

Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group
§ 62.1-223.2
August 30, 2023, 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM
Meeting Summary

Meeting Location:
Virginia Department of Health
5th Floor Main Conference Room
109 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Virtual Option via WebEx

Attendees:

Scott Morris	Lance Gregory	Shawn Crumlish	Chase Sawyer
Danna Revis	Gabriel Irigaray	Christy Meek	Haley Edmonds
Joey Hiner	Charlie Paullin	Chris Pomeroy	Mike Lynn

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Morris welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order.

2. Review Summary from July 14, 2023.

The workgroup reviewed and approved the July 14, 2023 meeting summary with amendment.

3. New Business

a. Needs assessment report update.

Mr. Morris reported that the needs assessment report is still currently under review and will be shared once posted for the public.

b. Staffing needs at Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

In 2019, DEQ's Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund processes 88 projects. By 2023, the number of projects has increased to 692. To assist with this increase DEQ is hiring 4 new positions; a Financial Services Specialist, a grant restricted American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Specialist, a Stormwater Tech Specialist, and a Wastewater Tech Specialist. DEQ also has 2 additional new positions under review.

VDH reported the addition of a Wastewater Infrastructure Manager position has been critical to the success of various onsite sewage system repair funding programs now available at VDH. The agency has also hired five contract employees under the Septic and Well Assistance Program (SWAP) funded by ARPA. Mr. Gregory noted that it is clear that additional full time support for the Wastewater Infrastructure Manager is necessary for long term success of seeking and providing wastewater funding programs at VDH. Mr. Gregory also noted difficulties at VDH in

filling critical positions, such as Environmental Health Specialist positions in local health departments.

c. Inflation impacts on wastewater infrastructure project cost.

Mr. Morris provided data from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) regarding the inflation impacts on wastewater infrastructure project costs since 2000. Cost have increased annually from two to 8 percent, but have not been directly correlated with the consumer price index. Average annual services charges have increased from \$222 in 2000 to \$569 in 2022, and are project to continue to increase to \$721 by 2027.

Mr. Gregory noted that VDH anticipated a cost of \$8,000 to \$12,000 for the installation of conventional onsite sewage systems under SWAP. The actual average cost of installation under SWAP is \$19,720.56. A portion of this increase is accounted for by site clearing (e.g tree removal) costs. VDH anticipated an average cost of \$30,000 to \$35,000 for alternative onsite sewage system installation cost under SWAP; the actual average cost is \$36,758.33.

d. Time constraints to expended wastewater infrastructure funding.

For ARPA funds, DEQ must have grant agreements executed by December 31, 2024. All funds must be expended and all reimbursements disbursed by December 31, 2026.

VDH has the same constraints for SWAP funds.

Mr. Pomeroy asked whether there are any legislative changes that could assist with timeframes to disperse funds.

Mr. Morris noted that budget language that was proposed last year would help.

The workgroup then set a tentative date of September 29, 2023 for the third meeting, and noted a survey is necessary to set the fourth meeting date.

4. Public Comment

Mr. Lynn noted there are lot of pots of money, with different funding timeframes and sources. He asked if there is a summary sheet of who is eligible.

Mr. Gregory committed to updating the spreadsheet previously put together by the workgroup, sending it out to the group, and then post the updated spreadsheet on the VDH website.

5. Adjournment

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Virtual:

Join from the meeting link

<https://vdhoep.webex.com/vdhoep/j.php?MTID=maa03d35da9a49a8ec9d1931cb9db6377>

Join by phone

1-844-992-4726 United States Toll Free

+1-408-418-9388 United States Toll

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- 2. Review Summary from July 14, 2023.**
- 3. New Business**
 - a. Needs assessment report update.**
 - b. Staffing needs at VDH and DEQ.**
 - c. Inflation impacts on wastewater infrastructure project cost.**
 - d. Time constraints to expended wastewater infrastructure funding.**
- 4. Public Comment**
- 5. Adjournment**