



LIVINGSTON COUNTY, MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE LIVINGSTON COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONER

2300 E. Grand River Avenue, Suite 105, Howell, MI 48843
Phone 517-546-0040 Fax 517-545-9658
Web Site: www.livgov.com/drain

Memorandum

To: Livingston County Board of Commissioners
From: Michelle LaRose, Deputy Drain Commissioner
Date: 12/16/2020
Re: Reorganization of the Drain Department

Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of the Livingston County Board of Public Works (BPW), I am requesting a reorganization of the Drain Department that would include the addition of one full time employee to the sanitary sewer operation team in the form of a Wastewater Technical Specialist.

BACKGROUND

The BPW, in conjunction with the office of the drain commissioner, is responsible for the operation and maintenance of numerous wastewater systems throughout the County. The Drain Commissioner serves on the BPW as the Director of Public Works. The breadth of responsibilities includes operation and maintenance of the following systems:

- **Livingston Regional Sewer System (LRSS)**
The LRSS provides sanitary sewer service to approximately 2,400 customers throughout Tyrone and Hartland Townships. Approximately 60% of these customers are serviced by a grinder pump or septic tank effluent pump, which require added maintenance. Utilizing state grant funding, a comprehensive asset management plan (AMP) was developed and adopted by the BPW. The AMP identifies preventative maintenance and long-term capital improvement needs over the next 10 years and will continue to be updated annually. Implementation of the AMP projects will begin in 2021. Each project will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine the most cost-effective path forward, which may include contracting services, completing the work with internal staff, or a combination of both.
- **Septage Receiving Station (SRS)**
The SRS was constructed in 2007 and was initially projected to accept 12 million gallons of septage. In 2020, the flows are projected to reach over 33 million gallons. This

substantial volume results in an increase in waste strength at Genesee County's Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) in Linden where the waste is treated, which causes problems with their plant operation and the SRS permit limits. Consequently, the BPW was issued a corrective action plan to construct a dewatering facility that would remove solids and bring the WRRF into compliance. Despite the enormous success of the station, which one of our consultants estimates is one of the busiest septage stations in the United States, we have maintained nearly identical staffing to what we started with when the station initially opened.

- **Septage Dewatering Station (SDS)**

The SDS is currently under construction and is expected to be in operation by December 31, 2020. The SDS is a new facility constructed at the site of the existing SRS where a press machine will be installed along with another bay for trucks to offload. The septage flows received by the SRS and the SDS will run through the press to remove solids and bring the SRS/SDS into compliance by meeting permit limits. As we learned through operation of a similar temporary press over the last several months, these press machines require significant operational oversight.

- **Community Wastewater Sites**

The Drain Commissioner's office is also responsible for the operation and maintenance of nine community wastewater systems spread throughout Livingston County. These systems are established as drainage districts through the Michigan Drain Code (Act 40 of 1956) and service nearly 200 customers. The systems include a variety of operational components such as grinder pumps, septic fields, and advanced filtration systems.

NEW POSITION DESCRIPTION

The job description for the Wastewater Technical Specialist is attached. The intent of this position is to develop internal technical expertise along with operational experience that will allow the operations team to stay on top of changing technologies and streamline our operations. Several of the specific tasks of this new position will include:

- Improve internal troubleshooting capabilities on mechanical and electrical control systems.
- Install/upgrade/maintain SCADA systems used for operational control, system reporting, and identification of system deficiencies.
- Serve as administrator to update and maintain the work order management system used for tracking routine maintenance and inspections, recording service requests and corresponding work, and reporting.
- Develop and maintain standard operating procedures to ensure consistency and improve operational efficiencies.

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS RECOMMENDATION

The BPW has extensively evaluated and discussed our operational needs based on our current systems, the addition of the Septage Dewatering Facility, and the implementation of maintenance and capital improvement projects identified in the LRSS asset management plan. The consensus of the board was that more than one position is warranted at this point, however, they felt that the addition of a single position and evaluation of our needs over the

next year was the wisest approach. As indicated in the attached resolution, the BPW recommends the addition of a Technical Specialist to the sanitary operations crew. (Please note the attached version has been approved by the DPW Board in December and is awaiting signature.)

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The County would be fully reimbursed the cost of this position through the sanitary sewer system operating budgets.

Based on the information presented, we respectfully request passage of the attached resolution for reorganization of the Drain Department.