

Bayside receives some good news from the state

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By Toni Mailloux

Calling it "a victory of common sense," overseer David Crofoot informed his fellow overseers Sunday that the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has backed off its insistence that Bayside construct a new secondary treatment facility or connect to Belfast's secondary treatment plant.

Crofoot, who is also chairman of the board of trustees for Bayside's utility department, said the DEP has agreed with the recommendation of the department's engineering firm, Woodard and Curran, to upgrade the existing wastewater treatment facility,

construct a new ocean outfall and continue with efforts to improve stormwater infiltration into sewer pipes.

"They agreed we could not afford a secondary treatment plant," said Crofoot.

"Do we need to revise the consent agreement?" asked one overseer.

Northport Village Corporation, commonly referred to as Bayside, signed a consent agreement with the state several years ago to work toward closing its primary treatment plant, through construction of a new

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secondary treatment facility or by connecting to the Belfast system.

The utility department has consistently insisted with only around 230 customers it could not afford to operate a secondary treatment plant, much less construct one for an estimated cost of \$3 million to \$4 million.

In the letter to Crofoot, engineer Karen Hefler of the Bureau of Land and Water Quality wrote, "We understand that the construction of a new secondary treatment facility or the connection to Belfast for secondary treatment appears to be unaffordable for the corporation. The state is unlikely to have grant money available to NVC in the near future and the corporation is limited to how much it can borrow due to the fact that the existing user fees are already relatively high."

She said Bayside should prioritize work "such that the corporation will be able to operate the existing plant with the least likelihood of effluent violations."

Hefler asked Bayside to review its estimated costs for operating an upgraded facility for accuracy. She said the projected operation and maintenance cost estimated will be used to calculate the amount of grant needed to make the project feasible for users.

She also suggested the estimated cost for the new outfall of \$650,000 plus 35 percent labor should also be reexamined. She said there may be possible cost savings that should be looked at before the design is finalized.

Crofoot told the board the utility department had no license violations during the past month but did have a flow that was higher than last year's despite the work done to reduce stormwater infiltration. He said there appears to be a new source of infiltration from the south shore. He said there's an old main that serves only one house that is currently not occupied that is putting 16 gallons a minute into the system, which is 37 percent of the licensed output.

In other action, the overseers:

- decided to send a letter to the Northport road commissioner and the selectmen about the road damage they believe occurred because the storm drains were not cleaned out by the town and are plugged and because some of the streets were not contoured correctly so the water couldn't even get to the storm drains. "There needs to be shared cooperative preventative maintenance," said

Crofoot:

- hired Maine Rural Water with a bid of \$2,000 to put together Bayside's request for a water rate increase with public hearings to be scheduled in July;

- learned the moderator for Bayside's annual town meeting has to be a resident of Maine, which longtime moderator Tim Sample is not;

- agreed to pay a \$150 plowing and sanding bill from a resident who was not able to leave a residence during a storm despite driving "a front-wheel drive SUV with studded tires" and also couldn't get fuel oil delivered several times. Both Bill Paige, who plows for Bayside, and the town of Northport had reportedly run out of sand at the time. The overseers agreed to speak with their attorney about what their responsibility is for protecting the property and safety of taxpayers on public roads in the wintertime;

- learned the end of the one-year warranty on utility work performed by Lynch Construction is fast approaching and any complaints need to be brought to the village's attention soon;

- discussed whether double signatures should be required on checks that are sent out before warrants are signed by the overseers at their monthly meetings as a security measure. It was decided to discuss the issue again at the board's annual organizational meeting in September;

- learned Shelley Munson has been hired as the lifeguard for this summer. She also had the job two years ago; and

- voted to make a \$50 donation to the Maine Veterans Home in Bangor in memory of Al Keith.