

WEST WINDSOR SELECTBOARD

Draft Minutes
August 14, 2013

Present: Glenn Seward, Tom Kenyon, Bruce Boedtke, Nate Pion (Aldrich & Elliott), Joe Duncan (Aldrich & Elliott), Tom Joslin (VT ANR Facilities Engineering Div.), Lynette Whitney (VT ANR Facilities Engineering Div.), Al Keiller (West Windsor Wastewater Committee & Planning Commission), Elvin Kaplan (West Windsor Wastewater Committee & Planning Commission), Barbara Truex (West Windsor Wastewater Committee & Planning Commission), Erik Schutz (Albert Bridge School Board), Arthur Steinberg (West Windsor Planning Commission), Mark & Catherine Harley, Tom Urban, Edson Pierce, Louise Hudson, Don Burke, Dennis Lemire, Rudy Gross, Lucy Rosen, Hank Roth, Jim Bertrand, Xaveria Vegh, Kenneth Phillips, Wayne Welles, George Calver (*VT Standard*), Martha Harrison

- 1) Call to Order – Selectboard Chair Glenn Seward called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and introduced Nate Pion, Joe Duncan, Tom Joslin, and Lynette Whitney.
- 2) Discuss village sewer project - Glenn said: The Selectboard and Wastewater Committee have been working on wastewater issues since 2011 and feel strongly that the town should move forward with a project to address the issues. Given recent tax increases, the Selectboard would not make this recommendation if they didn't think it was incredibly important. Procrastination will only increase costs. A bond vote will be required this fall and voter approval will greatly improve the town's grant prospects, which will reduce costs to taxpayers. If approved by the voters, construction would start in 2015. Joe Duncan provided information about the project including service area and basic system design. Joe explained that existing well isolation distances in the village are inadequate which makes replacing on-site septic systems expensive. Joe said as systems fail, innovative/alternative systems are generally required at a cost of \$20,000 to \$40,000. Joe noted that the library has no restroom and the fire department has no leach field. Joe also noted that, without adequate isolation distances, there can be no development (additions, changes of use, etc.) in the village. Joe said the total project cost is \$2.1 million. Joe described the grants the town is pursuing. Joe said user rates will depend on grant funding received. Joe said user costs are based on the cost of operating and maintaining the system and on debt service. Joe said the Selectboard feels that the sewer system would benefit the entire town because of the services provided and the tax benefits that would result from changes of use and additional development, so debt service costs would be paid by all property owners through a "property value assessed fee." Joe estimated connected user costs in the \$800 to \$1,000 per year range, and non-connected property owner costs in the \$80 to \$150 range, depending on grants received. For purposes of comparison, Joe reviewed current costs for property owners with on-site systems, assuming the systems are being maintained properly and pumped approximately every three years at a cost of \$300. Joe then figured in the cost of replacing a failed system with a mound or I/A system (\$20,000 to \$40,000) since a conventional system would not be allowed where the well isolation distances are inadequate. Joe said the state also requires property owners with I/A systems to have a maintenance contract at a cost of \$200 to \$300 per year so a village property owner who has to replace a failed on-site system could be looking at a cost of \$1,400 to \$2,500 per year for the design, installation and maintenance of a new on-site system, with no potential for a change of use. Tom Urban asked why Seems Road was excluded from the service area. Joe said the additional cost of hooking up Seems Road was considered along with the number of users. Glenn added that isolation distances are not as problematic on Seems Road and most property owners have room for a replacement system. Tom asked about the additional cost of including Seems Road. Tom Kenyon said the pipes are being sized to accommodate future expansion. Dennis Lemire asked about initial hookup fees. Glenn said initial hookups are included in the total project cost. Glenn said the town would need an easement from each property owner for the line to connect to the house. Elvin Kaplan asked if the town can decide not to proceed if the bond vote passes but the grants don't come through. Glenn said yes. Speaking for himself, Glenn said he would have a hard time going forward with the project under those circumstances. Xaveria asked if hooking up to the system is required. Glenn said people within 200' of the sewer line will be required to connect although an exemption may be considered for property owners

with on-site systems who can document that they meet all current state requirements. Rudy asked if the property value assessed fee is for the length of the loan or forever. Glenn said it's for the length of the loan, which would be 20 to 30 years. Barbara Truex asked if the warning for the bond vote could be worded to authorize the borrowing only if a certain amount of grant funding is received. Glenn said he would have to ask the town's bond counsel. Joe said that can be done but the Selectboard would be held to the exact wording of the warning so if the grant funding were short by a dollar, they couldn't proceed. Someone asked if additional staff would be hired to maintain the system. Glenn said the Selectboard is talking with Windsor about an operations and maintenance contract. Someone asked if state inspectors are going to come and do perk tests in his yard. Glenn said no. Mark Harley asked to what extent the pollution issues are active problems currently. Joe said the survey indicated that no one was unhappy with their water quality and there is no documentation of polluted wells. Someone asked about the likelihood of cost overruns. Joe said A&E has a good track record of staying within budget as long as the project doesn't get postponed. Tom Kenyon said Route 44 is scheduled to be repaved in 2017 so hopefully this project will be done by then. Joe said the budget includes money for repairing roads and sidewalks affected by the project. Dennis asked about the location of the pump stations. Joe said one would be on town hall property and one would be somewhere between Leland's and the Fire Department. Glenn said the town would need an easement from the property owner. Louise Hudson, owner of the Leland property, said she is not keen on having a pump station on her property. There was discussion about the visible portion of the pump station, which is minimal. Louise asked about odor. Joe said they try to mitigate odor issues with tight seals and carbon filters. Tom Urban asked about the plan for power outages. Joe said there could either be below-grade storage or a generator. Joe said the storage option is included in the \$2.1 million. Someone asked if the school has thought about installing a waterless system. Erik said no but noted an odor issue associated with the school's system, where the pump is located, when school is in session and it rains a lot. Erik noted that the school is getting closer to capacity and would very much like to have a municipal sewer system. Glenn said to improve the school's existing system would cost in excess of \$100,000. Glenn suggested being proactive and forward-thinking and addressing these issues now. Tom Urban asked about the size of the storage tank and the cost of adding Seems Road to the project. Joe said the cost of adding Seems Road would be about \$750,000. Al Keiller said Seems Road could be added in the future but the initial goal was to keep the project affordable while addressing the critical issues in the village. Xaveria asked why the people on Seems Road can opt out and the people on Route 44 can't. Glenn said property owners need to document that their system meets current standards if they want to opt out. It was noted that most of the lots in the village don't have enough land to support their use. Glenn said that's why we're here tonight. Lucy Rosen, who has property at the resort, asked why new connections don't have to pay a hookup fee. Glenn said the town decided to include hookups in the project cost; resort property owners have been dealing with a private entity not a municipality. Dennis asked if a sewer stub will be provided for every home that legally opts out. Joe said yes. In response to a question, Glenn explained that the "property value assessed fee" was based on a \$300,000 average property value; the actual fee would be lower or higher based on the value of the property. Louise asked if there will be more meetings before the bond vote. Glenn said yes. Glenn invited people to call him or Martha Harrison with questions.

- 3) Citizen complaint – Rudy reported a problem with dogs barking on Kimball Farm Road. Bruce said he has heard similar complaints from other people. Glenn said he will discuss it with the Police Chief.
- 4) Authorize Selectboard Chair to sign FEMA forms required for public assistance – **Tom moved to authorize the Chair to sign whatever FEMA forms are required in connection with the town's request for public assistance. Bruce seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
- 5) Adjourn – **Glenn moved to adjourn at 7:45 PM. Bruce seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison