

Town of Cusick Water and Wastewater Work Session

January 3, 2024

1:30-2:30 pm

Duane Schofield, Town of Cusick
Julie SiJohn, Town of Cusick
Everett Alford, Town of Cusick
Tina Alford, Town of Cusick
Afton Servas, Town of Cusick
Kurt Holland, Varela & Associates
Abby Gromlich, Varela & Associates
Rustin Rathburn, Town of Cusick contract employee
Casie Monge, Town of Cusick contract employee
Kate Hupp, Dept of Ecology
Greg Dobb, Dept of Ecology
Kim Prisock, Dept of Ecology
Nathan Ikehara, Dept of Health
Brenda Smits, Dept of Health
Claire Miller, Commerce, Small Communities Initiative
Cynthia Fuller, Commerce, Small Communities Initiative

DRINKING WATER

- **Water Treatment Plant Operations**
 - Update (*Town, Health*)

Things going well – plant is only running every couple of days right now. There have been a few alarms, but not for major events.

Varela has drafted a General Services Agreement for the town to review as well as an agreement for the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) improvement project. Included in the agreement for the WTP improvements is a task for initial review of the facility and interim improvement recommendations. This would include an evaluation of the ability to implement more remote operations oversight at the WTP. The plant sometimes experiences “ghost” alarms or minor alarms that require the operator to make small repairs. Having remote oversight would allow the plant operator to have parts on hand when responding to the alarm. It would also increase interaction time with the plant when the operator is off-site. Plant numbers could be read in “real time” versus current analog method, and plant performance trending could be tracked.

Department of Health supports remote operations improvements as long they don’t impact the normal contract operations visiting schedule.

- **Water Treatment Plant Upgrade/ Community Grants Funding**
 - Status of application/ Grants.gov
 - Grant administrator
 - Draft master services agreement forward to town for review

Varela Engineering staff is working on the Grants.gov application for the EPA Community Grant.

A Master Services Agreement and a Task Order for work at the WTP has been drafted and sent to the town for review and approval.

- **Lead Service Lines Inventory** (due October 2024)

DOH has extra funding left over for lead service line inventory work and is re-opening their application cycle. The funding is loan only at 0% interest. Technical assistance funding has been distributed to previously-identified small communities. Cusick is not on that list. Regional DOH staff may be able to assist town in how to get started on line inventory. Any maps showing water system distribution lines will be needed for the inventory.

Inventory includes all the way to both sides of the meters.

Initially, “unknown” may be the answer to some parts of the survey. DOH goal is to identify which systems can be excluded from future work by October 2024. Cusick will likely not be on the exclusion list based on age of system.

The inventory is compiled using an Excel spreadsheet created by DOH. Nathan will send Excel document to Rustin, Cynthia and Kurt.

Unknowns

- Who is going to do LSL work? Rustin is currently in charge of distribution system.
- How likely is it that secondary lines might be lead lined?
 - How to identify them?

WASTEWATER

- **Wastewater Treatment Facility Update**
 - Compliance with SWDP (*Town; Ecology*)

DMRs are being received on time. There is a new Ecology requirement to attach lab results to electronic DMR via upload to PARIS. Casie will upload lab sheets from last month.

Storage ponds are currently still low, finishing pond coming up. Everett is transferring water now. Another 4” sewer line submerged in water was discovered and capped.

Staff gauge has been installed in lagoon per Ecology Dam Safety requirement.

- **Main Lift Station**
 - Certified letter sent out to Keller terminating services.
 - RFQ for engineering services for lift station work – revisit at next work shop
 - PWB Emergency Loan Application
 - PWB Board meeting on January 19 – is there someone from the town that can attend remotely?
 - Casie and Afton will attend. Cynthia will send meeting details.
 - PWB approval to submit form signed by mayor – needed (on council agenda)
 - Financial information from town – needed by January 9
 - Project budget – received from Varela
 - Repair/Replacement Options
 - Review Varela memo

- **State Waste Discharge Permit - Update**
 - Groundwater Evaluation Study by a hydrogeologist (was due June 30)
 - HG study postponed until weather is more advantageous. Ecology has not received correspondence about postponing HG study and rationale. Casie will check her files and resend to Rob Buchert and copy Kate.

Cusick Infrastructure

Pend Oreille County has formed a planning commission to create a subarea plan for the Cusick and Usk area. The plan will determine how the area will grow in next 20-30 years. Cusick should be participating so they have a leading voice about how their capacity for growth is managed, and not leave the decision-making to the county. There is a benefit to being an active participant in the subarea group. Currently, Afton is attending as an interested citizen. Town opted not to participate at the last council meeting. *If Afton is already attending, why not support her participating in an official capacity?*

The commission has questions about the capacity of Cusick's water and wastewater systems to serve growth. Without a representative of the town at the table, the commission may make assumptions about Cusick's ability to accommodate growth.

Building permits are issued by Pend Oreille County. Plans and specifications are currently not reviewed by a town planner or licensed, professional engineer to ensure adequate water/sewer piping size is correct, or other off-site impacts are mitigated before issuing a final occupancy.

- **Sewer**
 - Sewer is current over capacity. Recent mapping by Parametrix shows the current infiltration and inflow (I/I) the plant receives causes the plant to exceed design capacity. If I/I is addressed, additional capacity would exist to allow new connections. Although there is not a growth moratorium declared in Cusick, the plant is often at or above design capacity. This usually occurs in the winter months and limits winter storage capacity.
 - The Kalispel Tribe is buying lots in Cusick and building residential homes on them. When existing buildings are torn down, the side service connection is often left uncapped, allowing inflow into the sewer system. In addition, the lots are often built up before new construction and existing manholes are retrofitted with risers to prevent inflow. Addressing these two issues would reduce I/I to the town's sewer system.
 - The current building permits go through Pend Oreille County. The town does not have an on-site planner to review building permits for items such as adequate water/sewer size piping and off-site impacts.
- **Water**
 - The water system has been documented to be "at capacity" over the past two years.
 - The system is allows 389 connections per Department of Health. Currently, there about 200 connections, which would, in theory, allow for an additional 148. However, with a leakage rate of 41%, unmetered residences, and potential unmetered or incorrectly metered overuse by commercial/industrial users, no additional capacity exists currently.
 - Water rights situation is unclear.

NEXT WORK SESSION – Proposed - Wednesday, January 31 at 1:30 pm via Zoom