

SEELEY LAKE SEWER DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
February 15, 2024

Tom Morris	President	PRESENT	Cheri Thompson	Director	PRESENT
Pat Goodover	Vice President	PRESENT	Troy Spence	Director	PRESENT*
Jason Gilpin	Director	PRESENT*	Felicity Derry	Secretary	PRESENT
Bill Decker	Manager	PRESENT			

* Joined the meeting at 6:39pm
Public Attendance – Appendix A

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm. The meeting was held remotely at the Barn, 2920 Highway 83, Seeley Lake, MT and via Zoom.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Tom Morris moved to accept the agenda. Cheri Thompson seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS:

Tom Morris noted that it was a very full agenda and requested that the meeting be kept moving along and to be respectful of everybody’s time.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Tom Morris requested public comment. Bill Decker noted that he had attended a meeting with Missoula City/County Health Department (MCCHD) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for possible grant opportunities that could fund a feasibility study. Bill Decker, Felicity Derry, and Jess Alexander had a meeting with the Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) regarding the Reclamation & Development grant (RDG). CRC had sent the District two letters regarding grant funding, but they were received too late to be placed on the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

MINUTES:

January 18, 2024

Tom Morris moved to accept the minutes for the regular meeting (January 18, 2024) as circulated. Cheri Thompson seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was carried.

Tom Morris	Aye
Pat Goodover	Aye
Jason Gilpin	Absent
Cheri Thompson	Aye
Troy Spence	Absent

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

Invoices

Felicity Derry reviewed the January invoices. Cheri Thompson requested clarification of the WET invoices. Jess Alexander noted that they had been working on the draft report that had been submitted to the Board. Discussion followed and Jess Alexander agreed to provide more task detail on the WET invoices. Tom Morris requested that all documentation and invoices for the board meetings be submitted by the second Thursday of the month.

Tom Morris moved to approve the invoices and pay them. Pat Goodover seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was carried.

Tom Morris	Aye
Pat Goodover	Aye
Jason Gilpin	Absent
Cheri Thompson	Aye
Troy Spence	Absent

November 2023 Financial Reports

Felicity Derry reviewed the November financial reports, noting that it had been a quiet month, with no checks written.

December 2023 Financial Reports

Felicity Derry reviewed the December financial reports, noting that it had been another quiet month

MANGER'S REPORT:

Bill Decker noted that most of his report would be covered under the eDNA sampling item later in the meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Action Plan for 2023-2024 - Committee Reports

Pathfinder Article & Email Newsletter

Cheri Thompson reviewed the map that she had created, noting that she had visited every property on the map. Also, noting that quite a few of the septic permits in the County property information system were attached to the incorrect property.

Mission Update

None.

Environmental Deoxyribonucleic Acid (eDNA) – Fluorescence Excitation Emission Matrix (EEM) Sampling

Bill Decker noted that the fourteen monitoring wells had been sampled for the last five quarters. The four wells that had the highest nitrate results were sent for more intensive testing, and reviewed the testing. Bill Decker then outlined the test results, noting that three of the monitoring well results were fairly uniform, but the results for the monitoring well at Lindsey’s were significantly higher.

John Richards asked what was the recommendation for testing? Tom Morris noted that MCCHD had offered to pay for and perform the testing.

Shannon Therriault noted that the County had agreed to install and monitor the ten transducers in the monitoring wells. Also, the County Surveyor would be able to survey those wells. Additionally, the County would take monthly nitrate samples from those monitoring wells and pay for that testing for one year. Jeanna Miller explained how the data from the transducers would be collected. The County would share the data with the District. There was discussion regarding the two monitoring wells on private property and the need for access agreements.

