

ROUTE 209 SEWAGE PROJECT
MEETING MINUTES
January 8, 2020

Meeting opened at 3:00 PM

Present were: Mike Mrozinski, Joe Sain, Al Schneider, Bob DiLorenzo, Tim Gartner, Nick May, Frank Tarquinio, Scott Sheldon, Matt Osterberg, Bill Kiger, Peggy Emanuel, Fred Weber, Michael D. Weiss, Rich Nichols, John Ciccolella, and Jim Davis. HRG Engineering staff via phone - Matt Roberts and Mark Spatz.

Meeting was videotaped.

Minutes from December 4, 2019 Meeting – Approved

A progress report was provided from HRG. Matt Roberts said one of the main things done since the last meeting was we went with some of the Representatives from each municipality to the DEP office in Wilkes Barre to discuss the TAR. We have the map with the inspection results which is on GIS. We are moving ahead with designing the alternatives for possible sewage routes and being able to get some cost estimates as well as what the cost would be for individual users. We will be able to move forward and decide how we want to progress with things - if all of the municipalities are still comfortable with going forward with the sewage or if we want to start sending things out to DEP with updates. As far as next month, the number one thing we'll be working on is designing the alternatives based on the GIS maps and estimate the cost. From there, we can discuss next stakeholder meetings and proceed from there.

Mark Spatz said the map actually has each of the locations where we did on-site surveys in red (or green). The red is expected malfunction and that is due mostly to the definition of what a cesspool is. By definition, it is suspected unless you confirm it is functioning. The green dots are confirmed functioning. When I look at the map I see a shotgun pattern with some areas defining a pattern but not specifically showing certain regions of either borough that have more failures or more functioning septic systems than in the other part. When Matt was out there it seems that people were looking for sewer more than in other areas. We will keep that in mind as we pull together the alternatives analysis and get the pricing done.

We are not done with the needs assessments. The two areas that still need are Westfall Township and Milford Township. The two boroughs are done. It's been a little difficult to do the on-site inspections with snow on the ground or grass not growing. We feel we have enough to generate a preliminary alternatives analysis and costing so we can figure out what the tap-in fees might look like. Then we would meet with the stakeholders group after that and go through those numbers in a draft form and see where everybody is at. We want to make sure that everyone is comfortable with the status of the project before we start disbursing information to the DEP. Our goal is to have that assessment and information for this coming February meeting (the first Wednesday in February). I will print everything out and come up to review that. It's a pretty big meeting to go through everything. Immediately after that we want to get that meeting set up with DEP and DRBC.

A meeting attendee asked if we can post this video on the Pike County website? Commissioner Osterberg said he would have to get I.T. in order to do that. If not, could we upload it to YouTube? Commissioner Osterberg said it would be easier to just use YouTube. The thing is, if we start to do that, then where do I stop it? Which ones don't we post?

Question from meeting attendee that Moon Valley was not in the original scope of this project, when did that get added? Commissioner Osterberg asked Moon Valley Road or Moon Valley Development? The answer was Moon Valley Falls. Commissioner Osterberg said Penney Luhrs had asked for that to be added at some point because they have central sewage now. The Supervisors asked for that at some point. Mark Spatz said Moon Valley was brought up and then we talked about how it wasn't in the original scoping and then we generated a costing to add that in and it was never moved forward to add that in. It's not just adding it in with no additional costs, it's additional assessments. Penney brought it up and we cost it at another \$3K-\$6K approximately to add it into the project. It's not too late-we can still add it in. The attendee asked if the Township bears that \$3K-\$6K? Commissioner Osterberg answered the initial funding for this whole thing came through Act 13 Funds, we'd have to analyze that and check the accounts. It was brought up on June 5th - Mark Spatz asked if Moon Valley Falls is too far out of the sewer? Mark Spatz answered that if you want the sewer in that area we will include it in that area. Currently they have their own sewer but it is not doing well. I think it was just left like that because they do have sewer. I guess it is up to the Township Supervisors if they want to entertain us adding them to it. Right now, they are included in a central sewage system. It could always be added later, correct Mark? Mark Spatz answered yes, once the plan gets moved through you would do a Component 3M to amend. The 537 process is a living document, it's not like you do something once and you're done forever. Whenever you have this bounded area that this 537 is going to study, the study area on the mapping, if any development or any sewage needs are needed outside that bounded area there are a couple of mechanisms to add that in. If it is a private entity, they could submit a planning module to the Township for consideration. The Township could review it and approve it and that is usually funded by the private entity. If it is a municipality that wants to expand the area, that is a Component 3M. Either are mechanisms to amend or tack on this additional area to the Master 537 Plan. That will continue forever, that is how it works. Maybe in 30 or 40 years there may be another 537 Plan, but in between the two big 537 efforts you have these planning modules and Component 3M that are mechanisms to make little amendments and add in areas here and there that need it.

Another question by attendee - as part of the TAR will you be able to give residents some estimate range for connection, not just the \$1,750 hook-up, but what this typically costs? I'm looking at numbers anywhere from \$8K to \$12K and, depending on the type of system you use, it could be \$20K. Will that be described in the TAR so we have some idea what homeowners can anticipate? Mark Spatz answered that we're going to have draft numbers and draft documents that are really not for larger public release-they're still in draft. It is for the stakeholders and elected municipal officials, but we have to make sure we don't get carried away with getting too much draft information out there. We are not trying to hide anything. It's just hard to explain to the public what a draft is and that a draft can change. The final 537 Plan will definitely have a tapping fee and estimated rates in the final form. Along the way, the goal is to have the elected municipal officials looking at these numbers and to say yes, these are numbers that our township or borough are expecting and these are acceptable. That's the process of going through the 537 and planning it. If we get to a spot where numbers aren't where people think they need to be, then we need to look and work on that if there are ways to do things differently to bring them into expectation. We have to make sure we have reasonable expectations. Ultimately, it's a work in process - all the time we're trying to push the numbers down, push the expenses down. Can we get grants to offset things? They are always in a planning number state until you get those bids back from construction to go build. With proper planning and proper understanding of how numbers are developing as you're going along and trying

