

**Craftsbury Planning Commission Minutes 9.10.20**  
**Meeting via Zoom**

Present: Farley Brown, Emily Maclure, Annie Rowell, Rudy Chase, Susie Houston, Linda Ramsdell with guest Lynnette Claudon.

Farley introduced guest Lynnette Claudon from VT Department of Environmental Conservation(DEC). Lynette spoke to how Craftsbury might address wastewater infrastructure in the village. A first step would be to set up a Wastewater Committee - Lynette recognized that we have a good start with the planning commission's wastewater subcommittee. Lynette highlighted a workbook available on the DEC website with recommendations on how to develop a well rounded committee. The committee's first step would be a community driven survey to see what the needs are. This works best neighbor talking to neighbor to get good honest data (indication of failed systems can open grant opportunities rather than lead to crack down by DEC). Homeowners, businesses - what are the needs and the vision for the town, what would you like to see your village grow into.

Funding: Village wastewater website outlines different options.

Lynette administers the engineering planning advance loan that can be a grant. State provides an advance available to town to do feasibility study on moving forward with a community based system. First come first served, opens in July. Could move into Cleanwater State Revolving Fund, projects are ranked. Currently more funding than projects. Sister program: Pollution Control Grant. If project develops and goes to construction, but if qualifies for Pollution Control Grant the money is recovered/turns into a grant. Failed systems are worth points. Public health, environmental, sections to earn points for - engineer will have understanding of points system - put into formula. 10 points is the trigger to convert loan to grant. Loan only triggered for repayment if they go to build.

Looked at website together during meeting - financing and sequencing sections are good places to focus. Because of all permitting and the perception that wastewater will cause a lot of sprawl, it is important to have a solid plan in the town plan for whatever solution might be. Most towns that have been successful have done visioning events. VCRD and ACCD good resources. Some towns want growth and change and more resilient economies, others don't - important to get pulse of what community wants to get support for the project.

Our regional engineer is St. J office Rich Wilson. A great resource. Do not hesitate to reach out to get thoughts on good systems and what soils are - needs and resource assessments.

Asked for a recommendation about looking at the whole picture including sidewalks and parking, Lynette replied that a master strategy would be to the town's benefit. Montgomery combined grants to look at their systems.

Recommend exploring if drinking water system could be a solution to wastewater systems. Drinking water system could remove conflicts with drinking water systems. Look to DEC to see if drinking water contamination is an issue.

Greensboro is just starting their wastewater efforts, and Wolcott is working with DEC too - Montgomery was able to complete in a year - not every village is on the same timeline.

Books are available from DEC to take a project from planning to construction

Emily: spoke about re-doing wastewater system at Craftsbury General Store. She had a 64' leachfield to 128' had space to grow into, many others don't have the same option

Could potentially tie stormwater system into wastewater system? Lynette does not recommend. Would be good to do stormwater concurrently with wastewater.

Londonderry, Highgate about 6 months into their studies, history section on the website, Westford has taken 10 years to get ready, have river, population challenges, Waitsfield and Warren, a lot of creative ways to address issues are highlighted on DEC website.

DEC, Lynette as funding agency and program committed to working with each town's needs to figure out potential.

Tim Patterson joined at 7:45 in his role as President of Craftsbury Fire District #2. The current water system was installed in 1983, and is nearing point to need major maintenance, serves 40 homes, Strong Farm, Sterling College, Craftsbury Academy (the town's heat and emergency shelter) and a few apartments.

Pre-approved for grant for a back up power system. Main well is contaminated with PFAs. PFAs in well are just a hair under State's threshold, and well under Federal threshold. State will probably grant emergency funding for new well. Distribution lines will need to be replaced/maintained soon.

Proposed ordinance has been written to put ducks in a row, provide written procedures, outline how the money flows, and make all clear - is taking things that have been in people's heads and putting it on paper. The committee went to VT Rural Water Assoc to get the template - followed Hardwick's model, customized to Craftsbury needs. Following best practice, in compliance, adopted as manual.

The ordinance would state that if anyone is going to drill a well in Fire District #2 service area, water system needs to sign off on it, so that other wells would not adversely impact the water system.

State doesn't want to fund a water system that doesn't have control over its area, and so requires adoption of an ordinance.

Question from Rudy about where PFAs are coming from. Priority is in finding new water source. Cleaning supplies might be suspects. What assurances might there be that there aren't PFAs in new source. Don't know until you drill and test. Trying to get best possible sense of where a new well could be. Virginia Russell woodlot is a candidate. Could tap into a clean well that is near system - owned by private homeowners. State is saying ordinance is needed to release funds. There are questions from the planning commission about implementation and legal standing - the planning commission could approve in concept and send to selectboard for next level of vetting.

Big obstacle is that Fire District #2 is a private enterprise, separate from town. Town Ordinance seems an unnecessary channel for private enterprise.

Historically the water system was the North Craftsbury Water Company, with springs, tank on top floor of funeral home.

Susie points out that Hardwick is different b/c it is municipal system.

Could look at a new well also serving the village.

In previous discussions, we did not know that the current water source is contaminated - that changed the equation for many on the planning commission.

Still no answer who would enforce an ordinance if it were to be adopted.

Tim will talk with Rural Water Assoc to find out more about legalities of an ordinance. Tim will come back next month with more info

Wastewater Subcommittee will meet before October.

Respectfully submitted -  
Linda Ramsdell