Tom Morris moved to move ahead with the ten transducers and let the County Surveyor do the sampling and have Bill (Decker) continue testing quarterly on any of the (monitoring) wells that have higher results, that may not be those ten (monitoring) wells. Bill Decker noted that the ten transducers would be in the monitoring wells that would have water. **Tom Morris amended his motion to move forward with having the County do the transducers and the surveying and take the nitrate samples monthly.** Both Pat Goodover and Cheri Thompson seconded the motion. There was discussion regarding the monitoring wells that had water. Jeanna Miller added that the Water Quality District would choose which ten wells would be most advantageous, some of which might not have water year-round. There was no further discussion. The motion was unanimous.

Tom Morris	Aye
Pat Goodover	Aye
Jason Gilpin	Aye
Cheri Thompson	Aye
Troy Spence	Aye

NEW BUSINESS:

WET Proposal

Jess Alexander noted that the proposal was not complete.

Written Access Agreement for Transducers

Previously covered.

Missoula City/County Health Department – Septic Permit Policy

Jeanna Miller provided an overview of how the Health Department reviewed septic permits in the Special Management Area (SMA) and then gave information and an in-depth history on how the septic permit rules/protocol had been developed and the SMA was formed. Jeanna Miller noted that over time the permit evaluation protocol was updated and explained how and why.

Jeanna Miller reviewed the normal levels of naturally occurring background nitrate in groundwater and the nitrate standard in drinking water. Adding that health impacts had been observed at lower nitrate levels. Seeley Lake had limited water rights and the public water system was nearing capacity, which illustrated why both actual and potential drinking water sources were protected to the same degree.

Jeanna Miller reviewed the water flow map and noted that the transducers and the testing that the Health Department had offered to the Board would help provide a better understanding of the groundwater flow and the level of the groundwater, as well as the surface water.

Jeanna Miller reviewed the protocol for new use and the level to which a permitted septic system would be required to treat to and how nutrient trading could be utilized. Jeanna Miller then outlined the process for increased use, such as adding a bedroom. For a replacement system there would be no changes and conventional systems would be allowed.

Jeanna Miller illustrated correlations between each of the three requirements in the SMA and how the current protocol addressed them, giving some history on the release of the protocol and the updated protocol. The Health Department's role was to uphold the health code rules and write permits, but also to be part of the solution. Taking on the study was exciting and they were trying to stay connected with the interested groups. The Health Department will propose new health code rules this year and wanted to advocate for community wide and community lead action.

Brandon Grosvenor asked if there was a way for residents to find out what kind of system they had if it was not registered with the County. Jeanna Miller noted that the Health Department had been issuing septic permits since 1966 and the records from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s were sometimes lacking. When a permit was not attached to a property it was not necessarily an issue. Information that can identify where a permit should be placed can be sent to the Health Department to be reviewed. If there was no septic permit, contact the information desk at the Health Department as they can search the permits. Alternately a septic pumper could help you identify your system.

There was discussion regarding the smaller lots in town and what their options for a septic system would be.

MCCHD Rebuttal Letter

Cheri Thompson noted that Jeanna Miller had addressed most of the points and the transducers would help. Cheri Thompson agreed to retract her letter and requested that the Health Department put an update in the Pathfinder.

FY2025 Budget

Tom Morris requested that the Board review the 2024 budget and start putting together a 2025 budget, to enable the District to finalize it by June.

Emerine Contracting Proposal

Brandon Grosvenor, the President, and owner of the Lazy Acres RV Park LLC noted that it had taken him six years to complete the Missoula County subdivision process. The subdivision was for 70 sites on 14 acres and had been approved last fall. The site also had preliminary approval from DEQ for a discharge permit for 5-7.5mg/L. During this process he met Gary Chilcott, the owner of Emerine Construction, who had built four or five RV parks in Montana and the surrounding states, as well as numerous medical waste treatment plants. During discussions Brandon Grosvenor became aware that Gary Chilcott owned a sewer system. This system was half the price of the previously proposed system. It could handle the RV park and the community and treat the effluent down 2.2mg/L at discharge. Darrel Barton was an engineer and worked with Gary Chilcott.