to keep those within budgets, within range of expectations. You're trying to keep your costs down and get to that end, but they are always fluctuating here and there. A big part of that is grants and things of that nature. The final 537 Plan will have estimated costs for tapping fees. We'll have some draft numbers in between now and when that final 537 Plan is put out for public release. It is important to understand that the Plan that the elected officials say yes, this looks like a good plan for my community, that has to go out for a thirty (30) days public comment period. We make public presentations up on the plan and have this information; address questions, comments, concerns and then take the plan back and make any revisions on it based upon public input. That's a required process. The DEP won't even look at the plan until that's done. We have to officially respond to those comments. It's built into the mechanisms to make sure that the public is aware of the document going to the DEP in final planning form.

An attendee thanked Mark for the feedback, but said what he is hearing is that the cost he is including is going to be the tapping fee and annual rate, it will not include any grinder pumps, pumping out of existing cesspools, damage to yards, fences, roads or whatever. It is not a complete cost right? Mark Spatz said what is tricky about that are people's situations are different. You can look at ranges, but it depends on your septic tank versus somebody else's, do they have to repair fence work? Go across driveways or not to get connections? Do they need a grinder pump and things of that nature. I will talk to my team to see if we can pull some reasonable ranges together so we have some understanding of that. It's not an official thing that would be in the 537 Plan, but it's something we can see if we can include around the fringes or at least have that information for public meetings. The other thing is, many times with communities a local contractor or a local person who has a license to do work in construction and has proper insurance for the State, but they will start making news of it to go around and do these sewer tie-ins for people. To some extent it takes a person that is handy and has a backhoe. A lot of times that has a pretty decent impact on the costing. If that comes together, the costs go down. Bob Dilorenzo said to add to that we're going to have people with finished basements, most of the lines are going to be in front and we're going to have to move the sewage line from the back of the house to the front of the house or business. Some of these businesses are going to be on grade/slab. The cost to that could be a great deal because you have to abandon the old system, move the plumbing inside the house; if they have finished basements, that's an issue too. When you look at that, you're going to have to look at all the angles on that. Mark said that's what makes it really difficult. Our ranges might have quite a range. What's maybe more appropriate as we get closer to this, and getting toward a draft, a public comment period, is some people with that concern can call a plumber and get a quote. Quotes are usually free and very specific. Bob replied that they would need to do that before this goes in place because, once it's in place, if we're using funding we're going to have to hook up. Bill Kiger added as long as the homeowners understand that it's not just a \$1,750 hookup fee and probably \$800-\$1,200 a year usage fee, but there are other costs. Even if you don't put a dollar sign to it, this is not going to be a trivial expense to most homeowners-they should know.

Frank Tarquinio asked Mark if they're going to identify where the pipes are going in the streets and/or alleys? That will have an effect on people. If they go down the alleys, it's close to most people's septic, they don't have to rearrange inside the house. You will identify where, at least at that point, you're expect all the lines to go down? Mark replied that yes, our analysis will have a general layout. It's going to be lines on a street, it's not going to be exactly where the line needs to go. They're going to be looking at mapping and we're going to show generally where the lines will be. With this whole process and, most of engineering processes, the least expensive way is the way that achieves the objective – that's always the way. Bill Kiger reiterated that it will still be a cost of

the homeowner, it is not going to be insignificant. It is going to be a cost that is incurred not just the connection fee, that's my point.

A meeting representative asked what the earliest that the hearing by the municipality will take place? Mark Spatz asked if he was talking about the public comments period-clarified as public hearing. Mark answered it would be this year (2020). It's up to the towns, but from what my perception of it is, it will be this year some time Spring/late Spring 2020. Matt Roberts added that it also has to do with when the DEP gets things approved or, once we have the alternatives, if the municipalities reviewing them wants us to change things. Depending on things like that, it can get delayed.

An attendee said that in the last meeting we discussed the Commercial District in Milford Borough will precede the Residential District. How much separation from Commercial to Residential? Is that 6 months? A year or 2 years? Mark answered it has not been determined. It's the community's plan, so it is what the community will want it to be and it gets checked by the Department. If there is a residential with a business back to back, it would make sense to grab them both. Mark said what's important to realize is that the main driver is getting commercial businesses served. This is the message I've heard from the communities – there is an economic burden that's currently on many of the businesses through the central corridors of each borough. It starts to erode the town because the commercial starts to dither away and people need the commercial for economics of the area. That is really the main concern. It takes sewer 10, 15, 20 years to build – it takes a long time. It takes a long time to figure out how to fund this, looking for grants and aggressively chasing these things. That is the main driver for this project, the needs of residential homes around the area is being looked at as well. The scheduling and costing and stuff like that is a work in progress. That is what we're starting to figure out now. Ultimately, once the elected officials are comfortable with the plan then that will go out for public comment to receive public feedback. If we have to make changes, we go ahead and make those changes. If everything is in good order then that gets submitted to DEP. They will have to review and approve the socioeconomic benefit to the plan itself as well. They are making sure costs are contained, fees are reasonable and that there is a sewer need for commercial and residential. There are a number of checks and balances in the process that was established by the State in the 1960's for how you go through this to get a town with no public sewer to a town with public sewer.

With no other business, the meeting stood adjourned. Next meeting will be on February 5, 2020 at 3:00 PM in the Commissioners' Meeting Room.#