

Greensboro Wastewater Advisory Committee

8/12/25 Meeting Minutes 7-8:30pm – final

Attendees:

WWAC: Stew Arnold, Blake Auchincloss, Mary Parker, Dan Predpall, Davis Barnett

Unavailable: Jefferson Tolman

From the public: Sheila Dillon

Zoom Recording (Davis' account):

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/wJJ--lHhKOezLlxQbKQ4wyldeJLqY8dsXbVnL-rhfjyMyh6AWjAoWCcTJ_0hgw.ZrzGL6Y9qkbPgvSr?startTime=1755039961000

Passcode: VOcM!z6x

Stew Arnold (Chair) initiated the meeting:

- Minutes for the WWAC's meeting on 6/12/25 were approved

Public Comment: None

Review of June 27th call with Lynnette Claudon (Pollution Control Design Chief – State of Vermont):

How to use the \$100,000 leftover from the original contract is currently with the state.

We met with Lynnette and her team on her weekly open office hours timeslot and Lynnette confirmed that we may use the remaining funds with Hoyle Tanner. We need to update the Hoyle Tanner Engineering Service Agreement (ESA) grant agreement and submit it to the State of Vermont, using the ANR portal as well as sending the amended agreement to Lynnette). Hoyle Tanner will amend the ESA.

Once the state (ANR) and Lynnette agree to it, we would submit the amendment to the Selectboard – once the Selectboard signs it, Hoyle Tanner would be able to start the work.

The guidelines for using these funds are that we need to include two types of tests:

- 1) one meter square – surface profile for sensitive archeological significance
- 2) backhoe test pit(s) – a large area for a) soil scientists' work, b) hydrological work, c) to confirm the soil matches the mapping and wastewater needs

Lynnette's advice is:

- 1) Use a hand auger testing before archeological and backhoe testing, to eliminate incompatible sites
- 2) Look for existing systems that could be expanded with private landowners – possibly using pre-treatment. If there is town land located near a private well, consider moving the location of the private well, to make the town land a possibility.
- 3) Focus on town-owned land
- 4) Ask the community: Ask property owners to see if anyone would volunteer their land for a site

Amendment to the Contract: Dan mentioned that Stew needs to contact John Reilly (Hoyle Tanner) and ask for the amendment, based on the scope of work he sent you.

Action Item: Stew to contact John Reilly

Once we get the amendment, then we need to get approval from the state (Lynnette Claudon), and then we can ask for approval from the Selectboard.

Our plan would be to get the amendment approved by the state and then we would meet with the Selectboard in one of their September meetings to have them approve the amendment. This would align with our goal of meeting with the Selectboard quarterly. Note at the next night's Selectboard meeting, MacNeil and I discussed the Wastewater Committee presenting in September's 2nd meeting, expected to be the 4th Wednesday.

Action Item: Stew will get the amendment from Hoyle Tanner and send it to Lynnette to get the state's approval.

Comments:

There is next to no town land to explore, so we are at the mercy of private landowners. Our challenge is what is the best way to engage with the community on this topic.

We need to have an understanding about what we can offer private landowners, what incentives are available. Are tax rebates available or tax incentives? Would we be purchasing the property for some dollar value?

Currently, the Wastewater committee is just a group of people that does not have anything to offer landowners. We need to meet with the Selectboard and discuss.

Blake says that there is public money available for Wastewater, however it is very restricted.

Blake and Mary Parker have talked about sites that may be suitable for a different technology – we should be looking at different technologies with smaller footprints.

Mary would like to speak with Jefferson Tolman to learn about what the technology options are. Blake would like to explore what Hoyle Tanner can use on the front or back end to reduce the dispersion area. Dan mentioned you only need about 0.2 of an acre for a dispersion area.

We understand that any system that is in the Lake Champlain watershed is heavily restricted.

