



One Burke Village Infrastructure and Visioning and Economic Development Meeting

April 19, 2022

Online via Zoom

Dufresne Group
481 Summer Street, Suite 8
Saint Johnsbury, Vermont 05819
Tel: (802) 748-8605

On April 20, 2022 at 5:00pm, a meeting was held via Zoom video conference to discuss the Burke Water and Wastewater Study. The following individuals attended:

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Todd Vendituoli	One Burke
Linda Lotti	One Burke
Cathie Wheeler	One Burke
Coralie Curran	Burke property owner
Martha Harrison	Town of West Windsor, Town Administrator
Charlie Hancock	Town of Montgomery, Selectboard Chair
Lynnette Claudon	State of Vermont
Amy Macrellis	Stone Environmental
Andrea Day	Dufresne Group

Andrea Day has prepared the following summary of notes taken at the meeting. Please notify her if you have any corrections or additions to these minutes. Tasks to be completed as a result of this meeting are underlined.

- I. The minutes from the March 15, 2022, meeting were approved.
- II. **Water & Wastewater Study**
 - a. On-site Investigations update.
 - i. West Burke
 1. Review of map showing contributing areas to each potential wastewater disposal site. See attached.
 2. Field investigation analysis status update from Amy with Stone Environmental.
 - a. Gingue property and School Street property planned to dispose of <6,500 gallons per day, Cole site expected to have capacity of 25,000

gpd. Additional analysis still to be completed to determine capacity of Cole site.

ii. East Burke

1. Still no word from DHP on requirements for investigation of the property on Rt114.
2. Appraisal estimate, next steps. Spoke with two qualified appraisers and got quote from one. Andrea working with Lynnette to get draft agreements and loan applications prepared for the Town to make sure the work qualifies.

b. Next steps

- i. Finalize sizing and layouts for wastewater disposal sites in West Burke.
- ii. Develop cost estimates.
- iii. Summarize alternatives.

c. Village Wastewater Panel

- The story of how their community's wastewater projects progressed was provided by Martha Harrison, Town Administrator for West Windsor and Charlie Hancock, Chair of the Montgomery Selectboard.
- Wastewater Story of West Windsor presented by Martha Harrison, Town Administrator
 - The 2010 Town Plan said the Town should look into the feasibility of a wastewater system.
 - Focused, active committee formed to explore a municipal wastewater system.
 - Around the same time as the formation of the committee, Mount Ascutney owners abandoned the resort.
 - The wastewater committee retained an engineer to complete a preliminary engineering study and the project moved forward quickly.
 - Tropical Storm Irene hit during the study.

- The engineering study determined connection to the Mount Ascutney system which pumps to Windsor (4-5 miles away) was the best alternative.
- The purchase of the wastewater system was pursued during the Mount Ascutney foreclosure process. Once the foreclosure was complete, the Town took ownership of the system.
- Challenges included
 - Naysayers – required everyone in service area to connect to make it financially feasible. Some resisted.
 - Obtaining easements – one property owner resisted until realized that connecting later would be at their cost.
 - To add the village onto the Windsor system upgrades to one of Windsor’s wastewater pump stations were required. Worked with Windsor to show that increased revenue would quickly pay for the upgrades.
- Outreach
 - It helped to engage the community along the way.
 - Get as many people to meetings as possible.
 - Send mailings, hold public meetings.
- Funding
 - Funding was helped by TS Irene through CDBG disaster recovery funds because some wastewater systems were damaged by the storm. The Town was able to get almost \$900K in grant funding through that source.
 - Voters approved a bond with the debt services to be paid by the entire town.
 - Town got a PC grant due to failed systems which they had to lobby the legislature for.

This program has since changed to use scoring based on the number of failed systems.

