

NEW HAMPSHIRE DRINKING WATER AND GROUNDWATER ADVISORY COMMISSION

Merrimack Special Project Application Review Subcommittee

Minutes of July 9, 2019 Meeting

In attendance: Sen. Chuck Morse and Rodney Bartlett; DES, Merrimack Village District, and Senate Staffs.

The meeting was convened at 9:00am.

Staff from the Merrimack Village District presented to the subcommittee their application seeking funding to address PFC contamination in their Wells 2,3,7, and 8. The Village District is seeking \$6,264,500 in loans and \$1,450,000 in grants. With the newly announced PFC standards, the total cost of the project has increased by \$3 million. The ask of the Trust Fund is 44% of the total project cost, with the balance coming from capital reserves or the Drinking Water SRF program.

After a discussion between the members and DES staff, it was recommended to the Merrimack Village District that they keep the application as is and come back to the Trust Fund at a later date for funding for the \$3 million short fall.

Rodney Bartlett expressed some concerns over the size of the ask for the grant. With Merrimack having such a high median house hold income and relatively low water rates, there seemed to be the capacity to take on more debt and less in grant.

Senator Morse pointed out that the grant ask is only 8% of the total project, with most of the balance outstanding being bonded. Merrimack Village District staff indicated that the current grant to loan ratio in the application would require a 19% rate increase to pay for both the debt service for the project and the new operations and maintenance cost resulting.

The floor was opened for public input. Rep. Wendy Thomas of Merrimack urged the approval of the application and that treating drinking water is one of the most effective ways of removing these contaminants. Councilor Barbara Healey of Merrimack noted the 'bonus' impact of treating the drinking water would negate the need to treat the waste water discharge since the primary source of the contamination has already been

cleaned. She also pointed to landfills as being the next big problem area and cautioned against putting the costs of compliance on property tax payers.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 am

JWE

Letters from the following were submitted in support of the project:

Rep. Richard Hinch, Merrimack

Rep. Nancy Murphy, Merrimack

Rep. Wendy Thomas, Merrimack

Laurene Allen, Merrimack

Katharine Hodge, Merrimack

Carol DiPirro, Merrimack