

Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District
29 Sunset Drive, Suite 5
Morrisville, VT 05661

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' BUSINESS MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2023
CONDUCTED BY ZOOM

SUPERVISORS

Absent	Belvidere	Dana Sweet	Cambridge
Penelope Doherty	Craftsbury	David Whitcomb	Eden
Jane Oliphant	Elmore	Vacant	Hyde Park
Absent	Johnson	Absent	Morristown
Willie Noyes	Stowe	Lucas Tilton	Waterville
Phillip Wilson	Wolcott	Carl Witke	Worcester

STAFF

Susan Alexander	District Manager	Jon Skates	Facilities Manager
Donna Griffiths	Clerk		

OTHERS

Harry Shepard Stowe Director of Public Works

Willie Noyes called the meeting to order at 6:39 pm.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were present.

2. DISCUSSION OF BIOSOLIDS AND PFAS WITH HARRY SHEPARD, TOWN OF STOWE

Harry Shepard said he has been Stowe's public works director since 2010. He is also director of the Green Mountain Water Environment Association. PFAS are an increasing challenge in managing wastewater treatment, leachate from landfills, and drinking water. In the past, Stowe had an aerobic digester that produced Class B biosolids, which were spread on agricultural fields in town. In the early 2000s the residuals treatment section of the wastewater plant was upgraded to produce a higher quality Class A product that could be dispersed to the general public. Many contractors used it in topsoil mix. But that system was always problematic. It never properly functioned and was very odorous and with increased flow the town could no longer meet Class A standards. They suspended use of that system and reverted to anaerobic digestion. Since then they have produced a Class B product that used to be landfilled at the Coventry landfill. In 2019 they contracted with Englobe, a Canadian company and started trucking their residuals to Quebec, where the material is used as part of a composting/mine reclaim project.

There is increasing alarm from health officials about certain types of PFAS, particular PFOA and PFOS. These chemicals are ubiquitous. They come to the wastewater plant

from the sewer collection system and septage receiving. There is a growing body of evidence that one of the biggest sources of PFAS in our waste streams is residential sources. Studies in Vermont have confirmed that residential users are a primary contributor. Raw septage on farm fields was not uncommon in Stowe and many other places in Vermont. These chemicals are in our bloodstream. Washing machine discharge and showers are some of the greatest sources. The chemicals are in makeup, pharmaceuticals, dental floss, etc. PFAS is becoming extremely expensive to deal with and options for getting rid of it are becoming increasingly challenged. The problem is not going to be solved by individual towns.

Harry showed results of PFAS testing of Stowe WWTP residuals. Their primary water supply has low levels of PFOA. They know they have it in what is coming in and going out of the treatment plant. Just a year ago when they got these results the consultant advised that the levels were background levels and should not be a cause for worry. But at the DEC these levels are now a concern. Stowe is not going to be allowed to renew its solid waste disposal permit for Mayo Farm because these levels are now a concern. Stowe has had to do testing of what was spread previously at Mayo Farm and they know there has been accumulation over time.

Where to dispose of residuals is becoming increasingly challenging. Stowe is trying to get an agreement to continue to use Englobe as a potential outlet but in Canada there is a government report recommending that PFAS be classified as hazardous waste. Similar discussions about reclassification of PFAS are occurring in Montpelier and Washington. Englobe is currently still able to accept Stowe's product for their particular application at a mine reclamation site but they could not guarantee that they would still be able to accept it after the current contract ends at the end of 2023. Stowe is in discussions with them about the possibility of extending the contract. But a big challenge is that the contract includes provisions allowing Englobe to get out of it if there is a change in regulations or law. Stowe is also having conversations with Casella. Acceptance testing has been done so Casella could evaluate Stowe's product for disposal in a landfill or a grasslands facility they run in upstate New York. Stowe is hoping to get pricing for those options. They have also had conversations with a New Hampshire residuals firm. They are not willing to use Stowe's product in Class B form but if they wanted to go back to trying to create Class A product he thinks that firm would be a potential outlet. Disposal options are quickly becoming limited and disposal will become a lot more expensive even faster if PFAS are classified as hazardous waste. Stowe's expenses are already concerning. There has been a 97% increase in sludge management costs in 3 years. That is not all due to PFAS. During COVID there were exchange rate issues with Canada and since COVID fuel surcharges in the contract have increased expense.

Stowe has an immediate need to identify where to take PFAS in the near future. In the long term they are trying to look at other technologies to manage residuals in other ways. He believes they will have to focus on volume reduction. He does not believe individual towns are going to be able to deal with advanced levels of PFAS treatment. The costs are very high. They may be seeking partners in regional solutions. That is why he and others

are talking to solid waste districts. He is not saying the burden should be shifted to solid waste districts but he thinks the conversation needs to be regional, not local.