- CWSRF loan was used for remaining balance.
 - Break down costs into impact to individual property owners.
- Linda asked about the entire town supporting the project to approve the bond for the capital costs. How did they gain support for that?
 - Outreach to voters focused on:
 - Connection of public buildings
 - Pollution reduction
 - Well shields vs. sewer system locations and age of sewer systems
 - Development limited by lack of municipal wastewater.
 - Historic buildings that can't be restored due to septic limitations
 - Linda asked how the village has changed since the wastewater system was developed?
 - The general store closed in 2017, a local group purchased the store and remodeled it and then worked with a young couple for them to purchase it and take it over. It is doing very well.
 - Mount Ascutney base lodge had a fire shortly after the system was acquired. Town ended up with the water system as well after that and 460 acres of resort. A local non-profit, Ascutney Outdoors, rebuilt the base lodge and made improvements to the mountain which was made possible by the sewer system. This increased community support of the sewer system.

- The school can now install a kitchen.
 - An application has been submitted for 6 tiny homes to be rented out as Air BNBS.
 - West Windsor has grown more than any other Town in the upper valley with 22% growth as of the last census.
- Wastewater Story of Montgomery presented by Charlie Hancock, Selectboard Chair
 - Started considering the question of “What do we want for our community?” in the winter of 2018-2019
 - Went through the VCRD Community Visit process and identified three goals
 - Public wastewater for the Village and Center
 - Improved bicycle/pedestrian facilities
 - Broadband
 - Set broadband goal aside as lower priority and started working on the other two
 - Had a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) completed in 2019-2020 with the preferred alternative identified in the summer of 2020.
 - Provided outreach through a community website, Montgomery Thrives
<https://thrives.montgomeryvt.us/>
 - Did a lot of PR and outreach
 - In July 2020, \$20M bond passed for wastewater and streetscaping
 - Completed supplemental reports to add onto the PER to further develop disposal site design and landowner coordination
 - Funding
 - Affordability was the biggest hurdle

- Presented idea of a Local Option Tax and/or a Municipal Tax to the voters
- Voters approved Local Option Tax but not the Municipal Tax
- Final funding package includes Local Option Tax covering capital costs and user rates covering O&M
- Local Option Tax
 - First asked voters if they wanted a local option tax
 - Required charter change
 - Can charge 1% on meals, alcohol, rooms and sales – can choose to tax any combination of these
 - Generates revenue from mostly outsiders
- Went after all funding options
 - ARPA
 - NBRC
 - Rural Development
- Final user fees are approximately 1% of local income at \$378/yr for 166 users
- Requiring everyone in service area to connect to make if financially feasible.
- How did they achieve community buy in?
 - Environmental impacts – on a wild and scenic river that needs to be protected from pollution
 - Business growth
 - Lack of affordable housing
 - Septics in well shield

- Not doing this to change Montgomery but to keep the villages viable
 - Went back to voters and asked for approval
 - Message was that the project was cautiously proceeding and project could stop at any time.
 - Build trust with the community.
 - Find a target group that can be brought to support the project rather than spending time on those groups that will never support the project
 - Approach from the start should be to get support for capital costs from the entire town.
 - Montgomery had the opportunity to install a municipal WW system in late 90s at little to no cost to the Town but passed on the option. Don't want to pass up the opportunity again with current funding availability.
- Planned for future buildout
 - One of hardest questions was responding to those property owners that had recently had to install a new wastewater system that would lose that investment
 - Montgomery will need to hire a project manager for the Town to keep track of all the funding.
- Linda asked both Martha and Charlie their experiences working with people who felt like the project was taking too long.
 - West Windsor's project was fairly straightforward and moved through the process in 6 years. The committee chair was very driven. The concurrent changes at Mount Ascutney helped with turnout.
 - Montgomery had two committees one for streetscape and one for wastewater. Tried to gather a good cross section of the community in the committees. Did have some attrition but had a good

core group that was willing to put time in and a committed selectboard. Celebrated success at every opportunity.

- What is the biggest lesson for West Windsor and Montgomery learned during these projects?
 - West Windsor – get the community involved and engaged as frequently as possible
 - Montgomery – become educated about the funding sources. Lost the NBRC funding due to matching fund limitations and requirements.
- Information from Montgomery is provided at the link below. Additional information provided by West Windsor is attached.
 - Montgomery Thrives website:
<https://thrives.montgomeryvt.us/>
- e. Local Option Tax
 - i. Need to review for Burke.
 - ii. In addition to funding a wastewater system, it could be used to cover roads, parks, trash expenses which are impacted by visitors.
- d. Funding
 - i. ARPA updates from Lynnette.
 - 1. IUP release delayed due to delay in receiving guidance from the EPA.
 - ii. PC grants have changed since they were used by West Windsor. Montgomery didn't include a PC grant in their funding package because they have historically been less reliable and since Montgomery is using RD funding, they needed to know their grant sources up front.
 - iii. Once the PER is done, RD will be interested in funding. The Town will want to know their funding package before they agree to funding with RD since the grant portion of RD funding is reduced by grants received from other sources.

