

## What We Do Part Two or A Tale of Two Cities (well, actually, a small sewer district and an equally small village)

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It was the best of times; it was the worst of times....It was a time to seek direction. The Town of Northampton and the Village of Castorland were both in need and sought the assistance of the New York Rural Water Association (NYRWA).

(Who remembers what “WE” refers to?)

Sacandaga Park is a small sewer district located in the Town of Northampton, consisting of just under one hundred mainly seasonal sewer connections (that's a hint). The District is experiencing a surge in development. One condominium complex is under construction, and several others are being considered. One problem. Flows received by the districts small wastewater treatment plant often exceed the design flow during wet weather. And, as the weather has been wetter than normal the past year or so, the elevated flows are raising concerns. DEC has not issued an official consent order, but they do WANT TO SEE SOMETHING DONE to reduce the flows. First step. Smoke test.

In June of 2006, “WE” assisted Ken Cramer, the operator, with smoke testing. The results were, to put it politely, not encouraging. The hundred year old clay tile mains definitely showed their age. While the smoke test results were discouraging, it did bring to light the seriousness of the inflow and infiltration (I&I) problem. After discussing the situation with Town Supervisor Linda Kemper, we decided it was time to move forward, to choose a direction in which to move. Funding was a major issue that needed to be addressed, so the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) was contacted for assistance. EFC offers “FREE” funding assistance. They are aware of most, if not all, of the loan and grant programs available, as well as, the application deadlines. An initial meeting of NYRWA, EFC and the Town was scheduled. During that meeting, a basic project scope was developed, and the need for engineering services discussed. It was decided that a request for proposal (RFP) for engineering services needed to be developed and issued. Over the next several months a duty (responsibility) specific RFP was developed. The RFP spelled out clearly, not only what the engineering firm would be responsible for, but also what measures the Town would pursue in order to save money. Those measures include utilizing Town employees and NYRWA to complete I&I investigations (smoke testing and televising), and having EFC handle the funding process. The RFP was finalized and issued on January 11th, 2007, and

an informational meeting for the engineering firms was held on January 23rd. The proposal opening is scheduled for February 22nd. NYRWA has been, and will continue to be, involved throughout the entire process.

The Village of Castorland is in a similar, yet different (HUH?) situation. A small village of just over one hundred sewer connections, they have, among other problems, I&I issues. Unlike Northampton, Castorland has not experienced a surge in construction as other communities in the area have, due to the Fort Drum expansion. They have also been issued a consent order by DEC. The consent order is the standard 45/90 order (45 days to retain an engineer, 90 days to develop a corrective action plan), with a recommended compliance schedule and penalties. The goal was to negotiate an order that not only satisfies DEC, but also does not financially overburden the Village.

Once again, NYRWA contacted EFC to provide funding guidance. Also contacted was Resources for Communities And People (RCAP Solutions), another organization that provides “FREE” assistance to communities in collecting data required by the funding agencies. Several conference calls were held with NYRWA, EFC, RCAP Solutions, Operator - Mark Birchenough, Village Clerk - Donna Louks, the Village Attorney and Engineer, and an alternate compliance schedule was developed. The alternate schedule addressed the Villages needs/concerns such as funding deadlines, time required to gather representative data and complete an I&I survey. It also addressed DEC's concerns for timely correction actions. The alternate schedule has been submitted to DEC and the Village now awaits a response. In the meantime, the Village is moving ahead with an income survey, investigating funding sources, collection of data to be used for the preliminary engineering report, soke testing and televising scheduled for this spring.

Castorland has the unique distinction of being the first community (to the best of my knowledge) to contact NYRWA before signing the consent order. Northampton issued an RFP that unequivocally (wow, nice word) defines the work being requested, and who will be responsible for what. In both cases, the Town and the Village were able to respond to their problems in ways that protect their interests, as well as, addresses the concerns of DEC. In both cases, NYRWA acted as facilitator in bringing all the players together. By providing the technical assistance, as well as, access to funding resources, NYRWA truly can provide one stop shopping. And the best part is that it is all FREE!

And they all lived happily ever after.

The End. ♠