

Danville Town Services Committee
Wastewater Assessment

Proposed Service:

Assessment of Wastewater management and oversight. There is currently no entity who knows the system and its locations and can respond to questions. This assessment does not address plant operations or upgrades as outlined in the Wastewater Treatment Plant Evaluation from 15 November 2024.

Facts and Assumptions:

1. The Danville "Sewer Ordinance" identifies the position of "Superintendent of Sewage Works". This position was occupied by a former Town employee, Stubb, who retired in 2001-2002. This position has been vacant since his retirement.
2. The Wastewater plant operations and compliance are contracted out to H2O, a global organization. They are obligated to run the plant, manage the three pumping stations, complete required testing, and to submit all required paperwork to the State of VT. They do not manage the distribution network.
 - They have noted that it is unknown when the distribution system was last cleaned or if there was any camera inspection of the pipes to determine condition or water infiltration. Dufrene Henry notes that the system was inspected by R Allyn Lewis in 2003 and deemed to be in excellent condition. Keith Gadapee has identified two damaged manholes allowing for stormwater infiltration. These have been repaired by the Town Highway Department.
 - By default, they also provide lawncare for the plant area, using town owned equipment. This is not in their contract (This is part of another issue for the town to address).
3. All office functions, billing, and collections are completed by the Town Clerk/Treasurer, Michelle Leclerc. Michelle stated that she is not burdened by this task. Billing is done quarterly. Sewer rates and other hookup/application fees are not necessarily driven by actual operating expenses.
4. Issues outside of WW Plant operation are handled by a subcontractor. This would include blockages, issues with the weir in the streambed, or system damage and repair. The protocol for identifying, approving, and completing these subcontracted items is not clearly defined. Keith Gadapee is often consulted for knowledge or assistance. He routinely assists in cleaning out the Water Andric weir a few times per year, as a non-billable service.
5. Knowledge of the system, manhole locations, and pipe locations are vague. There are no readily available drawings of any part of the system. Construction drawings from when the system was installed are buried somewhere in town hall

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and could be researched and compiled. Manhole mapping was partially completed and is noted on the Preliminary Engineering report by Dufrene Henry.

6. At present, there is no individual or resource that can answer system questions or verify the remaining system capacity and development potential. This information is requested often. Keith Gadapee and Michelle Leclerc usually try to research and answer these questions in a timely manner.
7. At present, contrary to the Sewer Ordinance, there is no "Superintendent" to perform the required hook-up inspections, for which a fee is collected.
8. At present, there is no one, except Audrey Desprospero, who can identify, authorize or approve emergency repairs or the hiring of subcontractors for emergency repairs in a timely manner.
9. The Wastewater Service is a Town provided service, supposedly self-funded. Last year, 2024, there was a deficit of \$31,463, which was funded by the general fund, which affects all taxpayers, not just sewer users. The annual billing rate is increased incrementally, without a budget analysis. The Preliminary Engineering report by Dufrene Henry recommends initially increasing the rate by 100%.

Developed Options:

1. Reinststitute the "Superintendent of Sewage Works". This is likely not a full-time job and therefore could fall under the proposed Public Works position. This position would be able to respond to questions about capacity, pipe and manhole locations, map locations, inspections of connections, approval and oversight of acquisitions and subcontractors, and all other related tasks. Initially, this will require an investment of time to learn the system and to find the missing maps.
2. Rodger Sheldon, from H2O, noted that their contract is up for renewal at the end of this year. He expressed interest in managing the distribution system as part of their contract. On a related subject, he is also certified to run a potable water plant and could also assume or oversee operation of the Fire District water system.
3. Danville could hire the multiple employees necessary to run the WW Plant and system, including "Superintendent", in house.
4. Lawn care at the WW Plant and the pending dog park needs to be evaluated on a townwide basis.
5. Job descriptions and responsibilities for all town positions would be helpful to avoid conflict and simplify operations.

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6. WW fee structure needs to be audited to reflect actual costs. There are projected costs for sludge removal and plant upgrades to meet more stringent effluent standards.

Compare Options:

1. Contract with an outside agency to manage daily operations and testing. Hire a "Superintendent", a Town employee, to act as liaison between operator, selectboard, and public.
2. Create a Town wastewater department with multiple employees to manage operations and information. Training and certification will be required. **This option will require finding/hiring people and then training them to assume operations. Training will take at least two years, unless they are already certified.**
3. Investigate how many man-hours are currently required to run the WW System, compared to the annual cost to contract this out to H2O. They are currently billing about \$73,000 per year, or approximately \$1,400 per week. **H2O noted that their initial contract was based on 20 hrs per week**

Refinement of Recommendation(s)

1. Determine who will assume role of Superintendent of Sewage Works.
2. Re-negotiate H2O contract for managing plant operations.
3. Contract our lawncare at the Wastewater Campus.
4. Adopt improvements and maintenance as outlined in the Engineering Report by Dufrene Henry. Remaining capacity is quickly being allocated. This summer added 25 units for the Rt-2/Rossi development, 4 units at the senior housing, and 1 unit for a new residence on Hill St. Dufrene Henry suggests recalculating the allocations on a per capita basis vs on a bedroom basis. Not all bedrooms have 2 people.
 - a. Complete sludge removal. Funding in reserve account?
 - b. Address plant update. The existing system will likely not meet standards for the next permit renewal. Will this require a bond vote at the next Town Meeting?
 - c. Adjust fees for applications and hook-ups as they are below average.
 - d. Adjust monthly fees contingent on plant update costs and financing. See chart in Dufrene Henry report. Currently, the revenue stream has a \$31,463 deficit, without budgeting for sludge removal or any plant upgrades.

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TSC Recommendation(s) to Selectboard:

1. Confirm acting Wastewater Superintendent. Keith Gadapee is currently covering the position. Create a job description and define required training/certification, if any.
2. Review and renegotiate the H2O contract for plant management. Consider adding management of the distribution system. Redefine the job description. Contract out the lawn care at the plant and at the pumping stations(Peacham Rd only?)
3. Review final, 100% Dufrene Henry Engineering Report upon receipt. Evaluate and initiate final recommendations for action, i.e. sludge removal and plant upgrades. Prepare for bond vote on plant upgrades for 2026 Town Meeting. Determine percentage borne by town vs by subscribers (Town buy-in percentage).
4. Determine new fee schedule for Wastewater Applications and Hook-ups. Determine annual fee increase for subscribers before and after bonding. Dufrene has prepared a schedule for this in their report. Resolve funding of account deficit so it is not from the General Fund.

Submission Date: 15 September 2025

Selectboard Feedback/Comments:

Revision History

If TSC or Selectboard respond with revisions, please track below to ensure that everyone is up to date.

| Name | Description | Date |
|-----------------|--|--------------|
| Brian Henderson | Update after initial meeting | 10 June 2025 |
| Brian Henderson | Add H2O contracted hours | 23 July 2025 |
| Brian Henderson | Summarize recommendations | 10 Sept 2025 |
| Brian Henderson | Consolidate final recommendations after meeting discussion | 12 Sept 2025 |
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