

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD
RIVER ROAD WEST PUMP STATION BOND VOTE INFORMATIONAL MEETING MINUTES
ELECTRONIC MEETING VIA ZOOM AND PHONE CALL-IN
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021

Present:

Trustees: Steve Hatfield, Will Jennison, Scott Meyer, Athena Parke

Others: Meredith Dolan, Rosemary Audibert, Dan Copp, Michael Mainer (Aldrich & Elliott), Wayne Elliott (Aldrich & Elliott), Eric Osgood, Kyle Nuse, Rick Aupperlee, Susan Tinker, Kim Dunkley, Diane Lehouiller

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Scott called the meeting to order at 5:33.

2. Changes, Additions to Proposed Agenda

No changes to the agenda were needed

3. Overview of River Road West Pump Station Project and Costs

Meredith said this is the required informational meeting for the bond vote for the River Road West Pump Station replacement. The vote will be by Australian ballot tomorrow.

The trustees introduced themselves.

Meredith said the village has identified an immediate need to address the River Road West Pump Station, a critical piece of sewer infrastructure off Railroad Street. The village is going to have a bond vote to provide necessary funding for the project because it will cost more than the village has on hand. It is typical to bond for a major infrastructure project like this. Voting will be from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. tomorrow at the Johnson municipal office. Curbside voting is available for those who don't feel comfortable going into the building. Those who have absentee ballots need to return them by 7:00 p.m. There is a drop box at the municipal building.

Mike Mainer of Aldrich & Elliot said this project includes replacement of the wastewater pump station, which will include a new below grade concrete wet well, new piping, controls, and redundant submersible pumps. The existing remote telemetry unit for alarms will be reused. The existing pump station will be decommissioned. The project is necessary because the existing pump station is aging and unreliable. Failure could cause sewer overflows. It is becoming difficult to find replacement parts. It is becoming costly in time consuming to maintain the pump station. The estimated project cost is \$345,000. That includes construction, a 10% construction contingency, engineering and legal fees, permit fees, administration, short-term interest, and other costs.

The village is hoping to obtain funding from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. That would include an engineering subsidy covering 50% of engineering costs (about \$14K) and a subsidy of 40% of construction costs, saving the village approximately \$125K. That subsidy is first-come-first-served. That is why the village is eager to have a bond vote now. There is no guarantee that subsidy will be available in the future if the bond does not pass. The remainder of the cost will be covered by a 30-year loan at 2% interest. The loan amount will be about \$205K. Annual payments will be about \$9K. The first payment is not due until a year after construction. The cost to the average sewer customer will be about \$1.40 per month. If the bond vote passes construction will be in summer 2021.

Meredith asked Dan Copp to talk about some of the challenges we have had with the pump station. Dan said he thinks it was originally built in 1969. It is a type of system that is not used anymore. It is not as efficient as a submersible pump design. Parts have become an issue to get. We were down to one pump for almost two months and if that had failed we could have had an overflow. Repairs have often been time consuming. We have a fear that the pump station will fail and cause an environmental issue due to overflow to the river. We want a new station that is more reliable and will hopefully serve the village for many years to come.

Meredith said we are trying to move rapidly to take advantage of very favorable funding sources available now that might not be available in the future.

4. *Questions from the Public*

Kyle said she has a recollection that this was talked about a long time ago. The board has changed quite a bit since then. She seems to remember that designs were already drawn up years ago to replace this pump station. She is wondering what happened between then and now. Could someone speak about why the delay happened? If there were plans before, are those the ones being used now? Is this a new consulting company?

Dan said previous plans to replace the pump station were dropped before he was working here. He has no idea why. The Otter Creek designs he saw from 2010 involved purchasing land. The cost based on those plans did not include the land purchase cost. Now that it is 10 years later the design would have had to be re-engineered. We decided we should open it up to multiple engineers and we picked the one we thought was most qualified. One reason we didn't go with Otter Creek again is that they didn't even mention in their interview that they had designed this 10 years ago. We would have had to re-engineer the whole thing in any case so he doesn't think getting this new design from Aldrich & Elliot will be more expensive. Hopefully by starting fresh we get a better design that will last well.

Kyle said as a taxpayer she hopes future boards will not have to go through this process twice.

Wayne Elliott said one condition of state funding is that the village has to go through a process to qualify for the 50% subsidy. Aldrich & Elliott is aware of the previous work and they would like to think that their work this time is priced accordingly. They have that previous design and are using it. They are trying to be efficient. Regarding the condition of the pump station, obviously potential overflow is an environmental problem but if there were an overflow the village could also be subject to fines from the state.

Meredith said the village did supply the plans from 2010 to Aldrich & Elliot so they could use baseline data that wouldn't have changed in 10 years. We are using what we can from that previous plan, trying to be as efficient as possible. The pumps we are planning to use in this project are similar to some we have used in other parts of our system so there will be some efficiencies in terms of spare parts.

Rick Aupperlee said he heard that funds that are going to offset about \$140K of the cost are on a first-come-first-served basis. The estimated \$1.40 annual cost per customer took into account those subsidies. If they are not available, what does the effect on the customer look like?

Wayne said every indication we have gotten at this point is that if the village passes the bond vote tomorrow the funds would be available. These funds are restricted to communities with populations

under 10,000. Part of the reason the village decided not to wait until March for the bond vote is that by voting earlier the village will be earlier in line for the funds.

Mike Mainer said we will be saving about 40% with the subsidies we expect so without those the cost to the customer would be about 40% higher, maybe around \$2 a month.

Rick asked how many homes or businesses are served by that pump station. Dan said he thinks it serves 37 residences. Meredith said it also serves the site of the municipal garages. Dan said if we assume about 2.5 people per residence, it serves about 80 people.

Kyle asked what the construction will be like and what people can expect as far as noise and road blockage. Mike said most of the construction will be on River Road West, right around the pump station. The road should be open to traffic. There is little traffic on that road. When this is put out to bid there will be requirements for the contractor to keep traffic moving and keep the project on schedule. Wayne said the pump station will need to remain operable during construction. Meredith said we are working within the existing right of way for the station, not expanding its footprint.

Kyle asked if the project will require village crew time. Meredith said she thinks any assistance by the village crew would be minimal. There might be minor assistance with moving materials, etc. Dan said wastewater plant employees will be spending time watching over the project but that will be included in their normal time so there will be no extra cost to the village. Wayne said Aldrich & Elliot will be overseeing the construction.

Kim Dunkley asked if there are any subsidies that are a sure thing and if there will possibly be savings that will knock down the cost. Meredith said the planning subsidy is a sure thing. That has been approved. She doesn't think we can say that any of the others are sure thing. Wayne said it is very doubtful that the village would not qualify if the bond vote passes tomorrow.

Wayne said the biggest savings to the village from this project will probably be from less ongoing maintenance expense. Dan agreed that maintenance is where we will see the biggest savings. We have put a fair amount of money into that pump station in recent years. We will save some money on maintenance. He doesn't think we will see significant reduction in electrical cost. The pump station doesn't run a lot for 37 homes.

Kyle suggested a post on Front Porch Forum or Facebook before the polls close. Meredith said she was frustrated to see that her post on the vote didn't make it into today's Front Porch Forum. It will be in tomorrow's and she can put something on Facebook.

5. *Adjourn*

Will moved to adjourn, Athena seconded, the motion was passed and the meeting was adjourned at 6:06.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths