

RUTLAND CITY BOARD OF ALDERMAN----COMMITTEE REPORT

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: May 11, 2017 CONVENED: 5:30 P.M. ADJOURNED: 6:30 P.M.

**LOCATION: CLASSROOM OF RUTLAND CITY WASTE WATER
TREATMENT FACILITY, GREEN HILLS LANE, RUTLAND CITY, VT.**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Alderman Larson, Alderman
Donahue. Failure to meet a quorum AGAIN! Thus this report is for
information purposes as no action could be taken if it was brought up.**

**ALDERMAN PRESENT: Alderman Ettori, Alderman Humphrey,
Alderman Ryan.**

**OTHERS PRESENT: Public Works Commissioner Jeffrey Wennberg,
City Engineer James Rotundo, Bob Protivansky- Rutland City Public
Works Department, Kirk Shields-Green Mountain Power Corporation,
Billy Day-Rutland Mental Health, Alan Keays-Vermont Digger.**

**The matter of the City of Rutland investing in Waste to Energy Power
program at the Wastewater Treatment Plant was referred to the
Public Works Committee by Commissioner Jeffrey Wennberg.**

**Commissioner Wennberg forwarded two informative packets to the
Committee Chair. Both of which are attached to this report. Both are
lengthy but informative as to the process involved and the benefits of
such a system, as well as several handouts displaying engineering data
and the evolution of the project that is being considered.**

**The discussion centered around the proposal to construct a new
digester facility either on the current Waste Water Treatment Facility
or on property adjacent to the facility owned by Green Mountain
Power. Decisions have not been made as to who will construct, own
and/or operate the facility if it becomes a reality.**

Commissioner Wennberg indicated that a comprehensive development company known as Sophance has shown an interest in building and operating the waste-to-energy assets. Sophance has shown a willingness to invest in the anaerobic digestion facility and potentially completely replace the existing anaerobic digestion functionality at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. This would potentially open up current digester areas for usage related to combined sewer overflow capacities.

The current preliminary design of the system calls for two digester of approximately 1.1. million gallons each for the new digestion system that would produce methane gas. This would be dependent on the operator of the facility have a viable and continual source of organic waste. It would be anticipated that a considerable portion of that organic waste would be from off site and out of city locations.

Commissioner Wennberg indicated that if the City were to bond for such a project and construct it, there would be additional employees required in the Department of Public Works. If the project were privately constructed and owned, several items would be eliminated or reduced from the operational expenses including: Labor and benefits, electricity, fuel oil (which currently costs 75K per year), building repairs and general maintenance. The intangible benefits are reducing the risks associated with ownership of long term capital assets, removing the anaerobic digestion and dewatering related processes from the city's ongoing capital plan, converting them into operational budgeting items, thereby allowing the City to focus capital allocations to other, non-wastewater departments.

Although no formal agreement has been discussed as that would have to go through the Board of Alderman; the Sophance proposition is simple. It would increase the City of Rutland's net revenues on Day 1, by reducing its costs of operations and dramatically reduce future capital liabilities. Sophance would also offer the City a service contract to provide digestion, and if viable, dewatering and disposal services cheaper than it would cost the City to do this internally.

Bob Protivansky advised that one of the current digester covers will soon require replacement and the cost is quite large.

Kirk Shields of Green Mountain Power advised that the utility has been actively looking into alternative energy sources and was taking part due to the potential leasing of the property near the current Waste Water Treatment Plant.

The feasibility discussions are still ongoing and require considerably more determinations. Additional Committee Meetings will need to be scheduled to update City officials on the potential project.

Commissioner Wennberg pointed out that Rutland City has the largest single waste water treatment facility in the State of Vermont and his department is looking into Clean Water Act Funds, and other potential resources should the City opt to bond and own the facility.

When asked what the Department of Public Works required from the Board of Alderman at this time, it was recommended that a vote of approval to move forward with the investigation into the feasibility of the waste to energy project at the Waste Water Treatment Facility would be advisable.

Submitted on 05/12/2017 Alderman Ed Larson-Committee Chairman.



