



**Town of Agawam, MA
Stormwater System Assessment and Utility/Fee Planning**

**Stormwater Utility Group Meeting
April 26, 2017**

Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: Tuesday April 26, 2017

Time: 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Location: Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St, Agawam, MA

Prepared by: Rich Niles (Amec Foster Wheeler)
Elizabeth Flanary (Amec Foster Wheeler)

Attached for reference are the attendee sign-in sheet and meeting agenda and below are the next steps, followed by a summary of key discussion and information related to the project.

Next Steps:

- Outline existing and future costs for the stormwater program
- Continue to update the GIS database and conduct the impervious area analysis
- Interview Task Force on public outreach suggestions
- Plan for Task Force meeting #2 at the end of May or early June

Summary:

1. Statement of Goals and Objectives

- Rich Niles provided introductory remarks, presented the scope of the project with the anticipated schedule of tasks and deliverables, and discussed the roles and responsibilities for members of the Project Team and Task Force. The project includes six Task Force meetings, two public meetings, and a final report with recommendations for stormwater funding by the end of 2017.

2. Municipal Stormwater System Overview

- Rich Niles presented an overview on the components of a municipal stormwater system and common problems associated with historical combined stormwater and sanitary sewer systems, such as overflows. These systems were separated in recent years and

the existing stormwater infrastructure was reviewed. Existing stormwater management activities performed by the DPW were also discussed.

- It was noted that under the new EPA NPDES MS4 permit there will be stricter regulations on certain operational activities, such as catch basin cleaning and street sweeping that will require an increase in funding. Separate from these regulations, increased design standards for culverts have historically increased costs, as they must be designed as a bridge for stream crossings in many cases. Although these requirements have been in place for some time, culvert replacement efforts are increasing as the infrastructure ages. Another expense that needs to be addressed is the maintenance of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that are on private properties (e.g., mowing, removing clippings and debris).
- The current budget status of the DPW was discussed and whether it was adequate to properly meet the Town's needs for storm drain infrastructure management. The current DPW budget for stormwater activities has been static for years and is not adequate to address the known and anticipated infrastructure needs. The release of the EPA NPDES MS4 permit is a significant driver that will compel the Town to address the management of the storm drain system and impose additional requirements that are not part of the current stormwater program.

3. Stormwater Needs

- The Town's current understanding of stormwater system needs were discussed by Town staff, who elaborated on several problem areas, such as: increased expense of culvert reconstruction, problems with detention ponds on private property not being maintained, regulatory compliance challenges, and maintenance issues. It was explained that the Town's subdivision regulations currently require that homeowners take on maintenance of detention basins. This is regarded by many as a major burden. With funding, the idea is that the Town may be able to take on maintenance of these facilities.
 - A GIS map showing current stormwater infrastructure in Town was displayed during the presentation with a hard copy on the table for Task Force members to review. The map illustrated stormwater pipe systems (by color) based on the approximate age of construction. Approximately 6% of the pipe systems is older than 1970 and 57.5% of piping is of an unknown age. The high percentage of unknown piping is a data gap that requires further assessment.
 - The Town is subject to regulatory requirements due to water quality impairments for the Connecticut River for TSS, E. coli, nutrients, and PCBs in fish. Potential causes of the impairments were discussed in the context of stormwater contributions and management needs.
 - Areas in Town that are frequently subject to flooding were identified on a GIS map that was also printed for Task Force members to review. Frequent street flooding accelerates the deterioration of pavement, culverts, and stormwater conveyance systems, adding to costs and putting DPW in the position of being reactive. Addressing these issues should be a priority for remediation and prevention efforts. The DPW added that they have purchased a camera for drain pipe inspection, however, they are constrained by the staff time required to properly inspect all drainage pipes.
 - Amec Foster Wheeler developed a preliminary online stormwater problem reporting map that can be made available to the public. The interactive map shows current stormwater
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infrastructure and allows the public to report issues. To streamline the process and consistently manage data, several common issues are provided in a dropdown menu for users to select.

- Task Force members were polled and asked to select the top five stormwater issues that they felt were priorities for the Town's stormwater program. The results are summarized below:
 - Aging infrastructure – 5
 - Flooding problems – 5
 - Erosion of channels and streams – 4
 - Water quality problems – 3
 - Wastewater or septic pressures – 3
 - Drinking water protection – 3
 - Compliance requirements – 2
 - Preserve recreation or fisheries – 2
 - Ecological concerns – 2
 - Understanding of the stormwater system / data quality – 1 (added to list at Task Force member request)
 - Beach closures or swimming restrictions – 0
 - Preservation of property value – 0
 - Development pressures – 0
 - Prevent lawsuits – 0
- The requirements of the new MS4 permit that becomes effective July 1 were presented. The permit is developed around six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs): public education and outreach, public involvement and participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction site stormwater runoff control, stormwater management in new development and redevelopment, and pollution prevention and good housekeeping. Each of the six MCMs were explained to the Task Force in greater detail. Upcoming regulatory requirements will be discussed in greater detail at Task Force Meeting #2 with anticipated cost estimates.
- It was mentioned that the new MS4 permit requirements will place an additional administrative burden upon Town staff. It was suggested that the costs associated with stormwater be separated from Town politics and marketed to the public as a necessary utility, in the same manner as sewerage and electricity. The stormwater program will affect all residents and businesses and the public needs to understand the needs to manage the program, as well as the options for funding.

4. Public Engagement

- Patty Gambarini (PVPC) presented proposed activities and objectives related to public outreach. Task Force members were urged to think of how to most effectively engage the public on stormwater and which groups in Town might be most interested. Task Force members commented on the importance of continuing and enhancing youth outreach and the need for more programs and education at local schools.
- One Task Force member noted that there needs to be a lot of outreach for people to understand the stormwater (as a topic with growing needs) since it is competing with all other needs in Town. Examples of specific infrastructure projects that have been completed with costs would be very useful in helping people to understanding needs.



- The Town noted that currently most stormwater work is not highly visible or recognized by the public. The DPW is currently implementing a program to distribute door hangers that will explain infrastructure and best management practices. These will be distributed when the DPW is performing stormwater work in neighborhoods. As part of this project, a graphic designer will assist in developing public education and outreach materials.