

Seeley Lake Sewer District
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
May 23, 2011

ROLL CALL

Glen Morin, President	ABSENT	Greg Robertson	Missoula Co	PRESENT
Vice-President	VACANT	Jeff Seaton	Missoula Co	PRESENT
Bob Skiles, Director	PRESENT			
Mike Lindemer, Director	PRESENT			
Mike Boltz, Director	PRESENT			
Felicity Derry, Secretary	PRESENT			

OPENING:

The meeting was called to order at 5:17pm at 3360 Highway 83 N (old Plum Creek Office).

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

Missoula County Partnership

Greg Robertson noted that there had been some mistrust by the Board. He hoped to be able to put that behind them and move forward in the direction they would like to go. The first step was to develop the inter-local agreement. They were a sovereign Board and so had all the decision-making authority. Governmental entities usually form inter-local agreements to outline each respective agency's responsibilities and duties and the development of a plan of action as to how to proceed. Missoula County did not want to stir the ship, only to help navigate. His job was to sort through the rules and regulations and give the Board the best advice to allow the Board to make an informed decision.

His role as a Department Head at Missoula County was to give the County Commissioners the best information and advice that he could so they could make an informed decision. It was the Commissioners' decision, not his. The same would be true for the Sewer Board. He would give the Board his advice and it would be up to the Board to use it. Generally he was fairly objective. He knew that the Commissioners were interested in the same goal as the Board. They wanted to assist the Board in putting their best foot forward. The County did not want to charge the District anything. This would enable the District to save their money and preserve it for next move.

The County was willing to put their money where their mouth was and take a risk by giving the District \$100,000 for matching funds. The County wanted the money to be used wisely and he knew it would be. The key was to start building up some reserves and preparing for the first phase. Also the PER needed to be updated. The PER was used by State and Federal agencies for funding. It needed to include the current site and not the site up by the gun range.

Bob Skiles said that the PER was being updated. One of the main goals was to pick a site, which they had done. The District did not own the property and would not for a couple of years. Greg Robertson said that the PER needed to be finished and publicly vetted to remove any arguments. The cart was coming before the horse. The site studies should be included in the updated PER and to his knowledge they were not. He wanted to do a literature check of the files and keep them here. Somebody would be here to observe the files which would have a cabinet lock on it. The files would be available to the public for viewing. When there was a public inspection somebody would be there and available to make sure things did not get lost. He also needed to find out where the District had been and where they were currently. He would talk to Great West Engineering (GWE) if that was all right with Board. This would help him develop a background of the District.

Bob Skiles asked if he would do that personally or if staff would do it. Greg Robertson said that he would do it himself. If he was going to advise the Board he had to know the history and the technical aspects of decisions that had been made in the past. That would take some time.

The third step was to preserve the large chunk of grant money that the District has, namely the STAG and WRDA grants. They were not in danger of losing them. Once he was up to speed then they could develop a course of action.

The fourth step was to get the finances out and available on the web. That way the Board could tell people where to look at the finances as well as other documents such as the PER. He would like to develop a web page for the District somewhere on the County site. There would be timely updates as records became available. The decision type documents should be on the web for public review. The idea was to make the decision making process as transparent as possible. It was clear to him that the District had nothing to hide. Bob Skiles commented that one of the reasons that there was a problem in Seeley with this was that people called the County Commissioners. That was one of the things that he had a problem with the County. When somebody called the Commissioners with a question, they answered the question and did not refer them to the Board for information. Greg Robertson said that he did not totally disagree and it was his goal to stop that. The way to do that was to put information in a public place and on the web for people who wanted to review it. That way financials and other documents would be there for everybody to see. He wanted to get away from the bickering and focus on the important issues like the sewer and water quality. The Commissioners were behind the Board 100%. They believed in the same thing. They have signed their names on documents that have put in motion a lot of the types of things that the board was after, such as conversion of septic systems to a centralized collection system and proper treatment facilities.

