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MEMORANDUM

TO: Ash River Sanitary Sewer District Board

FROM: Colin Marcusen, P.E. (Lic. MN, ND, SD, IA)
Project Manager

DATE: September 29, 2020

RE: Engineering Updates
SEH No. STLES 146794 14.00

The purpose of this memo is to provide you with updates related to the Ash River Sanitary Sewer District (ARSSD) Collection and Treatment Systems project for decision making at the next regular District meeting.

FACILITY PLAN UPDATE

We do not yet have approval of the Facility Plan from MPCA. The following will lead to Facility Plan approval after an amendment is submitted:

1. Service Area Decisions:
 - a. Total project area has an estimated project cost of \$16,987,500.

Alternative	Capital Cost
Mechanical Pretreatment with Biomicrobics System and Subsurface Dispersal	\$5,108,000
Low Pressure Collection System	\$9,717,000
Additional Collection System Costs for Serving Properties on the South Side of the River	\$2,162,500
Total Project Costs	\$16,987,500

- i. We have received Preliminary Effluent Limits from the MPCA that do not allow for treated effluent discharge to surface waters in this area (Outstanding Resource Value Waters). Therefore, a subsurface discharge will be required. Costs listed above are conservative and assume much of the excavation will require removal of bedrock.
- ii. Low Pressure Collection System Costs assume bedrock is present in many areas. Additional soil borings are required to refine cost estimates.
- b. Options for Serving South Side of River Properties
 - i. One River crossing and low pressure system - \$2.16M
 - ii. Two River crossings and low pressure system - \$2.60M
 - iii. Low pressure system and small community treatment system - \$2.24M
 - iv. Individual systems – hybrid model. Owner pays a one time fee for construction or improvements to their individual system. They then pay a monthly fee for the District to maintain and make future improvements. Costs for this alternative have not been calculated.
 - v. No service - \$0.

PROJECT NEXT STEPS

1. Archaeological Review
 - a. Sue with Duluth Archaeological Center has said they have about 60% response rate granting permission to access properties to perform the necessary survey. Please return a response to Duluth Archaeology Center if you have not already done so.
2. Easements – Mia (Fryberger Lawfirm – Sanitary Dit)
 - a. Would like to establish blanket easements for review and construction so that we do not have to modify easements if the tank location needs to move slightly at the time of installation. Board agreed with blanket easements on each property before conducting soil borings.
 - b. Need a decision from the District on Title Commitments from a Title company for each parcel or Owners and Encumbrances reports Board decided to proceed with Owners and Encumbrances reports.
 - i. O & E is most common and has been used on other similar projects.
 - ii. O & E only looks at the last deed of record to identify land owner
 - c. If homeowner refuses consent to an easement will the District elect to utilize eminent domain to acquire the easements?
 - d. If there are mortgages on the properties, we will need consent from the lender because easements are a violation of the mortgage terms. Usually easy to obtain from local lenders but not as easy for national banks. Board agreed that Mia should obtain consents.
3. Soil Borings
 - a. To get an idea of the amount of available sand or depth to bedrock, soil borings should be conducted at each place where a grinder installation is planned. This will help refine costs and help us better plan for construction. These will follow obtaining easements.
4. Review of EDU assignments for future ordinance
 - a. Kab Township – Puck’s Point ordinance attached.

SCHEDULE

The project is currently in report phase. The draft Facility Plan was submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in March 2020. An Amendment to further refine the scope of work and to include the archaeological review, will be submitted after the review is complete.

FUNDING

Minnesota Clean Water Legacy Grant funds have been obtained for a portion of this project. The grant is in the amount of \$450,000, but includes a match of \$90,000 from St. Louis County’s Environmental Trust Fund, for a total of \$540,000. These funds will be mostly expended by engineering and geotechnical services. The JPB and SEH’s lobbyists have secured another \$950,000 in grant funding for Ash River which will be split between FY 2020 and FY 2021. SEH has completed the budget and schedule and submitted to MPCA. in the next few weeks and submit to MPCA for review to finalize. This funding will allow completing of easements, soil borings, and design with likely some left over for construction. Additional funding will be needed to complete the construction of the project. The goal in obtaining funding is to set sewer rates at or below \$100 per month per EDU.

Other items:

- There are holes where the original soil borings were performed. SEH will contact Braun Intertec to have these filled. Property owners may fill these in if immediate need.
- The land swap with the State for the treatment property will likely be finalized in December.
- The next Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Joint Powers Board will be held at the VNP office in International Falls on October 21, 2020 at 10 am. The District will try to have a representative there.

Engineering Updates

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c: Jason Chopp, SEH

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