

APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER FEASIBILITY STUDY

August 31, 2020

Members of the Selectboard:

The Jamaica Planning Commission recommends that the Selectboard make application to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (application form attached) for a “planning advance” to fund a municipal wastewater feasibility study. The funding would cover the cost of hiring an engineering consultant to prepare a feasibility study of the concept of establishing a community wastewater disposal system that would serve at least some of the properties in Jamaica Village. The goal of this system would be to relieve the current use and development constraints on certain properties due to water supply systems that are unable to be permitted, and existing wastewater disposal facilities that limit seating/uses.

We believe that this action is called for, and supported by, the potable water supply and wastewater policies and priorities for action found on pages 36-37 of the 2017 (current) Jamaica Town Plan. The most directly applicable policies and priorities are:

1. Support collaborative potable water supply and wastewater planning efforts that build on the Jamaica Village Water Quality and Septic Study and investigate alternatives for water supply and/or wastewater treatment.
2. Encourage the use of technical assistance to help address the potable water supply and wastewater issues in Jamaica and to allow existing buildings to be used at full capacity,
3. Evaluate the feasibility of a water supply and distribution system and/or a wastewater collection and treatment system in Jamaica Village.

Recommended steps for the evaluation are as follows:

- Engage local citizens throughout the process by information dissemination and public meetings;
- Identify, collect, and analyze all relevant reports, findings, and data that may have a bearing on water quality issues in the community;
- Evaluate economic impact of existing conditions;
- Investigate different solutions to the water and wastewater issue in Jamaica Village based on their cost, reliability, management and maintenance requirements, regulatory restrictions, soils requirements, and possibility for future expansion;
- Explore state and federal funding sources. If identified, establish a budget pursue development of a municipal solution for a water supply and distribution system or a waste water collection and treatment system for Jamaica Village. (Planning Commission, Selectboard)
- Establish a budget and funding sources (Planning Commission, Selectboard), and,

- Follow up on the Jamaica Village Water Quality and Septic Study, 2000, including mapping potential water supply sources. Specific possibilities discussed in the Study include creating a Decentralized Wastewater Management System (Study page 27) or creating a Centralized Community Treatment and Disposal System (Study page 29).

Concept Summary

Background

Karen Ameden has indicated that she would be willing to allow a portion of her property for use as a community septic system. This area would be the undeveloped open field on the northwest corner of her property (closest to the village) and adjacent to Rt 30. Chrissy Haskins reached out to Lynette Claudon of the Water Investment Division (WID) of the Department of Environmental Conservation to get information on funding for planning and design.

Type of System

We are looking at designing a system for less than 6,500 gallons per day. Anything over 6,500 gallons and the construction costs for a distribution field double as you have to construct a backup field and have it ready for operation. Under 6,500 gallons and you only need space for the backup field.

Funding status

The WID planning advance is for wastewater only, and would cover planning and initial design for wastewater systems in towns with no current community septic system. It looks like we qualify! The WID advance program is first come first serve, and goes on until the funds run out. The new fiscal year began July 1, 2020. We don't know how much money will be allotted for this fiscal year, but there are currently no known applications that have been submitted, and Jamaica could potentially be the first submitted application for this funding year.

Funding Process

The WID funding includes the planning and initial design work that would be completed to prepare the Preliminary Engineer Report (PER). The PER includes the field work (i.e., test pits, soil borings, soils evaluation) and preparation of concept design plans. For preparation of final design plans, the Vermont Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) provides funding for projects in the form of low interest loans (CWSRF Final Design Loans are currently defined as 5 to 15 years with 0% interest - <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/water-financing/cwsrf>). In the event that there is no 100% subsidy available from CWSRF, then Lynette Claudon of the WID indicated that the WID funding can be extended through final design. So for the purpose of this proposed septic system, our application is recommended to include a cost for the PER Phase and the Final Design Phase. During planning and design, Jamaica would pay (from town funds) the engineering

costs up front and submit the expenses for State reimbursement. The payback timeframe is typically around one month. The benefit of the WID advance is that it would only be required to be paid back if the system is actually built. A copy of this regulation is attached to this request letter for reference. See the website listed below for more information regarding the Vermont Engineering Planning Advance Program:

<https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/water-financing/planning-advance>

If, after planning and design, the town decides the community system is not feasible or not wanted, Jamaica would not have to pay back this grant.

As we apply for funding we would also send out a Request for Qualifications (RFQ - required as part of the funding process) for design engineers. Jamaica would have the sole responsibility for selecting the engineer that we felt was most qualified.

If the town, or a newly formed “fire district” within the village, decides to proceed with construction of the system there are options for funding, loans, and subsidies. The construction loans allow for planning and design payback requirements to be rolled into the construction loan, it's low interest (~2%), and has 30-40 year payback options. Consistent with the last federal government stimulus associated with the 2009 American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, by going through this process and getting "shovel ready" we would be in the best position to be approved for any COVID19-related infrastructure stimulus packages that become available.

