

**SEELEY LAKE SEWER DISTRICT**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
October 19, 2023

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			

Public Attendance – Appendix A

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:08pm. The meeting was held at the Barn, 2920 Highway 83, Seeley Lake, MT and remotely via Zoom.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**Tom Morris moved to approve the agenda.** Cheri Thompson seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was carried.

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

**PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS:**

Tom Morris noted that it was a busy agenda and asked that everybody respect each other’s time and to keep the meeting moving.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Tom Morris requested public comment. Cheri Thompson commented that there had been some discussion at the Seeley Lake Community Council meeting regarding the Sewer District. Cheri Thompson had invited everybody present to attend the meeting tonight.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

None.

**MINUTES:**

September 21, 2023

**Jason Gilpin moved to accept the minutes (for the Regular Meeting, September 21, 2023).**

Troy Spence seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was carried.

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

**FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

Invoices

Tom Morris reviewed the October invoices.

**Pat Goodover moved to pay the invoices.** Jason Gilpin seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was carried.

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

July 2023 Financial Reports

Felicity Derry noted that some fee assessment had been received. No checks were issued in July and it had been a very quiet month.

August 2023 Financial Reports

Felicity Derry noted that a negligible amount of fee assessment had been received. Cheri Thompson asked how Missoula County assessed the interest to the account. Felicity Derry noted that the amount was variable as the interest was from investments and not a flat interest rate.

**MANGER'S REPORT:**

Bill Decker apologized for last month's technical issues and wished to cover the unanswered questions from last month. Bill Decker noted that previously the wells had been tested for total nitrate. WET had wanted to test for nitrite/nitrate, so basically the parameters for the testing had changed and the numbers were not comparable. There had been a comment regarding the nitrate levels in the airport and that was cleared up. There had been much discussion at the Community Council meeting regarding the special management area and enlarging the area.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### Action Plan for 2023-2024 - Committee Reports

#### Pathfinder Article & Email Newsletter

Cheri Thompson noted that the District was getting close to putting more articles in the paper. There was discussion as to Bill Decker sending the Manager's Report earlier.

#### Mission Update

Cheri Thompson and Felicity Derry noted that the testing needed to be posted on the website.

#### Environmental Deoxyribonucleic Acid (eDNA) Sampling

Jeanna Miller, Missoula City/County Health Department (MCCHD), introduced herself, noting that she was there to answer any questions.

Bill Decker noted that he had been communicating with Keith Hackley of Isotech, regarding eDNA testing. While five monitoring wells had tested over 5mg/L for nitrates, only four of them had water in them currently and the proposed testing on those would cost \$6,600. Jess Alexander had contacted Keith Hackley to discuss the testing. Bill Decker noted that testing to show if the eDNA was from deer, people or waterfowl did not exist.

Jess Alexander noted that while eDNA analysis could distinguish nitrate sources, such as cattle, human or deer, that test would not work for the District and explained why. Discussion followed.

Jess Alexander continued that the second option was an isotopic study to compare the difference between the isotopic ratios in the groundwater concentrations to the stuff down gradient of Seeley Lake. If there was a difference that would tell you whether the source of the nitrates was human based or natural. Keith Hackley's proposal was to compare the isotopic ratios of two well samples with two upgradient well samples. Jess Alexander would not recommend this option and reviewed the issues. There was discussion as to whether there were any upgradient wells to sample from.

There was discussion on the hydrologic flow and as to whether it would be worth digging some down gradient wells and having WET attend the next meeting to discuss this further. Jeanna Miller added that she had spoken with Elena Evans, the Hydrologist at MCCHD, who had offered to loan the District some transducers to help gather more information on the groundwater flow. This would give real-time water level readings in those monitoring wells.

