

DATE: July 12, 2022
TO: Members of the New Lebanon Town Board
FROM: Business and Economic Development Committee
RE: Wastewater feasibility study

A municipal water and wastewater system in downtown New Lebanon would be a big step for the Town.

The Business and Economic Development Committee recommends that the Town of New Lebanon commission a study into potential water and wastewater treatment systems that could serve downtown New Lebanon as well as the costs and benefits of those systems.

The BEDC makes this recommendation following the results of a petition (first enclosure). This petition has the endorsement of nineteen of the twenty-nine relevant landowners (second enclosure). We regard this as a clear and powerful signal that the landowners in downtown New Lebanon are highly interested in charting a new course toward economic growth and shared prosperity and are highly interested in finding the facts regarding a potential water and wastewater treatment system.

The next milestone on the path to completing such a study (often called a feasibility study) is to publish a Request for Proposal (often called an RFP). The BEDC recommends that the Board vote today to direct the BEDC and the Wastewater Subcommittee to produce a draft RFP. The BEDC also recommends that the Board vote to finalize and publish this RFP once the draft is complete.

The RFP will define what kind of feasibility study the Town wants. In accordance with the petition, the RFP will aim to generate proposals whose engineering is sensitive to the Town's unique rural needs. It will also aim to generate proposals that describe the expected costs and benefits of the infrastructure they propose compared to a future without any municipal water and wastewater treatment infrastructure.

The Wastewater Subcommittee expects to work with experts to complete its draft RFP. One of these experts would be Candace Balmer of RCAP Solutions, a not-for-profit that assists small rural communities with the planning and execution of municipal wastewater systems. The BEDC recommends that the Board vote to direct the Supervisor to sign the memorandum of understanding furnished by RCAP Solutions, whose services to the Town are completely free.

Finally, the BEDC and the Wastewater Subcommittee also expect to help identify and evaluate grant opportunities that would defray the costs of the feasibility study.

FIRST ENCLOSURE — NEW LEBANON WASTEWATER PETITION

Dear Members of the New Lebanon Town Board,

I'm a tax-paying owner of land or a business in downtown New Lebanon.

I am invested in New Lebanon and our downtown and would like to see improvements in the state of our economic development. Property owners, business owners, other citizens, and visitors alike — we would all benefit from a thriving downtown.

I believe water and wastewater infrastructure may offer a path to economic development. I would like to know how this infrastructure could work. I would also like to understand the costs and benefits of having this infrastructure. That includes possible individual costs, like special fees or taxes, and benefits, like increased property values, as well as possible community-wide costs and benefits, like a stronger tax base for the Town and a more bustling business district. In addition, I would like to understand the costs and benefits of forgoing this infrastructure. Finally, I would like qualified, licensed professionals to answer these questions, so that we are less susceptible as a Town to speculation and misinformation.

To this end, I strongly urge the Town to commission a thorough feasibility study of different potential municipal sewer and water systems fit for our rural town, using grant funds if available and ARPA or other funds as well.

Once we have the facts, I will be able to evaluate the costs and benefits for my business or property, and we as a Town will have the information we need to move forward on an appropriate plan or defer action for now.

Thank you for your diligence on this matter.

Sincerely,

SECOND ENCLOSURE — TABULATED RESULTS OF WASTEWATER PETITION

Endorsements

Lori Bashour / Midtown Mall
Michael Carey / Valley Plaza
Phil Moldoff / NAPA
Steve Stollman / Berkshire Thrift
Tony Murad / 530 Route 20
Patty Joseph / Liberty Realty
Diane Dibuono / Mario's
Melanie Hunt / Blueberry Hill
Linda Hursa / Angel's Trumpet
Sara Schonour and Shantel Schonour / 555 Route 20
Dolores Meissner / Meissner's Auction
Maggie Cullen / 511 Route 20
Jimmy Dillis / Jimmy D's
Cindy Noe / Roaring 20s
Pat Faran / 423 Route 20
Michael Deegan for the Shaker Swamp Conservancy / Shaker Swamp
Deb Gordon for the Phoenix Project / Fisher's Store's
Deb McLaughlin / Deb's Shear Perfection
Ellyn Gaydos / 452 Route 20

Declinations

Johnnie's Barbershop
Larabee Fuel

Abstentions

LVPA
Consolidated Communications

Did not reach

Tilden Plaza — new owner could not reached
Library Board — meeting after our deadline
Nancy Kyle — could not be reached
Others — could not be reached