III. Other

a. One Burke Updates

- i. New board members – Mike Harris and Sue Pierce joined Todd and Linda on the board
- ii. Working on 501 3c status.
- iii. Working on bylaw updates.
- iv. Once get non-profit in place will reach out to Ben Doyle from the Preservation Trust of VT about the architectural evaluation for the old Post Office building.
- v. Will look into READI funding to assist with identifying and pursuing funding for projects.
- vi. The Village of West Burke has \$100K of ARPA funds that may be available for matching other grant opportunities.

IV. **Next meeting**

- a. May 17, 2022 at 5pm via zoom
- b. Selectboard update at June meeting after next committee meeting. Wastewater study costs and recommended alternative for West Burke to be reviewed at next committee meeting prior to selectboard update. Andrea to check with Mike Harris on moving wastewater presentation to June meeting.



Legend

- Pump_Sta
- Treatment

Type

- 8"
- Force Main
- Project Area

Colle_Area

- 1
- 2
- 3

20 ft Contours

Rivers & Streams

0 500 1,000 Feet



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - Village Sewer Construction Project

Question #1: Why does the town want to construct a sewer collection system in the village?

There is essentially no available septic capacity in the village. As a result, there can be no growth or development on the existing small lots - no changes of use, no bedroom additions, no new apartments. In addition, many water supplies are too close to neighboring leach fields, and many leach fields are too close to Mill Brook. Pollution is already occurring and will probably get worse as aging septic systems begin to fail. 43% of village septic systems were built before 1970 and are now more than 40 years old. Also, if school enrollment continues to increase by 12% per year, the school will exceed its wastewater capacity in three to four years. The Fire Department's leach field was washed away in Tropical Storm Irene. The Library has no restroom facilities.

Question #2: How much will the system cost?

The system will cost \$2,100,000.

Question #3: How is it being paid for?

The town has been awarded at least \$750,000 in Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds by the VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Additional CDBG-DR funds could be awarded based on the number of low to moderate income households in the village. In addition, the project has been found eligible for a \$460,000 Dry Weather Pollution Abatement Grant from the VT Department of Environmental Conservation. Although the Pollution Abatement Grant still needs to be approved by the Vermont legislature, initial discussions with legislators indicate that a positive outcome is likely. As a result, town officials anticipate at least \$1,200,000 in grant funding.

Question #4: How do grant(s) work?

Grants do not have to be repaid so they reduce the net cost of the project. The cost of the project, after subtracting the expected grant funds, would be approximately \$900,000, which would be borrowed through the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) for 20 years at a 2% interest rate. This \$900,000 loan would be repaid by tax payers.

Question #5: How will this project affect my taxes?

The average property in West Windsor has an assessed value of \$296,500. The average property in the village area has an assessed value of \$176,500. This project will add approximately 2 cents to the tax rate, resulting in a tax increase of \$59 per year for the average West Windsor property owner and a tax increase of \$35 per year for the average property owner in the village. To find out how it will affect you specifically, multiply the assessed value of your property by .0002

Question #6: Why now?

Aging on-site septic systems in the village are limiting growth and development, threatening public health, and polluting the environment. It would be irresponsible of town officials to ignore these problems, especially now when there are substantial grant funds available to address them.

Question #7: How will this project benefit the village? the town as a whole?

Large structures on small lots are of limited use without sewer service. Constructing a sewer system will provide village property owners with more options for developing their property. Improved development prospects will increase the value of village properties, which should benefit the entire town as the village generates more tax revenue. The opportunity to adapt formerly unusable historic buildings for a variety of residential or business uses will provide property owners with an incentive to fix up or sell deteriorating structures. If new businesses open, residents won't have to travel as far for the services they provide. In addition, drinking water in the village will be protected. Mill Brook will be protected. School officials will not be faced with costly improvements to the school's septic system.

