

# Sherman considers options for plant upgrades

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Village Board members will have to decide whether to continue seeking grants to purchase a new screw press for the wastewater treatment plant, to purchase one outright or to search for a used one.

Sherman Mayor Colleen Meeder told board members at their regular meeting Feb. 9 that the village could seek a \$200,000 Local Government Efficiency grant to purchase a screw press dewatering system.

However, this grant must be shared with at least one other municipality, each of which can apply for \$200,000.

A new screw press costs approximately \$450,000. If the village chooses to buy one on its own, it would free up funds in the wastewater treatment improvement project for contingencies or lower the cost of the entire project, Meeder said.

The screw press is a machine that quickly removes water from sludge, producing an exceptionally dry sludge cake. "We will have to get it within the next year," Meeder said. "We are just looking at our options for funding (inside and outside of the current WWTP Improvement Project)."

Chief Wastewater Operator Jay Irwin told trustees that the village cannot apply for the LGE grant on its own. "This has to be shared," he said. "We can wait until later in the project or we can possibly look at a used unit."

Meeder noted, however, that the screwpress can only be owned by one municipality, which would entail a special agreement with another municipality if the Village chooses to pursue the LGE grant.

"By March 9, we will have to decide if we are pursuing this as part of the consolidated funding application (CFA) or buying it outright," Meeder added.

Irwin said that the village has received inquiries from other municipalities about using the screwpress when it is obtained. This could provide a source of revenue for the village, he said.

Meeder explained that the screw press would be on a trailer "that can go to the municipalities in need of dewatering equipment, like emptying their lagoon and taking a significant amount of water off the sludge before going to a landfill or drying facility for processing."

In other business, Meeder updated the board on the reasons why the village did not receive a grant from the Green Innovation Grant Program. She told board members that there were 89 applicants for the grant, out of which 17 were awarded so far in 2021.

The GIGP funds were intended to be used for the Main Street green infrastructure portion of the village's storm water project. The grant would have provided 90% of \$2,058,225, said Sherman Mayor Colleen Meeder.

The village scored well in the overall application process, Meeder said. However, Sherman is not classified as an Environmental Justice Community, and the village does not have "an impaired body of water" that is put at risk from storm water runoff.

The US Environmental Protection Agency refers to environmental Justice Communities as "overburdened communities," that are most impacted by environmental harms and risks

Meeder said the village would reapply for the grant; however, other sources of funding for the project are being explored. "They found that there was four times the amount of money requested than what they had available," she said. "The GIGP is a very competitive grant."

Meeder told board members that the Water Quality Improvement Project could be part of this year's CFA. "Also, there are some FEMA grants that have become available," she said.

Meeder also reminded trustees that decisions must be made regarding the use of American Rescue Plan ACT (ARPA) funds. "We have to decide how we're using our ARPA funds," she said. "We got \$34,000 this year and we'll get another \$34,000 next year."

At their January meeting, Meeder told trustees that, in September, 2021, the village was awarded the \$16,000 Rural Business Development Grant for signs. "The Village will provide \$3,000 for this project," she said. "And we already have 10 of the signs ready."

Meeder also updated trustees on the electrical vehicle charging stations. She asked them to approve a short-term bond resolution for \$300,000, so the village can pay the costs of the EV stations, including engineering, construction, administration, and purchase and improvements to the parking lots in the village.

The bond resolution was unanimously approved and, Meeder noted, the village will be reimbursed in the form of a rebate for the costs.

Trustees approved a resolution that the EV charging station project will result in no significant adverse impacts on the environment. That was in a prior meeting.

Trustees also approved a resolution expressing the Village of Sherman's intent to serve as lead agency of the French Creek Parks Project. The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requires this statement environmental review of for all projects, Meeder noted.

In a related matter, Meeder mentioned the SEQRA and the French Creek Parks Project. She reminded trustees that the Edmunds Park Committee now has \$30,000 available and they would like to start using the funds, but "they can't proceed until the SEQR is done," she said.

In other business, trustees approved the B & L Sewer Engineering Contract Amendment #3, to the agreement between the Village of Sherman and Barton & Loguidice to reestablish the \$175,000 amount previously reduced by Amendment 2 in Resolution 2021-12-08.6.

Board members also approved an agreement between the Village of Sherman and E & B Squared Consulting for inspection on the Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project.