

MV council: Phase one of wastewater treatment plant is going forward

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BY: SHERRY BLUEMEL, Bridger Valley Pioneer Reporter

Phase one of the Bridger Valley wastewater treatment plant will be going forward. This was the decision at the Mountain View town council meeting on Tuesday night. Keller Associates, from Pocatello, Idaho, met with the council Tuesday night to give information about mechanical wastewater treatment plants.

Right now, Mountain View sits number one in the State of Wyoming's intended use plan.

"DEQ has cut us a lot of slack over the years because we've been working on this," said Mountain View Public Works Director Dave Dasher. He stated that the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regulations have changed and that the town's population has outgrown the current system's capacity. "We are pretty much out of compliance every month in one form or another," he said.

During the public hearing, Dasher stated that the sewer lagoons have outlived their potential by at least ten years.

"The time has come for the town of Mountain View to take an aggressive, long-term approach to the needs of the Bridger Valley," Dasher said. The council stated that this is just phase one of the Bridger Valley plant. The other phases of the project are yet to be determined. The time is right to capture federal government stimulus money; council members feel it is possible for the project to get 100 percent funding.

"The jobs that will transpire are going to help the Valley out," said Mayor Scott Dellinger.

Town Clerk Bonnie Halford stated that operating and maintenance alone will cause the price of sewer service to go up, even with total funding. Another full-time town employee would have to be hired to make sure the plant is covered at all times.

"I have a problem with any sewer water going into South Creek," said resident Lisa Branson. "I know exactly how frequently little accidents happen."

Dasher stated that with a mechanical wastewater treatment plant, the town would have the ability to stop all the little accidents or mishaps. Presently, with lagoons, it isn't possible to do that. It was also explained that with a mechanical wastewater treatment plant, the water comes out almost drinkable. The water could be used for irrigation in the town or sold to ranchers. In the end, the water would pose very little, if any, danger of illness, chemicals, or diseases.

Branson also expressed concern as to how long the DEQ would allow the surrounding areas to continue [in their current situation]. This is a big community, and right now is the time to do this together, Branson stated.

"We didn't have a choice," said Dasher. "It is in the best interest of the Valley, but our concerns are taking care of our needs right now."

With Branson's concerns about South Creek, the council told her that that location is the most feasible place. It is a good location and cost-effective to the citizens, stated Mayor Dellinger. After the town has been guaranteed the money, then a consulting firm will look at all the options and find the most efficient and cost-effective type of plant and location. There will also need to be an environmental impact study done.

The town is hoping to have the grant application in for the April 9 meeting. They are applying for a \$7.5 million grant; along with county consensus monies and other money already spent on the study and land purchase, the project would



cost a total of \$8.6 million.

At the opening of the meeting, Mayor Dellinger swore in the newest council member, Barbara Hamblin.