**Cheri Thompson moved that we inquire of the Health Department (MCCHD) for the use of their transducers in our monitoring wells.** Jason Gilpin seconded the motion. Pat Goodover suggested that MCCHD be invited to our meeting next time? **Cheri Thompson amended the motion and moved that we inquire of the Health Department (MCCHD) for the use of their transducers in our monitoring wells and invite them to the next meeting.** Jess Alexander added that transducers were very simple to use. Pat Goodover seconded the motion and asked how long would they need to be used for. Jess Alexander replied that you could install the transducers and get

an instant snapshot of the groundwater flow. However, it would be good to keep them in for a year. The motion was carried

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

**Tom Morris moved to not do eDNA sampling at this time.** Jason Gilpin seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

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

Jess Alexander continued that the last option was fluorescence EEM analysis. This test detects compounds that could only be introduced to water by humans, anthropogenic sources, such as caffeine and ibuprofen. Keith Hackly had found a lab in Illinois that would do the fluorescence analysis for free. The only charge would be for the sampling kits and for Keith Hackley's time to process the data, review it and send out the report, for a cost of approximately \$1,500-\$2,500. There was discussion on how reliable the test was. Jess Alexander cautioned the group that if there were none of these compounds not to conclude that the nitrates came from deer or elk. The test only showed that the groundwater was connected to anthropogenic sources. The Montana Bureau of Mines did a correlation between nitrate concentrations and chlorine that was used in the PER, which was similar.

**Cheri Thompson moved to do the fluorescence EEM testing with a budget of \$2,500.** Tom Morris seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was carried.

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

The proximity of septic systems to the monitoring wells was discussed. The discussion turned to using the District's accumulated data to prove definitively that the septic systems were or were not degrading the groundwater. The kind of septic systems currently in the ground and cataloging them was discussed. Jeanna Miller added that a brand-new regular septic system (not with advanced treatment) was putting a similar amount of nitrate in the ground as a 1960s seepage pit. The level of the groundwater relative to septic systems and whether the septic effluent influenced the groundwater was discussed. The type of soils in the valley and the four sources of nitrates (natural occurring,

Concentrated or Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO), large scale fertilization for agriculture and human waste) and which of those were present in the valley were reviewed. The discussion of the soil typed in the area and cataloging septic systems were discussed further. The compilation of the soil in the area compared to other areas was discussed.

### Test Result Map

Bill Decker noted that Jess Alexander would be updating the map.

### Clearwater RV Dump Station

Bill Decker noted that the project schedule would be released in 2026. The Board discussed with Jess Alexander the possibility of putting in a model SepticNet system at the current RV dump in Seeley Lake and how much that might cost. MCCHD's goal to reduce nitrate levels in the area was discussed. The Board discussed putting in the SepticNet system, the high cost and that it was not in the budget.

### Monitoring Well & Lake Testing

Bill Decker reviewed the four monitoring wells that had a nitrate level of above 5mg/L. Whether a higher level could be attributed to wood waste was discussed. Whether the surface water samples should continue to be taken was discussed with Jeanna Miller and Jess Alexander.

Jess Alexander noted that one sample collected reflected a nitrate level of 11.6 mg/L, which he did not think was an accurate reading. The sample was probably due to stagnant water from the bottom of the well. Jess Alexander felt that it was not representative and questioned whether it was a valid sample. Jess Alexander reviewed the movement of the groundwater in that well and discussed the result with Jeanna Miller. The possibility of digging a deeper well was discussed. Cheri Thompson noted that the SLSD Phase Map had Juniper Drive and Spruce Drive reversed. Seasonal groundwater fluctuations were reviewed.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

None

### **NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING: November 16, 2023**

The Board discussed when to hold the next meeting. The Board agreed to hold the next meeting in January as there would be no new data prior to that.

**Tom Morris moved to meet at the Barn and Zoom on January 18, 2024 at 6pm and approve the payment of normal expenses between now and then.** Pat Goodover seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was carried.

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

**AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING:**

Tom Morris noted that the following items should be added to the January agenda: Action Plan – Committee Reports – Pathfinder Article; Mission Update; Test Result Map, Clearwater RV Dump Station, eDNA Sampling and Monitoring Well & Lake Sampling. New Business – WET and MCCHD.

**ADJOURNMENT OF MONTHLY BOARD MEETING:**

**Tom moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:59pm.** Cheri Thompson seconded the motion.

Attest:

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Tom Morris, President

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Felicity Derry, Secretary

APPENDIX A

SEELEY LAKE – MISSOULA COUNTY SEWER DISTRICT  
 Regular Board Meeting  
 The Barn & Via Zoom  
 October 19, 2023

NAME	ADDRESS/EMAIL	PHONE #
Jeanna Miller, MCCHD		
Jess Alexander, WET		