He would also like to take a fresh look at the treatment schemes that were available. When he read the PER the one centralized treatment plant did not necessarily lend itself to Seeley Lake. There are various population centers with miles of pipe between them. That was highly inefficient. A lot of infrastructure was being installed to really serve nobody. He was thinking about using smaller more regional package plants to serve the population centers, which can be expanded. They have to be managed and run by a certified operator. This would be a way to deal with the scattered population areas. Each area had a need and there were miles of pipe in between which was raising the cost. Bob Skiles said that he would be willing to look at that. The issue would be people do not want it in their backyard and there was not enough property. The Board had been fighting tooth and nail to get one site for the treatment plant. He

understood what Greg Robertson was saying; however the pipe might be cheaper than trying to figure out a place to put the treatment plants.

Greg Robertson said that people needed to visit a similar plant to what Seeley Lake needed. They do not have an odor to them, especially the filtration type plants. He had visited one that would be a similar size to what Seeley Lake needed and the treatment plant and storage lagoon were on less than an acre of land. It had a high level of treatment in a confined area. The GWE Engineer told him that they did not need more than an acre and half total to service all of Seeley Lake using an SBR or MBR. He asked that the Board not to close the door, to keep options open, and to see what would be best economically.

Greg Robertson asked what the Board's relationship with GWE was like. He knew that they were very good grant writers but he did not have much experience with them. Bob Skiles said that he had a lot of faith in them. His first choice would have been Morrison Maierle because he had worked with them for years and years. With the financial constraints the Board had placed on GWE he thought the Board had got a good deal. Greg Robertson said that there was sound engineering advice in the PER. He had heard that the relationship had been a little rocky and the Board sent an engineer packing. Bob Skiles said that the engineer they have now was good. The one before, Dave Aune, was long winded, and would give too much detail. They both worked at the Helena office. Greg Robertson asked if the Board had any objection for him to have a meet and greet with GWE. Bob Skiles said that he did not. Greg Robertson said that he would try and get something set up in the next week or so.

Greg Robertson said that he would have Cindy Wulfekuhle preserve the District's grants. They would be extended beyond their termination date. It was not a big deal. He had cleared his calendar so that he could focus on this project. He planned to take his time as there was a great deal of information to digest, as well as to get to know the Board. He wanted the Board to be comfortable with the information he was giving them. He would be acting as the Board's staff. He would work for the Board for nothing to keep the District going in right direction.

Mike Boltz said that he liked what he was hearing. He thought that multiple smaller sites would be easier to acquire than one large one. Greg Robertson said that the smaller package plants only needed 100 square feet. The plants were capable of class A drinking water even before the effluent hit the ground. The soil here was very percable allowing a lot of water to be pushed through using a minimal area while still getting some treatment. These plants did not rely on the soils to remove the nutrients from the effluent. He wanted to keep options open. Bob Skiles said that the Board's options were open. The main priority was to secure a piece of property for a site. Greg Robertson said that this was a charged issue. The way to do it was to take the steps and allow the public to comment and make them part of the process. When it comes to the decision making process if it was done well it would be easy. He wanted to put the Board in the position to make that decision easier. It might make sense to have a centralized plant with some satellite plants. It was a long way to the west side of lake. It might make more sense to have a very simple treatment system and eliminate a lot of pipe.

He would have Dori Brownlow in the County Attorney's Office develop the inter-local agreement. Nothing would be shoved down their throat. It would be an iterative process. It would begin with the basic framework. The Board would review it and provide comments. If the County had an issue they would talk to the Board about it. The County wanted the Board to be comfortable with the end product. The structure would be simple. The Board was the

decision maker and that would be retained. The County would provide the staff to assist the Board with that. They would be the Board's professional staff in conjunction with the engineer. The Board would have to decide how much they wanted the County to help. He could send a draft inter-local agreement for the Board to look at. They would take their time to go back and forth until everybody was satisfied. That included the termination clause that if the Board did not like the way things were going they could end the agreement. He hoped it would not come to that.