Question #8: Why should I be interested in village waste water problems?

Most residents would prefer a vibrant attractive village center. Without a sewer system, the potential uses for existing structures in the village are extremely limited, values are depressed, and revitalization is unlikely. Providing a sewer system will protect public health, expand the possibilities for use and increase property values, which benefits everyone.

Question #9: Has Mill Brook pollution been documented?

Yes. Tests conducted in the late summer and early fall of 2013 revealed the presence of E. coli bacteria in Mill Brook.

Question #10: Which properties will be connected to the sewer system?

The 22 homes, businesses and municipal buildings that are within 200' of the sewer line, on lots with fewer than 12 acres, will be connected to the sewer system. The sewer service area runs from Bridge #7 on Route 44 (the bridge that was washed out by Tropical Storm Irene) to the intersection of Route 44 and Seems Road, and north on the Brownsville-Hartland Road to Albert Bridge School.

Question #11: Is there a requirement to connect?

Yes, all buildings that meet the criteria noted in Question #10 will be required to connect unless they are served by an existing system that meets all design standards of the Vermont Environmental Protection Rules, Chapter 1, Current Edition. Exceptions to the connection requirement shall expire five (5) years from the date that the public sewer system is operable or when the exempt property changes ownership, whichever comes first.

Question #12: Do property owners pay for their connection?

No. The connection costs for all properties required to connect are included in the overall project cost.

Question #13: What are the yearly fees for connected sewer users?

The fee for connected village sewer users is projected to be between \$825 and \$895 per “equivalent user” for the first year of service. Each single-family home or apartment counts as one equivalent user. The Town Hall counts as four equivalent users and the school counts as five equivalent users. Fees have to be sufficient to cover the cost of operating and maintaining the system. Operating costs include the per unit sewage treatment fees charged by Windsor as well as charges for electricity, insurance, etc. The town’s goal is to keep user fees as low as possible. User fees will be adjusted annually based on actual and budgeted costs.

Question #14: Will a sewer connection increase my property value?

Although it is not possible to quantify the specific amount by which a property’s value will increase, local realtors agree that the value of properties connected to the sewer system will increase and the value of properties with commercial potential could increase substantially.

Question #15: When would construction start?

Construction would begin in May 2015 and be completed by October 2015.

Question #16: What will happen to my old septic system?

Old septic systems in the village will be disconnected, pumped out and deactivated. Disconnection and pumping are included in the overall cost of the project.

Question #17: What will happen if we don’t do the project now?

It stands to reason that you shouldn’t site a septic system next to a well or a brook. Currently, there are 13 septic systems in the village that are too close to wells or brooks. If we don’t do the project now, it is likely that water supplies in the village will be contaminated as aging on-site septic systems fail, the levels of E. coli in Mill Brook will rise, vacant structures that have no viable use without a sewer system will continue to deteriorate and decline in value and the village will stagnate. Eventually, to resolve these problems, we’ll have to construct a sewer system anyway. Several years down the road, the project will be more expensive, interest rates will probably rise and, without grant funding, the average cost per taxpayer will triple.

Question #18: What other alternatives were considered?

West Windsor’s consulting engineers, Aldrich + Elliott, evaluated eight water system alternatives and five wastewater system alternatives. A water system would prevent the

contamination of drinking water but would not address surface water pollution, school septic capacity issues, restrictions on the adaptive reuse of historic structures, or limitations on village growth and economic development. A small municipal wastewater treatment facility located in or near the village would alleviate contamination and pollution concerns but would not be large enough to serve the school and would not address limitations on growth and development. Constructing a village sewer system and connecting it to the wastewater treatment facility in Windsor via the existing sewerline is the only approach that addresses all the identified issues.

WEST WINDSOR WATER/WASTEWATER COMMITTEE DRAFT PHASE II CHARGE AND WORK PLAN

Committee Charge:

Prepare Request for Proposal for the completion of a small community water/wastewater evaluation for Brownsville and select consulting engineer to recommend to the Select Board on or before March 15, 2011.