The concern is that are we don't want to go down a path with Hoyle Tanner that we know is going to fail, so why spend the money. The reality here is that the \$100k funds that we do have are tied to use with Hoyle Tanner. If we want to work with a different engineering company, we will need to get new funds – we could not use the existing \$100k.

Is it worth spending the money?

Dan's comment is that the original WW initiative spent 5 years looking for a 40,000 gallon per day site, not several 6,000 gallon per day sites. There is a new scope now. Also, commenting on the ideas of different technologies – there are many problems with looking at other technologies – the State frowns on the other technologies. Technology is a solution for big cities but does not work for small towns. The problem is the alternative technologies are very expensive and there are no economies of scale for a small town. If you want to do a technology study, the State is not going to give you the money, you would need to fund it yourself, and it would cost tens of thousands of dollars. And if you use technology you end up with a discharge, and you will not get a permit to have a discharge into a creek. So you would need to discharge into a large dispersion area, which is what you would need with a the type of system Hoyle Tanner proposes, without the technology, so we need to think about a regular system with a dispersion area.

Stew described the system capacity of his neighborhood system, 500 gallons per day for each house. A 6,000 gallon system could handle 12 houses. Not sure what the capacity Willey's Store and The Miller's Thumb would need.

Dan mentioned the Hoyle Tanner system has technology beyond what Stew's system includes, so that it would be able to handle a larger capacity for a similar footprint to Stew's.

There was discussion on what properties could be handled – would we need to handle to Laurendon Apartments, how far up Breezy Ave would we go? How far past the post office, how far up towards town hall?

Blake noted in his volunteer experience, talk does not go far. That once a project is built, it serves as a prototype. It is believable to the community and there will be funds for it. His recommendation is to create a project for one of these smaller systems, and once that is done, the community will get behind the larger vision of more of these smaller systems.

An initial system could be expanded, if the initial site's hydrological study shows there is more capacity.

Sites:

Once we get the ESA amendment approved, Hoyle Tanner will help us identify some of the potential sites.

Dan's suggestions:

Find land with decent soils, where the landowner has a fair amount of land, find out where their septic system is located and see if you are able to make a deal to expand their system – they would get free septic forever, and they would help the community.

Ask Hoyle Tanner to examine their maps of village properties for decent soils. Looking at nearby properties so that you can keep the potential cost of the piping down. Looking at the locations based on a hydrological standpoint, and the size of the properties, and then the WW committee would approach those property owners.

Stew suggested checking in with the church in the Bend to see if they would be open to us building a smaller system on their land – they declined the 40,000 gallon per day system, maybe they would be agreeable to a smaller system.

We expect that there are houses in the village where their septic system may be failing, however they are not going to volunteer this information. If we approach people and tell them our plan, those with failing systems may be willing to have their system rebuilt by the town with extra capacity that part of the village may use – they would then not have to deal with a potential failure of their system.

The nursing home may be an opportunity for this approach, as we understand their system is failing/at capacity, and that we could approach them with this idea of rebuilding their system with extra capacity that the town. Dan mentioned the nursing home may not be a good choice because their system is not located on their property, it is located up the hill, and their system is already a fairly large system serving many people.

Other ideas, Circus Smirkus and Highland Center for the Arts – would they be willing to expand their systems to cover some additional capacity to serve the town?

Question: Does the town have maps of everyone's septic systems –

Answer: Dan: No, most people have not volunteered that information. In the initial WW project there was a survey of the people in the village, asking them for the location of their septic systems and not many people provided the information. However, you can probably make a good guess when you look at the properties.

The original list from Hoyle Tanner listed some possibilities on the Bend Road. Stew spoke with Tom Camarra who is selling his house and asked about Tom's land – Tom thought his property is probably not suitable/acceptable. The first step for testing a property is to use the hand auger test – Tom's land is close to 37 acres – would Tom allow Hoyle Tanner to perform hand auger tests? We don't know. We don't know what the soil maps indicate for Tom's land. Hoyle Tanner looked at the maps for Tom's property and classified the land as a possibility – it is not the top soil classification, but it may be good. We would only need 1 acre, so it may not impact Tom's sale value. Dan mentioned that the hand auger testing may be completed in 3-4 hours. Hoyle Tanner has agreement documents that can be used to work with landowners, documents which state the testing and impact of testing, assuring the landowner the property will be protected.

