

Q & A from Jul 27, 2023, Garrison Engineering Presentation

The questions/answers below are from the Driftwood Heights Water System Assessment presentation provided by Garrison Engineering. If you have additional questions or need clarifications, please contact the association at Ph# (360) 970-0845 or dftwdinfo@gmail.com

Q. What are AC pipes?

A. Asbestos cement, not a health hazard as long as they are wet, breathing dust is the danger. Asbestos does not get into the water. Ac pipes would remain in the ground. Not required to be removed.

Q. Have there ever been any leaks on the association side of the meter?

A. Yes, several years ago we had to repair a couple of leaks on the Vesper main.

Q. If we increase the pressure on the system will it cause leaks in our houses?

A. We will not be raising the system pressure, we will be installing equipment to maintain a more constant pressure instead of pressure cycling on booster pumps.

Q. In the posted documents, did not see cost line item for trenching to install piping?

A. It is included in the per foot estimated cost.

Q. Did you consider "pipe bursting" vice trenching?

A. No, going from 2" to 6" and 4" to 8" is not practical. You have no sidewalks, trenching next to existing pipes is easy and most cost effective.

Q. Is Diesel fire pump the only option?

A. No, it is the least expensive and probably the most reliable and is usually the preferred option by the fire marshal. To do electric it requires a generator and many electric pumps to match the diesel option capacity.

Q. Are propane powered pumps an option?

A. It is an option but for the fire flow rate required diesel is the best option. Propane is used on smaller applications.

Q. My understanding is when the fire dept comes to a fire they do not use the hydrants?

A. When they first arrive, they will use their onboard water, after that they go to the hydrants.

Q. How many fire hydrants are there on Camano?

A. There are a lot of them on the island, but they are not in all locations. Small systems (group B and smaller) do not have them. Many of the larger systems do have hydrants. I would guess at least 50%. Most of the larger systems have installed hydrants as part of their Capital improvements.

Q. What about meters, do they need to be replaced?

A. If the meter is greater than 20 years old it should be replaced. We have included a line item for 60-65% meter replacement in the project.

Q. Was the project put to bid already?

A. Not yet, Garrison Engineering used contractors in our area, that are capable of doing the project, to supply costs sheets to develop estimates. They used trusted sources for information. When project is defined and approved it will posted for public bid.

Q. Do you (Garrison Engineering) prepare and monitor all documents during project?

A. Yes, Garrison Engineering (C Garrison) will shepherd the full project. As Principal Engineer he will sign off on the project completion.

Q. Do you have to have collateral (cash) or down payment to apply for loan?

A. Not required but is good to put some money down to lower the principal. The association will also need to keep back money in reserve for emergency repairs.

Q. Once the loan is approved, does it allow for progress payment to contractors?

A. State requires that you keep weekly hours logs and ensure that works get paid weekly. This is usually performed by a member of the association. The state will provide training to the association on how to do this. Garrison Engineering can do it but would be more cost-effective for the Association to do it.

Q. Does the entity providing the loan give the association payment coupon books? Who do we make payments to? How does the process work?

A. Using DWSRF the association would be required to make one payment a year. The association would decide when we collect the Capital assessment, monthly, bimonthly etc. They would manage the funds, separate from maintenance account, and make the annual payment to the state.

Q. If we default, does the state seize our water system or what?

A. Never seen it happen. Would recommend the Association start collecting payments as soon as possible, at least one year in advance, so you are not waiting on individual payments to make the annual payment to the state. Starting early will make sure you always have funds available. You can always pay ahead or pay off loan without a penalty.

Q. The capital project money is separate from our water payment?

A. Yes current assessment is for maintenance and operation. Capital is for system improvement and in addition to current payment.

Q. If the loan got approved today, when would we have to make the first payment?

A. That would be up to the board I would recommend that the association start collecting right away to build up funds. This would ensure funds are available to pay the state.

Q Has the Board looked at only replacing only what needs to be replaced now?

A. Yes, we have looked at phased replacement, the downside is that it makes the total project much more expensive. We will have to find a mix of cost versus benefit.

Q. Failure to make assessment payment. Does this qualify as a reason a lien can be put against your property?

A. Yes, that would be the board placing the lien against the member as non-payer.

Q. To clarify, if we miss payment, DWSRF (state) will not lien our homes or water system.

A. Yes, they can sue the board if Association does not make a payment. They can also block permits etc. to penalize membership.

Q. Are there any agencies out there that can help members defray some of the cost?

A. We do not know all the answers as to what is available. We will have to follow up to get answers.

Q. There is a reserve that you are required per the state. If you do not have the funds and have a system failure the state can place a lien on homes?

A. As previously stated, do not use up your all your cash, have enough reserve to make repairs. This is also why you start collect payments early so you have sufficient funds to make loan payments and protect you reserves.