Susan said this is not just a Stowe problem. It is also a problem for other wastewater treatment plants in our district. PFAS is ubiquitous. The capacity for landfilling sludge is limited because liquid materials like sludge have to be balanced with more solid materials.

Penelope said she thinks we all agree that we should be going for volume reduction on everything. Craftsbury has had PFAS issues resulting in no drink orders. She heard recently that there is some thought that the plastic wrap used on hay bales in fields has UV breakdown and is contributing. Harry said he has not heard about plastic wrap for hay bales specifically. Sheet plastics that are coated, particularly for waterproofing, are known sources.

Susan showed a slide Harry had provided of children playing in firefighting foam put down by the volunteer fire department in Stowe years ago. Many ski towns in Vermont used to have winter carnivals in summer that included firefighting foam. That could be an example of why PFAS are found in places like Craftsbury Common. Firefighting foam was identified as one of the leading contributors of legacy PFAS. PFAS in it is being eliminated. Ski wax also used to have PFAS.

3. APPROVE MINUTES OF JUNE 13, 2023 MEETING

Dana moved and David seconded to approve the minutes of June 13, 2023. The motion was passed unanimously.

4. FY2023 FINANCIALS

a. Approve July 2023 Financial Reports

Susan said at the end of the first month of our fiscal year our net income was \$74K. That looks good, but we just had our last household hazardous waste collection event of the year and we anticipate a bill in the \$30-35K range which will not be covered by any grant money. In October we will have a big insurance payment. Our disposal income is up. We raised the price per bag but we also had a flood in July. It is difficult to know how much of the increase is because of the price increase and how much is because of disposal of flood debris. Our surcharge from haulers was up significantly for July.

Dana moved and David seconded to approve the July 2023 financial reports. The motion was passed unanimously.

b. Ratification of Check Register

Susan said we accepted donations for flood-impacted employees at the Stowe and Johnson facilities. Two employees lost their housing. We allocated the donations received proportionally to those employees. The help was genuinely appreciated.

Dana moved and Penelope seconded to ratify the check register. The motion was passed unanimously.

c. *Pre-payment Authorizations for Large Checks*

Dana moved and David seconded to authorize pending payments in the amount of \$10,047.50. The motion was passed unanimously.

5. REQUEST FOR CLEAN UP GRANT, LAMOILLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Susan said we put aside money every year for grants to people who do dump site clean up. Nonprofits or communities can ask for up to \$500 for a clean up activity. The money we grant is to be used for disposal or supplies like work gloves. The Lamoille County Conservation District did a clean up on the Lamoille River last year. They did not use their entire \$500 grant last year. This year they want to do it again. They are requesting \$500. They are planning to do it this week unless the water is too high. They will have a rain date or they may need to wait until next year.

Penelope moved and Lucas seconded to award a \$500 grant for river clean up to the Lamoille County Conservation District. The motion was passed unanimously

6. VISIONING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Susan said the visioning committee met last Friday with staff. Charles, Howard, Cathy and Willie were there. Jon said anyone is welcome to engage him or the committee on any questions about the committee or Stowe. On Friday board members toured the Stowe facility. We want to consider what we want to do at that site for the next 20-30 years. The tour started at 11:00 so committee members were able to see customers using site. The site closed at 11:30. The committee had lunch with employees. All 8 full time staff and 3 out of 5 part time staff members were able to attend for lunch and conversation. The committee spent about an hour with site attendants and they were able to talk about challenges Stowe is facing. Willie said he thinks it went well. The main issues in the short term are the wall and the compactor. Both will be very expensive. Jon said they talked about challenges at other sites as well. They broke into small teams and brainstormed and presented their thoughts to the group. Susan said they can share with the board the staff input about the sites. She will make sure the whole board knows when visioning committee meetings are scheduled so anyone who wants to attend is able to.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION: PERSONNEL DISCUSSION

Lucas moved and Penelope seconded to go into executive session for personnel matters, inviting Susan to remain. The motion was passed unanimously and the board entered executive session at 7:47. The board came out of executive session at 7:55.

David moved and Penelope seconded to extend Susan Alexander's contract for one year with the same compensation increase included in her previous contract. The motion was passed unanimously.

8. UPDATES

Susan said there will be an open house/tour at Lamoille Soil on September 30. The HHW event held this past weekend at Lamoille Union High School was a success, with 235 participants and no traffic or other issues.

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 8:00. The motion was passed unanimously.

Chair Willie Noyes adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Griffiths, District Clerk

Date

Willie Noyes, Chair

Date