

**Oneida County Sewer District SSO Abatement Project**

**Steering Committee Meeting Report**

**January 29, 2009**

**5:30 p.m.**

**New York Mills Community Center**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>The Village of Clayville</b>		
Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Nancy Sheppard	
<i>Community Delegate</i>	Mike Steiger	<b>X</b>
<b>The Town of Deerfield</b>		
Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Scott Mahardy Peggy Boshart	
<i>Community Delegate</i>	In process of soliciting a delegate	
<b>Town of Frankfort</b>		
Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Joseph Kinney	
<i>Community Delegate</i>		
<b>Village of Holland Patent</b>		
Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Michael Bennison David Wilcox	
<i>Community Delegate</i>	Peter Gaige	
<b>The Town of Marcy</b>		
Chief Elected Official OR Designee	<b>Brian Scala*</b> Keith Schuderer	
<i>Community Delegate</i>	<b>Carson Sorrell*</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>The Town of New Hartford</b>		
Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Earle Reed <b>Roger Cleveland*</b>	<b>X</b>
<i>Community Delegate</i>	Scot Owens	
Alternate	<b>Christine Krupa*</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>The Village of New Hartford</b>		
Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Donald J. Ryan Don Bathke	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>
	John Grygiel	
<i>Community Delegate</i>	Richard Sherman	<b>X</b>
<b>The Village of New York Mills</b>		
Chief Elected Official OR Designee	<b>Robert Maciol*</b> Joseph Urban	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>
<i>Community Delegate</i>	Michael Bailey	
<b>The Village of Oriskany</b>		
Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Don Rothdiener Mick O'Connor	

	<i>Community Delegate</i>	Chris Burch	
<b>The Town of Paris</b>			
	Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Felix Cardillo	
	<i>Community Delegate</i>	Jim Hogel	<b>X</b>
<b>Town of Schuyler</b>			
	Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Kenneth Dodge	<b>X</b>
	<i>Community Delegate</i>		
<b>The City of Utica</b>			
	Chief Elected Official OR Designee OR Designee	David Roefero <b>Deb Day*</b> Mike Mahoney	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>
<b>The Village of Whitesboro</b>			
	Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Richard Pugh Chester Kowalski	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>
	<i>Community Delegate</i>	Joe Lazenby	
<b>The Town of Whitestown</b>			
	Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Charles R. Gibbs II Sal Granato	
	<i>Community Delegate</i>	<b>Bill Schmitt*</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>The Village of Yorkville</b>			
	Chief Elected Official OR Designee	Bruno Petruccione Anthony Leone, Jr.	<b>X</b>
	<i>Community Delegate</i>	<b>Ken Schaaf*</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Oneida County</b>			
	<i>Community Delegate</i>	<b>Bruce Brodsky*</b>	<b>X</b>
	<i>Community Delegate</i>	Harvey Yando	<b>X</b>
	<i>County Executive Chief of Staff</i>	Al Candido	<b>X</b>
<b>Oneida County Commissioner - Water Quality and Water Pollution Control</b>			
		Steve Devan	<b>X</b>
<b>Project Consulting Team</b>			
	Shumaker Engineering	Karl Schrantz,	
	Brown and Caldwell Engineering	Jim Luz	<b>X</b>
	Paige Group	Steve Freeman	<b>X</b>
	Paige Group	Nancy Pattarini	<b>X</b>
	Fiscal Advisors	Richard Barrett	<b>X</b>
		Mark Colopy	<b>X</b>
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>			
	League of Women Voters	Joanna Albrecht	
	League of Women Voters	Barbara Weaver	<b>X</b>
	League of Women Voters	Mary Anthony	

**\*Working Group Members**

## **Meeting Highlights/Recap**

### ***Annual Progress Report***

The Oneida County Executive's Chief of Staff Al Candido welcomed committee members, thanked them for their continued involvement and passed along congratulatory remarks from DEC Region 6 Director Judy Drabicki for the model work that was done on the publishing of the project's annual progress report.

Candido mentioned that the director has been very impressed with the amount of project organization and fieldwork accomplished in the past year and credited the committee members for their participation in that effort. She is expected to attend the next, or a future, meeting to experience firsthand how the meetings are structured and function, the nature of the discussion that takes place, and the level of cooperation and decorum that pervades.

### ***Committee structure***

A recommendation was brought forth by committee member Roger Cleveland to elect a chair and vice chair in an effort to bring additional structure, leadership and ownership to the committee going forward. This recommendation met with the committee's approval.

In addition, committee members were asked to nominate themselves if they wanted to participate in a smaller working group comprised of individuals with specialized project expertise they are willing to share. This group would meet in between regularly scheduled full committee meetings for the purpose of pre-evaluating issues and refining topics of discussion for the full committee's consideration. Nomination forms were distributed and then collected at the end of the meeting for tallying. The names of the new chair, vice chair and working group members will be announced as soon as possible. These positions carry one-year terms.