Work Plan:

1. Select chair
2. Review, revise and adopt charge
3. Revise draft RFP by reviewing other towns' RFP's, consulting with Don Robisky, and considering West Windsor's unique requirements:
 - a. Confirm scope of work
 - b. Identify major work steps to be accomplished
 - c. Identify qualifications required
 - d. Define timing requirements for responding to RFP, selection and completing the work
 - e. Identify consultant selection criteria
4. Confirm funding amount and timing prior to distributing RFP, and distribute
5. Review responses and narrow to 2-3 finalists
6. Interview finalists and select consultant for recommendation to Select Board

Draft Request for Proposal Outline:

This water/wastewater evaluation study has the following goals:

1. to assess the wastewater needs of public, commercial and residential structures in the village,
2. to assess the potable water needs of public, commercial and residential structures in the village,
and
3. to provide reasonable options and cost estimates for long-term, effective solutions to those needs.

West Windsor wants to develop cost-effective options for public, commercial and residential landowners in the prospective service area (to be defined by the study) that address their long-term wastewater and potable water supply needs. Identification of these options would also permit the town to entertain the possibility of some growth in and around the village which is now limited by potable water and wastewater constraints. Options identified must provide long-term solutions which are capable of being administered successfully by Town of West Windsor without significant financial burden on the community.

Work with the consultant assisting West Windsor on this project should proceed in two phases:

Phase #1 – Data collection, a preliminary assessment, and analysis of findings

1. Geographically define a distinct study area.
2. Survey the residents and property owners within the study area and compile and summarize the results (without identifying specific properties or property owners). The purpose of this survey is to collect first-hand information on the age and condition of the owner's wastewater disposal

system and potable water supply to determine how well each system is working. It will include questions about the owner's perception of and interest in new wastewater and potable water infrastructure for the town.

3. Obtain and evaluate all available information about the condition, capacity and ownership of the private wastewater line connecting to the Town of Windsor sewage treatment plant serving the Ascutney Mountain Resort, as well as the community water system that also serves the Resort in order to assess both the feasibility and the advisability of a connection to one or both of these systems to serve part or all of the study area.
4. In order to fully assess alternatives to these prospective connections, investigate, review and summarize: property maps, previous sanitary surveys, site investigations, state and local permitting records, site reconnaissance and meetings with property owners; record usable areas and general characteristics, estimate hydro-geologic and infiltrative capacities, define scope and boundaries and present potential problem areas. For potable water supply, include all of the above plus geological information, potential sources and possible yields, source protection; define scope and possible service areas.
5. This Preliminary Assessment and Data Collection shall provide:
 - a) an overall assessment of the current wastewater infrastructure, in narrative form, including a definition of problems, if any, and their extent, and
 - b) an overall assessment of the current potable water infrastructure, in narrative form, including a definition of problems, if any, and their extent.

Phase #2 - Presentation of alternatives for the existing village and for possible growth of the village consistent with current and possible future town plans

1. Wastewater: Evaluate pre-treatment and treatment devices including septic tanks, effluent filters, passive treatment mechanisms (sand filters), pump only systems (re-circulating sand filters), mechanical treatment, and other emerging technologies. Examine alternative approaches to sewage handling including, but not limited to, low flow plumbing, composting systems, other new and emerging low-flow technologies. Evaluate potential mixes of individual/cluster and community systems (including connection to the existing line to Windsor). Propose possible service areas for the village and the particulars of providing wastewater service to those areas. Describe collection system designs for these service areas at a preliminary planning level.
2. Potable Water: Examine approaches to the development of a new small community water supply program or connection to the existing Resort system. Discuss types of water supply sources available to the village, including possible locations, yields, treatment options and source protection issues. Also consider fire flows and fire protection. Propose possible service areas for the village and the particulars of providing water to those areas. Describe distribution system designs for these service areas at a preliminary planning level. Explore the various technologies available for the treatment and distribution of potable water. Determine the possible economies of scale and cost savings of implementing a potable water supply system either at the same time as or instead of a wastewater system.

