



VILLAGE OF WEBSTER

UTILITY MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 19, 2019 @ 4:00 p.m.

Village Office

7505 Main Street West, Webster, WI

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Utility Chairman, Darrell Sears called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.
- II. PRESENT** –Chairman, Sears; Village President, Jeff Roberts; Member, Sarah Casady. Others: Public Works Director, Jay Heyer; Clerk/Treasurer, Kuhnly; Gary Strand-Cooper Engineering; Village Resident; Roger Tollander. Absent: Member, Kelsey Gustafson
- III. POND SLUDGE REMOVAL** – Chairman, Darrell Sears gave the floor to Public Works Director, Jay Heyer. Heyer explained that every year its getting tougher to meet the DNR’s limits that allows the Village to operate the sewer ponds; especially with phosphorus. Recommendation from the DNR is for sludge to be removed from the ponds every 20 years and ours have never been done. Gary Strand, from Cooper Engineering, explained that the sludge ties up the ponds. The ponds are designed for a volume to treat wastewater; not to store sludge. When not removed, more sludge is built up as it doesn’t have enough detention time to break down. Chairman, Sears asked how old the ponds are. Heyer reported that the two smaller ones were built in 1963 and the new one was built in 1990. None have been cleaned and are getting higher. Roger Tollander was in attendance and is interested in having the sludge pumped to his farm fields. Chairman, Sears asked Roger how many acres he has available. Roger stated that he has a total of 120 acres near the ponds. But, he farms a total of 650 acres – the farthest being about eight miles from the ponds. Gary said this is within reason. Gary said that if spreading all the sludge in one year, from all three ponds, 1200 acres would be needed. But, he suggests starting with one pond, or a portion of one pond, so it’s economical for all parties and breaking the removal project up over a couple of years. Need to account for the nitrogen for what the crop uses. For corn, it is 140 pounds an acre each year. There are setbacks that need to be taken into account. Gary stated that soil testing would need to be done on the fields prior to spreading the sludge. Roger indicated that his does testing on a regular basis. Chairman, Sears confirmed cost of 7¢ a gallon to haul vs. 3¢ to pump and spread into a farmer’s field. Gary further explained the process and equipment for removing the sludge and the other things the Village test for in the ponds; that need to be taken into account for applying to the farmer’s land. All the fields need prior approval from the DNR. Gary said can plan on starting after Fall harvest; before ground freezes. Gary encourages multi-year project. Heyer asked Gary about availability of grants. Gary said sludge removal is considered maintenance so grant funding is not an option and Village should have accounted for this in sewer rates over the years. Member, Casady asked the estimated cost for pumping. Gary said \$250,000 for Pond 1 and \$270,000 for Pond 3. Add another \$100,000 for each pond if need to haul.

Action steps include:

- Roger Tollander will talk to the owners of the other fields he rents. He will also check if soil tests are less than 3-5 years ago. If not, new tests will be required.
- Public Works Director, Heyer will get current sample tests from the ponds. The results will tell exactly how many acres are needed.

- The Village Board and or Finance Committee will research financing the project. Options include borrowing the money and potentially raising sewer rates to pay back the loan. Clerk/Treasurer, Kuhnly will check with Village Auditor on Sewer Fund balance. Gary Strand reminded the committee that this could be a multi-year project and should save money/budget for the next time the sludge needs to be removed.
- Once the samples of Roger's fields and the ponds are taken, the next step is seeking approval from the DNR.
- Schedule a Finance Committee Meeting.

Gary said the Village has a good plant; nothing better and the cheapest one. Heyer said if not maintained (sludge removed), the Village could be forced to go with a mechanical one that would cost millions of dollars and extremely expensive to run every year. President, Roberts asked Gary which one to do first. Gary and Jay would recommend Pond 1 and then Pond 3. Member, Casady confirmed that in the future, the removal has to be done approximately every 20 years.

IV. ADJOURNMENT. Motion was made by Village President, Roberts to adjourn the Utility Committee Meeting at 4:43 p.m., seconded by Member, Casady. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Darrell Sears

Darrell Sears, Utility Chairman

March 19, 2019

***These minutes are subject to approval at next month's Regular Meeting.