### ***Revised project cost estimate***

Commissioner Steve Devan discussed the recent newspaper article regarding the project status and updated budget estimate. Devan explained that as a result of the prior year's flow metering, manhole inspections, and preliminary evaluation of that collected data, plus the urgency for the project to be placed on funding agencies' lists, there was a need to develop an updated cost figure for the project based on current information.

The revised number reflects potential costs for fixing sewer lines plus making upgrades at the Sauquoit Creek Pumping Station and the County's waste water treatment plant, including the force main. The original \$66 million figure reflected sewer line repairs only and was formulated prior to the undertaking of any engineering studies or fieldwork.

In terms of positioning the district to receive funding, Devan indicated that it would adopt whatever institutional size and structure is necessary to obtain the most money for project financing, whether that means applying for funding consideration as separate municipal entities, one large consolidated entity, or a combination of the two. He encouraged

municipalities to work with the District and the consulting team to get projects that they have identified in their communities listed with the appropriate funding agencies.

***Elected officials' presence at future meetings requested***

A suggestion was made to invite state and federal political leaders to upcoming Steering Committee meetings to better familiarize them with the many complex issues the project faces, particularly funding challenges, and to persuade them to serve as champions for the district's cause. Another recommendation was to hold semi-annual forums to review project status and increase political awareness of issues and questions that arise.

***Presentation of examples outlining district's future institutional/operational structure***

Project consulting engineers were asked by the committee in a previous meeting to provide some information that would offer some indication of the district's options for future organizational and institutional structure, operations, and financial management once the plan has been developed, approved, and the repairs are underway. A presentation of considerations was provided to the meeting attendees.

This aspect of the project is being addressed concurrently with the technical component. There is consensus among the consulting team and the committee that the organizational structure of the district to implement the mitigation plan will require some level of modification to ensure success.

***Key issues identified***

The presentation also highlighted a number of key project issues that have been identified as a result of Steering Committee meetings:

- This is a joint problem impacting the county sewer district and its 15 member municipalities. One of the essential questions is how to allocate project costs equitably. Alternatives like cost sharing formulas are being explored.
- The project could cause an imbalance or undue burdens in some communities. The goal is to find an agreeable balance among all district members based on affordability and good science.
- There may be an inability of some communities to handle project workload, contracts, and administration. Among the potential solutions being discussed include enhancing the District structure by providing project management assistance the communities, create a public authority, or even privatize system operations.
- With the assistance of the engineering consulting team, the District must identify and prioritize the most cost-effective I/I capital improvement projects with both the District and municipal owned sewer systems.

- An effective enforcement mechanism by the district will be needed to manage peak flows.
- A change in the way municipalities are charged for sewer services may be necessary which may include rates for district members based on wastewater flow versus drinking water-based flow. This may provide incentive for municipalities to remove excess I/I and better maintain their systems. Surcharges could also be imposed for exceeding peak flows, with those funds applied toward system improvements.
- DEC will most likely require a sustainable O&M program as part of the permitting process going forward. Municipalities could attempt to perform sewer system O&M on their own. Alternatively, it may be necessary for the District to explore the option of establishing an O&M assistance program for the municipalities with the cost of that program reimbursed by the municipalities. Shared municipal resources are also a possibility.

### ***Feedback needed***

Project consulting engineers urged committee members to discuss and obtain feedback on these concepts from their respective communities in order to help the engineers develop an acceptable implementation plan they can submit to the DEC that also meets the established project deadline of July 2010.

They added that this phase of the project is the most difficult due to the number of communities involved, their different approaches to system operations, their different needs and different resources. The final plan must be one that all communities accept and are willing to implement, and one that finds common ground and seeks compromises on their differences.

Commissioner Devan noted that once the problem is fixed, the job is not complete. An organizational and institutional structure must be put in place, along with a capacity management, operations, and maintenance (CMOM) program, to maintain the repaired system and avoid a repeat of the problem 10 or 20 years from now.

He also reiterated the need for municipalities to show significant progress on I/I removal projects, as well as development of O&M programs that demonstrate a commitment to ongoing system maintenance, in order for the county to gain support from the regulatory agencies for any request a project implementation schedule modifications.

A request was also made to provide the committee with a list that breaks down the revised \$158 million cost into project components (sewer system repairs and rehabilitation, upgrades to the pumping station, treatment plant, and force main). The team agreed to provide that information for the next meeting.

**Next meeting: 5:30 pm on Thursday, March 5, 2009 at New York Mills Senior Community Center**