The JPC recommends completing test pits/infiltration testing outside of the planning advance funding (paying for it with town funds), as completing this step under the state funding would require an archeological study which adds time and cost to the project. Test pit cost is estimated to be approximately \$1,500. This could be paid from the existing \$9,400 in the JPC Capital Project Fund, which was established to pay expenses such as this.

Total project cost

Chrissy Haskins has estimated the total project cost, for both Preliminary Engineering Report and final design, to be approximately \$45,000. If we proceed, the town would be required to make the payments to the selected engineering firm up front, and then request reimbursement (in the form of loaned funds) from the state. If the system is not built, the town will not be required to repay the loaned funds. If the system is built, the loaned funds would be repaid from the construction loan or grant. The only direct cost to the town (paid from town funds and not reimbursed) would be the approximately \$1,500 cost of the test pits.

Compared to a community water supply, this is obviously something that is more defined, has a clear funding path, and is better quantified up front (from a cost perspective), which will hopefully allow for the Town to have a clear understanding of what the potential impacts are for individuals, property owners, and businesses.

STATE OF VERMONT
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER FEASIBILITY STUDY

Section I. Application

The _____, in accord with the provisions of Title 10 V.S.A., Chapter 55, Subchapter 2, hereby makes application to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation for the advance of funds in the amount of \$_____ to study the feasibility of developing a municipally sponsored wastewater treatment system for the areas of the municipality identified in Section III of this application.

The _____ as legislative body of the applicant municipality hereby certifies that local funds are not available for the study, either by direct payment or through a loan.

The _____ as legislative body of the applicant municipality hereby agrees that should State funds be advanced as requested by this application, that said funds will be repaid at the time of construction in accord with the above mentioned statute and that the feasibility study will be in accord with standards approvable by the Department of Environmental Conservation.

The _____ hereby appoints _____ as the individual who will act as "Authorized Representative" to receive communications and provide information related to this application. The Authorized Representative should be a resident or employee of the municipality.

Dated this _____ day of _____, by _____
(Municipality Name)

(All or a majority of the municipal legislative body)

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting _____ of the _____, hereby certify that the above action was formally taken by the legislative body at a duly noticed meeting held on the _____ day of _____, _____ and is duly recorded in my office.

(Signature)

(Print Name and Title)

Section II. Contact Information

Applicant Municipality

Authorized Representative

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Facsimile: _____

e-mail: _____

Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN): _____

Wastewater Committee (see Section IV)

First Coordinator

Second Coordinator

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Facsimile: _____

e-mail: _____

Section III. Project Information (Use the space below or attach a separate sheet for responses)

A. Purpose

Describe the reasons the community wishes to investigate wastewater problems and the feasibility of solutions to them. Possible considerations include surfacing sewage, water pollution, contamination of drinking water supplies, and development constraints.

B. Description of Project

If the community knows what subjects it wants to have studied; what questions it wants answered; what possible solutions it wants investigated; and/or what costs it wants addressed, please list them.

C. Location

Provide a map (8 ½ inch by 11 or 14 inch is sufficient) of the area(s) proposed for study. The Town highway map with study area(s) marked is adequate.

Section IV. Community Project Participants

For a community Wastewater Feasibility Study to be successful strong community involvement is necessary. There must be a defined group of community members (Wastewater Committee) who work on the project to help determine what questions the study should answer, talk with other communities who have done such studies, guide the consultant(s), discuss the study with members of the community, and help present the final report to the community.

- A. List the community groups and organizations that will participate in the study, such as the legislative body, planning commission, zoning and ordinance authorities, Health Officer, Sewage Officer, and other governmental and nongovernmental interest groups.

- B. List the individuals from the community, with their affiliations, who will actively work on this study; i.e., join the Wastewater Committee.

- C. Identify the individual(s) who will coordinate local activities and public outreach for the community during the feasibility study. (Leader(s) of the Wastewater Committee)

First Coordinator

Second Coordinator

Name: _____

(Provide complete contact information in Section II)

ENGINEERING PLANNING ADVANCE

The Vermont Engineering Planning Advance Program is a financial program available to Vermont municipalities:

- without existing water or sewer rate payers for the purpose of obtaining a feasibility study or Preliminary Engineering Report for community-based drinking water or wastewater solutions;
- to assist regional planning and study efforts related to specific drinking water and/or wastewater needs;
- to assist with master planning for large scale, long term facility planning for one or more capital needs related to water quality or drinking water.

Advantages of the Engineering Planning Advance Program:

- repayment does not start unless and until the project goes to construction, if no project is built, no repayment is obligated.
- refinanced with the CWSRF or USDA RD construction loan or can be credited towards a Vermont Pollution Control Grant if the project is eligible.
- some planning advances can be prorated to repay portions of the loans as they relate to multi-phased planning, long term planning, or regional planning.

Note: Engineering Planning Advance money may not be available and may need a special appropriation by the Vermont legislature. All repaid Planning Advance monies revolve and become available for future planning advance studies.