Stew mentioned that Rick Walsh's property on the Bend Road is for sale. Comments on this parcel is that much of it is too wet, however there may be a small area. Dan commented that property is very wet and that maybe we should wait until after Rick sells the property before we explore it.

Steps we need to follow when considering sites:

- Work with Hoyle Tanner and locate sites that have good soils, based on the soil maps
- Explain the process to the landowner
 - o Hand Auger testing of 1 square meter
 - o If findings are suitable, the next step is archeological testing
 - o If there are no archeological issues, then dig test pits with a backhoe

Steps we need to follow when we engage with property owners of potential sites:

- We need to have studied the soil maps and consider the size of the properties – we need to do our homework before we approach any property owners.
- Know that to turn a private septic system into a public septic system, the town needs to be able to control the property.

- We need to ask the Selectboard what other incentives they could offer the landowner – a public system is a benefit to the town, so the Selectboard needs to be involved and be part of the solution. We need to ask Hoyle Tanner what other towns have done to provide incentives to private landowners. We need to look at other towns in Vermont and find out what incentives they used to get access to private lands.

Other:

- **Grant writing:** Dan is leaving the community, however he is willing to help with the grant writing.
- **Wastewater Committee readout to the Selectboard** expected in the 2nd Selectboard meeting of September, expected to be the 4th Wednesday, Sept 24. Davis will create a draft and provide to the WW members in the Sept 4th WW meeting.
 - o **Action Plan:** Davis to create draft of WW activities to-date
- **Document the process that Stew followed to create his neighborhood (7 house) WW system** – for reference/guide to other neighborhoods that may be interested. Blake mentioned that people on Black Point are interested in this information.
 - o **Action Plan:** Blake to set up meeting with Davis & Stew
- **Tour of Wolcott’s wastewater plan:** Blake and Davis plan to contact Bruce Wheeler and meet with him to see Wolcott’s plans.
 - o **Action Plan:** Davis to set up meeting with Blake & Bruce
- **Public Awareness of Wastewater Committee Activities:**

We need to get the support of the town clerk to get the past meetings’ recordings on the town website. The meetings’ minutes are on the town website. Once we are able to get the recordings on the town website, Davis will post to Front Porch Forum the location of the meetings’ materials so that the community can see what we are doing. [Follow-up: The town clerk volunteered that we should now use the town’s Zoom account – Davis will use the town’s Zoom account going forward, as well as see if he can link the past meetings’ recordings to the town Zoom account.]

- **Overdue Bills with Hoyle Tanner:**

There are two invoices from Hoyle Tanner, from work done 3/11/25 and 4/14/25, totaling \$16,290. Hoyle Tanner is emailing MacNeil, asking for payment.

Dan mentioned that the money is with the state and that the Selectboard needs to submit progress reports to the state so that the state will pay Greensboro. In this meeting, Dan mentioned that Greensboro has received the money. In the Selectboard meeting on August 13, the day after this August 12 WW meeting, MacNeil said that Greensboro has not received the money and that is why Greensboro has not paid Hoyle Tanner. There is confusion on how to get the money from the state to Greensboro, so that Greensboro can pay Hoyle Tanner.

Action Item: Davis will email Stew, MacNeil and Hoyle Tanner to try to clear this up and determine if the Selectboard needs to fill out a progress report so that the state pays Greensboro, so that Greensboro can pay Hoyle Tanner.

Next Monthly WW Meeting: September 4, 2025 @ 7pm, with backup Tuesday September 9, 2025 – In-person and zoom options, Location expected to be the Greensboro Free Library. We would use this meeting to prepare to the readout to the Selectboard later in September.

Meeting adjourned.