WEST WINDSOR WASTEWATER COMMITTEE
Draft Charge, Work Plan & Minutes of August 2, 2010

Present: Glenn Seward, Al Keiller, Win Johnson, Barbara Truex, Rudy Gross, Don Robisky
Absent: Elvin Kaplan

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.

Background:

The proposed West Windsor Town Plan 2010 submitted by the Planning Commission to the Selectboard recommends the town conduct a comprehensive feasibility study (including technical, political and economic dimensions) to determine the costs and benefits of a community wastewater system. An initial meeting of the Wastewater Committee was held on August 2, 2010, at which Donald Robisky of the State of Vermont Facilities Engineering Division presented information, summarized below, about available State assistance.

The State of Vermont has funds available to towns in the form of “planning advances” for conducting “small community wastewater evaluations”. Such an evaluation would be focused on Brownsville Village (“between the bridges”) but would have implications for the entire town and should provide the following: an inventory of the current condition of wastewater treatment in the Village, evaluation of the existing Ascutney Mountain wastewater connection and Windsor wastewater system capacity for a Village system “hook up,” a range of reasonable options for addressing long range wastewater needs in the Village, and a rough range of costs and timelines for each option. The Selectboard should then be in a position to select the option or options for consideration by the town. Any option other than “no change from the present” would require preliminary and detailed design phases with associated costs and milestones before proceeding to the next step.

The State funding (an “advance”, not a loan or grant) would not have to be paid back if a wastewater project did not result from the evaluation. Funding for preliminary and detailed design would be available, but would have to be repaid regardless of whether a project resulted or not. If a project did ultimately proceed, all funds including for the initial evaluation must be paid back to the State, presumably rolled into a bond issue or other permanent financing for the project. Based on the experience of other Vermont towns, the cost of typical small community wastewater evaluations have been in the range of \$15,000 to \$30,000. There are consulting firms available to do such evaluations. It is advisable to include a water supply dimension in the study as the incremental cost when combined with the wastewater evaluation is relatively small, and can be covered by the State advance.

Committee Charge:

Evaluate the desirability and ramifications of conducting a State funded “small community wastewater evaluation” and make a recommendation to the Selectboard no later than October 31, 2010, regarding application to the State for funding to complete such an evaluation.

Work Plan:

1. Confirm charge.
2. Review work plan and modify as appropriate.
3. Advise Selectboard of charge and work plan, and obtain concurrence to proceed
4. Understand experiences of other Vermont towns
 - a. Identify towns to contact
 - b. List specific questions to ask each town to attempt to gather comparative information (e.g. timing of study, cost, consultants used, nature of report, reaction of town, etc.).
 - c. Collect information and summarize
 - d. Review gathered information with D. Robisky to confirm findings and add to conclusions.
 - e. Change work plan and approach as appropriate
5. Engage community
 - a. Utilize the Committee charge, as well as information from the State and gathered from other towns to develop consistent talking points for engaging community members. Specifically address the anticipated scope, process and products of a typical consultant evaluation.
 - b. Identify Village properties and owners who might be affected by an enhanced wastewater plan, and select a representative group for Committee members to engage directly; seek similar input from representative town's people who reside beyond the Village.
 - c. Warn, and then conduct, a meeting of the Committee to seek general input from the entire Town, as well as Village members, on the advisability to seek State funding for "small community wastewater evaluation" and what the town would like to get out of such a study.
6. Draft proposal based on input from Town and research gathered from State and other town experiences.
 - a. Conclude whether there is sufficient need and demand for moving forward with a State funded evaluation.
 - b. Draft the "scope" and "expected outcomes" section of a request for proposal that would be used in both the application to the State for funding and the basis for soliciting responses from consultants
7. Reach consensus on recommendation within Committee
8. Present conclusion to Selectboard no later than October 31, 2010
9. Be prepared to move forward with expeditious application to the State if approved by the Selectboard

Election of Officers

Win Johnson nominated Glenn Seward to serve as Chair of the Committee. Glenn declined. **Win then nominated Al Keiller to serve as Chair. Barbara seconded the nomination, which passed unanimously. Glenn nominated Barbara Truex as Clerk. The nomination was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at approximately 10:35 AM.