kendall if there was a difference over time of having a water or a wastewater meter. Kendall replied that there is a difference, wastewater meters need calibration depending on the type of meter you have because they can go out of whack during a thunderstorm and there is sometimes more maintenance with a wastewater meter than a water meter adding that generally they are both reliable.
- that Bard thought there was information that was being provided during the meeting that should be noted on the documents that would be provided to the public to make things clearer if someone had not attended the special meetings.
- that Fran asked who would be deciding what meters would be used. Bard replied that he thought there was an inclination to go with the water meters and we should be ready to explain why that was the best choice saying that explaining that the wastewater meters cost more and are harder to maintain, that the water meters would need to be purchased from the Town with the installation being done by the user. June asked if this was a system wide decision that the Commission would be deciding on either a water or wastewater meter or was that decision going to be made by the individual user. Kendall thought it would be up to the Commission for wastewater users only. Bard asked if it should be left up to the user and provide them the information to make the decision. Kendall said that if only wastewater meters were used the Town would need to have a study done to determine the rate that should be charged adding that if water were ever brought to the area a water meter would have to be installed also.
- that June asked how many potential users are there in total and how many are owner occupied residences. Josh replied that without diving into all the details, it's about 50-50. Bard said that is the current state and could change in the future. June said phase two (2) is about 30 residents, Josh replied two of those are commercial so 28, he did not know how many of those were owner occupied. Kendall said there are only about nine connections in phases 1 (one) and 2 (two) because of duplexes.

3) Review of project planning timeline

Josh reported:

- that he had updated the timeline
- that the next item would be to have a meeting with the potential expansion users to provide them information

Discussion included:

- that David thought we should do some research into potential federal funding since it would influence the decision-making process. Bard thought the money could encompass money already received and future money. He thought we should find out if the money that arrived would be eligible to be spent on this project.
- that Kendall said any funding coming down should be advantageous to the mobile home park. He added that the customers in the mobile home park will be the ones voting and they may have a different opinion than the mobile park owner.
- that June said, in May there is an item to meet with the Mobil Station owner and the Reap's, it says "incomplete" but thought a meeting had taken place. Josh replied that there was not a specific meeting but that the Reap's would like things done as soon as possible and the Mobil Station is working toward making a decision between going with the expansion and creating their own infrastructure. Bard said it is an odd set of circumstances, the Mobil Station has no residents, so they don't vote. If the system goes by, they are obligated to connect to it. They are interested in the project and are waiting to find out what the costs will be.
- that there are 7 commercial hook-ups proposed in phase 2 (two), phase 3 (three) would add additional commercial users.
- that through the VT Rural Water Association the mobile home park may be able to access funds

4) Consideration of calling a meeting to review the project with building owners and residents in the proposed expansion area

Discussion included:

- that the mobile home park is not interested but owners in phase 1 and phase 2 could be interested so we could see if they are interested. If there is no interest, then we could wait and see if there is more federal money coming. He thought having the Commission meet next week to come up with a rate structure, have the presentation documents, then have a meeting with those in phase1 (one) and phase (2).
- that Fran said it sounds like we are now looking at phases as individual items to be done. Josh replied that for the next meeting he could break costs out for each phase independently. Bard thought that would be a good idea.
- that having a conversation about using revenue at the next meeting would be contrary to the idea that the current users would not be paying for the extension but should be had in light of using septage revenue from haulers.
- that a user/ property owner meeting date will be set at a future meeting to determine interest
- that June asked if there would be a time for transitioning to the expansion. Kendall said there is no reason to not do that, that the fixed fees begin being paid at the time the line is available to the user and that in the past once the line was available existing septic systems were inspected and those that were failed had to connect right away the remainder were given time to hook-up.

- that June asked if there was something that says this expansion is worth it without the mobile home park. Bard thought having information related to current and potential users for the next meeting. Josh will have information available for the next meeting
- that some development is possible with public septic and not available for private septic.
- that phase 1 (one) has an alternate route

5) Other items related to the Gateway Sewer Expansion Project

Discussion included:

4. Adjourn

Bard moved to adjourn; Fran seconded. Roll call vote: David, June, Fran, and Bard voted affirmatively. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.