Gary Chilcott introduced himself to the Board, outlining his history and background in wastewater treatment in the oilfields. He reviewed his proposal for the Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) to the Board and felt that it was a great opportunity for Seeley Lake to demonstrate that nitrates could be kept lower at a much more reasonable cost. Gary Chilcott then reviewed the level of treatment that the plant could offer, as well as the price, which did not include the collection system. Gary Chilcott would like to do a design build for the plant, install the plant and then have the Seeley Lake Sewer District design the collection system, which he would bid for. The cost per resident would be well under \$100. Butte and Bozeman both had MBRs similar to this plant, which he would like to show to the Board members. They would trade the usage during the summer from the RV park for the land that the building was on. The building, the plant and the land would all be included in the cost of \$6.5 million. Darrell Barton had worked with DEQ for a long time and would do the grant writing, which was all included in \$6.5 million deal. They would find the money, put the plant in and the District would go out to bid for the collection system for Phase 1 & 2, whereby spreading the cost over more people.

Pat Goodover questioned if the system had been approved by DEQ and the State of Montana. Darrell Barton noted that there were smaller subdivisions around the state that utilized MBR systems.

Tom Morris wanted to clarify that the treatment plant cost \$6.5 million, but asked how much the collection system would be. Gary Chilcott agreed that the cost was for the treatment plant, and the collection system would be above that.

Cheri Thompson questioned how much the collection system would be. Gary Chilcott noted that he would require more information before he could estimate a cost for the collection system. Discussion followed on the cost of the collection system and the engineering. The estimated monthly customer cost of a \$100 per and the number of homes in Phases 1 & 2 were discussed.

Gary Chilcott and Darrel Barton requested that the Board allow them to present a proposal, adding that they would submit a bid for the collection system also.

Tom Morris noted that the Board had accepted an engineering firm during the request for qualifications process. Discussion followed on if Gary Chilcott would work with WET and whether this MBR was cheaper than other alternatives. The limited water rights in Seeley Lake and how this proposal would affect the RV park were discussed.

Pat Goodover suggested that the group return with a more concrete proposal for the Board to review and vote on. Tom Morris agreed that this could be an action item on the next agenda, but prior to that there should be a conversation with the current engineers. Discussion followed on how this proposal would fit in with the current plan for testing and potential funding. The collection system and going out to bid was discussed further.

Jess Alexander added that this proposal was a great idea, and worth the Board considering. WET would be more than happy to review the proposal as the engineer of record.

Tom Morris agreed that Gary Chilcott could have a short conversation with WET.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING: March 21, 2023

The next meeting will be held in person at the Barn and via Zoom. Any item for the meeting should be received no later than March 14, 2024.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING:

Tom Morris noted that the following items should be added to the March agenda: Action Plan – Committee Reports – Pathfinder Article; Mission Update; Test Result Map, Clearwater RV Dump Station, eDNA Sampling, Monitoring Well & Lake Sampling, WET proposal, FY2025 Budget, FEMA funding, DRNC Grants, CRC Letters of Recommendation for Missoula County and Emerine Contracting LLC Proposal discussion/action.

ADJOURNMENT OF MONTHLY BOARD MEETING:

Tom Morris moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:26pm. Pat Goodover seconded the motion.

Attest:

Tom Morris, President

Felicity Derry, Secretary

APPENDIX A

SEELEY LAKE – MISSOULA COUNTY SEWER DISTRICT
 Regular Board Meeting
 The Barn & Virtual Meeting Via Zoom
 February 15, 2024

NAME	ADDRESS/EMAIL	PHONE #
Jeanna Miller, MCCHD		
Shannon Therriault, MCCHD		
Jess Alexander, WET		
Jon Haufler, CRC		
Brandon Grosvenor, Lazy Acres		
Darryl Barton		
Gary Chilcott		
John Richards		
C Shane		
Kendall King		