

**Town of Berlin
Municipal Office Building
108 Shed Road
Berlin, VT. 05602**



**Water Supply Public Hearing
Berlin Municipal Office**

**SPECIAL MEETING
Monday, November 23, 2009
7:30 PM**

Selectboard Members: Brad Towne, Chair; Susan Gretkowski, Vice Chair; Roberta Haskin, Secretary; Nancy Driscoll, Absent: Jonathan Goddard. Also Present: Tom Willard, Water Supply Committee Chair; Jeff Schulz, Town Administrator.

Brad Towne called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Tom Willard stated that during the past 20 years, the Town of Berlin conducted approximately four different studies of a public water system to serve the plateau region of the Town. He stated that the properties in this area are mostly commercial and industrial and are served by private wells which have found inadequate due to either development of surrounding properties or contamination of the water supply. **Tom** stated that these studies have never come to fruition because it was deemed too expensive a project. He stated that approximately two years ago the Selectboard appointed a Water Supply Committee and asked them to move forward with a Public Water Supply. **Tom** stated that the Committee has looked into the cost of hooking up to Montpelier's and Barre's supply, and found that the estimated cost for connecting to Montpelier's water supply would be approximately \$960 per user, per year and the cost for connecting to Barre's water supply would be approximately \$1,000 per user, per year. These costs are based on the user paying 100% of the project cost. **Tom** added that Montpelier and Barre use surface water sources for their systems and surface water needs a higher level of treatment than ground water. He stated that 2/3 of the cost quoted by Montpelier and Barre was the purchase of water from those municipalities and 1/3 of the cost was for building pipes and treatments issues for the system.

Tom stated that Otter Creek Engineering estimates that there is adequate supplies of good quality water in Berlin on the Dodge Farm property and that if the Town were to go forward with the testing of the water source and developing a Community Water System the cost would be approximately \$450 per user, per year. He stated that the Central Vermont Medical Center has agreed to dedicate their water system to the Town and use the Town System as their water supply. He stated that the hospital water storage tank stores approximately 300,000 gallons but is nearing the end of its design life and would need to be replaced. **Tom** stated that the Town would need a storage tank much bigger than the hospital storage tank.

Tom stated that a Community Water System needs to be on an area that has enough area for a storage tank and be at an elevation that can provide gravity fed wells. He stated that this would eliminate the added expense of building a pumping station which would be more expensive to maintain and service. He stated that there were few areas in Town with the elevation and land area for a storage tank. **Tom** stated that the best site the Committee identified was at the end of the Airport runway on what is now the Dodge Farm property. He stated that the committee negotiated an agreement with the landowner to control the land around the well area for water source protection. **Tom** stated that the Town drilled a test well on the Dodge Farm property and that well tested at 60 gallons per minute. He stated that they went ahead with a second test well which came in at 140 -150 gallons per minute and a third test well at 50 gallons per minute, for a total of 255 gallons per minute with three wells.

Tom stated that a well drillers pump test on a well is not comprehensive and that if no further testing was done, the State would cut the amount of water in half. He stated that to have a Community Water Supply, the Town would need to conduct more testing of the wells. **Tom** stated that a well that provides 150 gallons per minute would require a continuous 5-day pump test, which includes a 2 day pre-test, a 2 day step test, the 5 day pump test and 2 days of monitoring. He stated that the other wells would require a continuous 4-

day pump test done at a separate time. He stated that barring any equipment failures or snow storms, the testing on all wells would require 37 days to conduct. **Tom** stated that State and Federal regulations require the Town to test and monitor all private wells in a 3,000 foot radius of the bigger well and all wells within a 2,000 foot radius for the lesser wells to determine if they are being affected by the Municipal wells.

Tom stated that the consultants would like to put threaded PVC pipe and a monitoring sensor into the private wells to measure the rise and fall of the individual wells to determine if there is any interference. He stated that the next step is to go forward with the quality and quantity testing of the wells with the agreement of the residents in that area. He stated that the agreement with the landowner needs to be executed by October 2010. **Tom** stated that after the testing is completed, the Town would move forward with a financial package to build the Municipal system and get user agreements in place. A resident asked why the Town did not go forward with the quality testing first before going forward with more expensive testing. **Tom** responded that if the Town were to do the quality tests first, the testing would need to be done twice. A resident asked what happens if there is a problem with putting the testing equipment into a private well. **Tom** responded that the well pump would need to be pulled and the data logger placed in the well and the pump be replaced which would take approximately one hour. He stated that they could always be the possibility for problems replacing a pump in a well and in that case the Town would be liable for solving that problem. **Paul Irons** asked when the testing would be conducted. **Tom** responded that the testing could start as soon as late December or early January. Dr. Burns asked whether any of the cost of building a system would be passed on to the taxpayers. Tom stated that the cost would not fall to the taxpayers, that if there are adequate users for the system the cost should be approximately \$450 per user, per year with a contingency plans within that estimate if they do not get enough user agreements. **Tom** stated that the majority of users for the system are commercial and industrial with the hospital being one of the main users of this system. He stated that currently the hospital and the Comfort Inn needs to pay to test their systems, they would not need to do this if they connected to a municipal system.

Roberta Haskin stated that this issue has been a difficult one for the Selectboard because there has not been a lot of public feedback and invited everyone to attend the regular Selectboard meetings on Monday nights to discuss this and other topics they are concerned or have questions about.

Brad Towne adjourned the public meeting at 8:30 PM.

For the Selectboard:

Rebecca Richardson, Administrative Assistant