Jeff Seaton is his finance guy. He would like to get the books out and online. He did not know how the Board wanted to handle the check writing and payments, if they wanted it to go through the County. Jeff Seaton said that the Board would have to have their own checkbook and bank account. Greg Robertson said that they would set up a website and get the financial information online if that was all right with the Board. Jeff Seaton said that the County would host the website at no cost. Greg Robertson said that posting the information would remove any arguments. They would try to keep the information up to date. All of the decision making documents such as the PER, inter-local agreement, a timeline and status of grants could be available to the public. If people wanted to look at older records they could be made available for review under supervision at the office.

Greg Robertson outlined his background to the Board. He said that he would give his honest opinion whether the Board liked it or not. He hoped that the Board could embrace that and come to appreciate it. He thought they were at a good point where they had not jumped off the deep end and had not spent a lot of money for nothing. They could make some positive decisions and get the public involved so that the public was hearing a common message. Hopefully they would do a better job of communicating with the public through the news media. The County had an employee that was great at dealing with media and getting the information out in a professional manner. Jeff Seaton would help him with the grant administration and the finances. They would do whatever it took for the District. Sometimes it might take extra time, but the Board could not argue with the price. It would be done in a timely fashion.

He would like to take the next couple of months to digest everything and get himself oriented so that he could talk to the Board intelligently about the project. Later this summer/early fall they could really start rolling with it.

Bob Skiles asked if it was proper for Greg Robertson to talk to GWE without an agreement in place. Jeff Seaton said that technically they would be dealing with public documents, so if the Board gave him permission to talk to GWE it would be fine. The Board members did not have a problem with that. Greg Robertson said that he would not be giving them direction he would only be getting background information. He would talk to GWE about some of the decisions that had been made and the reasons why they suggested going in a certain direction.

Mike Lindemer asked what the plan was in the meantime. Greg Robertson replied that the inter-local agreement had to be established first. Once that was in place, he would get grants preserved so that the District would not lose them. During all of that he would be getting up to speed on the historical aspect of project. The documents would be organized in an electronic format and uploaded on to the web. That would start to make the District much more transparent and would settle folks down. He wanted to know what the Board's primary issues were and then they would set a program to systematically work on them. Project development

had to be sequential in order to make it successful. It would remove a lot of the guessing and name calling and the Board would shine. There would be some tough decisions, but they would be well thought out and well reasoned. The Board would be informed and make the decision. He asked that the Board hear him out and give him the opportunity to paint his picture of what he thought needed to be done.

Greg Robertson said that they would start on the inter-local agreement and probably get it circulated within a week or so as a starting point. Then the Board should make any comments. They were going to try to keep it simple. He would basically allow Missoula County staff to do their job. Also the \$100,000 loan would be referenced. The Commissioners were willing to take a risk on that. If the project was successful they could recover that cost at a later date. They want to help the District out and save the hassle of having a public vote and it getting shot down. Bob Skiles said that they were never going to a public vote on that. Greg Robertson said that property owners have a right of protest. The District could not simply assess under Montana law. He would have to get caught up on a lot of the sewer statutes also. Bob Skiles said that he had understood that there was not going to be a public vote on \$100,000. The District was going to assess it. Greg Robertson said that he did not think they could. It would not be a public vote. The District would have to provide notice and the public had a right of protest. They were going to hold back on spending anything until they got a good game plan that everybody was comfortable with. Bob Skiles said that they were in the process of testing at the site that had to continue for the permit. Greg Robertson said that he would talk to Craig Pozega about that. The US Forest Service had been beat up by the Seeley-Condon community for a while and was looking for a project like this to make peace. This was one of the ways they had identified to help the District out. They would bend over backwards to help the District. The PER needed to be updated so that site was looked at and vetted, also to review any public issues that this site may or may not have. There was a public process to put any issues to rest.

The Board discussed the vacant board member position and the location of the meeting.

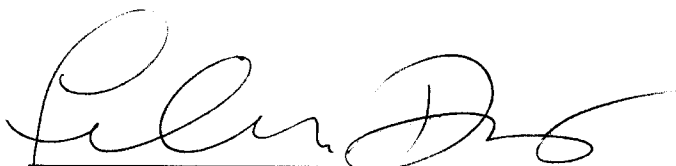
NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING: June 16, 2011

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 6:14pm.

Attest:



Bob Skiles



Felicity Derry, Secretary