

Village of Germantown Hills

Sewer Committee Meeting Minutes

October 2, 2017 5:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call/Minutes Approval**-Brian Wysocki called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and roll call was taken.

Village President/Trustees	Roll Call	1	2	3	4
Brian Wysocki – Chair	Present	Y	Y		
Mike Hinrichsen – Village President	Present	Y	Y		
Julia Miller	Absent	-	Y		
Jim O'Laughlin	Present	Y	Y		
Marty Clinch	Present	Y	Y		

Also, Present:

Rich Brecklin, Superintendent of Public Works

a. September 11, 2017 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Jim O'Laughlin to approve the September 11, 2017 sewer committee meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mike Hinrichsen. **Motion passed #1.**

2. Discussion and recommendation to the Village Board on the policy and procedures in regards to the grinder pump systems

Brian Wysocki stated the sewer committee and Village Board have met and discussed with some public input the grinder pump policy for after hour calls and misuse. The biggest concern people had was the after-hour call policy.

Mike Hinrichsen noted the number one thing is no one wants sewer in their basements. They also don't want to be inconvenienced to not be able to use water or sewer until the next day. There was also a misconception by some that if they called after 3:30 p.m. on a Friday that they would have to wait until Monday and that is not correct. Mike indicated Village staff would check messages every day, even on the weekends and holidays.

Mike stated since the discussions and in looking more closely at the grinder pump systems it is going to be a challenge to maintain the 24/7 service. One example is a pump on Highland Court. There are some complicating factors whereas the homeowner had built around the basin and the valve has failed. It is getting to the point with the systems that it is taking multiple manpower to service them. The homeowner's need to provide easy access to the pump and control panel.

Julia Miller arrived at 5:06 p.m.

Mike noted the Village knows it is an inconvenience but due to the aging system and complications there are safety issues in working on the systems in the dark and certain weather conditions. This of course can vary due to the season.

John Heil noted he understands the system is getting older and there is a need for more manpower. He indicated the problem being that no one is going to show up or respond with the currently proposed policy to even assess the issue. He would hope someone could come out to assess the problem even if they had to come the next day to fix it. If the homeowners are making it more difficult to access the pumps then the Village should address it separately with the property owners. The Village should be able to access the pump and know where the shut off valve is.

Mike noted the main issue is safety and not financial. With the aging system it is not feasible in most cases for only one person to work on these systems.

Rich Brecklin explained if they have to pull a pump there could be issues at night. The pump motor doesn't normally fail as it is usually the components. Rich noted there are some that don't have the correct power to the control box. If that happens at night they wouldn't be able to get the support that is needed. The homeowner's have to stay up and many want to go to bed. Rich noted pulling pumps after hours can be scary with the unpredictability of the conditions.

Mike noted the challenge of fixing it today or the homeowner's not having water and having to wait until the next day. There's going to be an inconvenience of some sort but we need to find a solution for everyone.

Rich Brecklin explained that most of the time the problems are due to the homeowner.

Lynn Sutton noted she would like to be able to talk to someone about the issue and then have the homeowner be informed to not use water and whatever other directions there might be.

Bob Sutton felt that a common ground would be that a homeowner could talk to someone and depending on the situation and weather have the ability to defer until the next morning.

Mike Hinrichsen explained the pm program had been beefed up and hopefully this will help over time to avoid some problems.

Rich Brecklin noted the only other system he knows of in the area is Goodfield. There are some grinder pumps in the area that are not serviced by Germantown Hills but by the homeowners themselves.

Tom Signore questioned if it's not a cost cutting measure but more about safety would having a 3rd party do the work be beyond their scope.

Brian Wysocki noted the issue is not only safety but having the resources at night. Rich Brecklin indicated he has checked with a contractor about doing some of the work with the estimated cost of \$121 an hour and \$152 an hour for Sundays and Holidays.

Bob Sutton noted the biggest asset is the knowledge and experience the Village staff have.

Brian Wysocki noted he sees it on both sides since he has a grinder pump system and feels he could be inconvenienced and wait until the next day for a repair. Brian noted on top of safety and an aging system there are some financial concerns.

Jim O'Laughlin mentioned the possibility of implementing a separate fee for grinder pump users. He noted he doesn't have a grinder pump but there is a lift station in his front yard so he understands the potential problems and concerns.

Rich Brecklin discussed the current pm schedule and the possibility of hiring a part time person to do the pms.

Tom Signore asked about the financial impact. Ann Sasso noted for years this number was tracked in order to reimburse the sewer operating fund from the grinder pump fund. Since the expenses were exceeding the amount of funds available this process was stopped.

Mike indicated the main issues are the safety and the ability to execute the repair.

Julia Miller noted the financial impact is not the issue but would be the last concern. The main issue comes down to safety.

Mike noted possible solutions in terms of how to contact the Village after hours, possible need to adjust the hours for after-hours calls, more aggressive pms, additional charge for afterhours calls, and higher charge for abuse so that it will change behavior.

Marty Clinch asked if all of the personnel are trained on the grinder pump systems. Rich noted all the employees are trained and capable of handling most all of the situations.

Jim O'Laughlin recommended having employees look at the situation and if a pump had to be pulled to wait until the next day and stop using water. The residents in attendance stated they would be ok with that policy as their main concern is not being to get any kind of response.

Julia Miller noted the Village could look at extending the time they can get a hold of village personnel but if there is a problem Rich would have the authority to wait until the next day and educate the resident why this is needed. Rich has the knowledge and experience and the board needs to take this seriously if there are safety concerns.

Mike Hinrichsen noted next best steps would probably be to have a couple of board members meet with Rich and look at the information that has been discussed at the meetings and bring a recommendation.

Rich Brecklin would like to propose a door hanger to be left at the homes when a pm has been performed. This was done years ago but was eliminated

Rich noted he has already contracted with Hoerr to put in three shut off valves outside of the tank. He proposed the Village look at hiring a temporary employee in the spring in order to get more pms completed on the grinder pump systems.

3. **Adjournment**-A motion was made by Marty Clinch to adjourn the meeting at 6:26 p.m. The motion was seconded by Julia Miller. **Motion passed #2.**

Ann Sasso, Village Clerk