

Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project

Update #1

To: Waitsfield Selectboard
From: Joshua Schwartz, MRV Planning District
CC: Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project Team Members
Annie Decker-Dell'Isola, Waitsfield Town Admin.
JB Weir, Waitsfield Planning & Zoning Admin.
Randy Brittingham, Waitsfield Town Treasurer/Grant Admin.
Bob Cook, Waitsfield Planning Commissioner
Chach Curtis, Waitsfield Selectboard Member
Robin Morris, Waitsfield Water Commissioner
Jon Ashley, DeBois & King
Date: April 14, 2023
Re: Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project Update
Enclosure: *MOU between the Town of Waitsfield and MRVPD for the Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project, 3.30.23*
Waitsfield ETT Update 4.12.23
Waitsfield Wastewater Project - Funding Summary
Waitsfield Wastewater Project Timeline 4.13.23
(overview & detail versions)

I'm writing to provide an update on the Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project. In my role at Planning Coordination Team Lead, as articulated in the *Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley Planning District for the Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project*, effective 3.30.23 (enclosed), this serves as the first of what will be regular project updates to the Waitsfield Selectboard. The purpose of these updates is to ensure the Waitsfield Selectboard and Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project Team Members are abreast of project status and developments, summarizing activities over the preceding weeks. This first update is being submitted in advance of a 4.17.23 Joint Meeting of the Waitsfield Selectboard & Waitsfield Planning Commission focused on Wastewater Planning Project updates. As such, this document serves the triple duty of 1) articulating my baseline understanding of the project's context and efforts to date, 2) providing an update on recent activities, and 3) ensuring pertinent information is available in advance of the meeting and subsequent dialogue.

Context & Efforts to Date

The Town of Waitsfield has recently made many strides in its effort to *maintain the town's historic settlement pattern of compact growth centers surrounded by rural countryside...*¹ In the winter of 2022-2023, the Waitsfield Planning Commission launched the [Vibrant Villages Initiative](#), which includes several projects intended to promote lively neighborhood centers in Waitsfield. These projects include a current bylaw modernization initiative, efforts to secure a Neighborhood Development Area designation for Irasville Village, and future master planning efforts for Irasville.

At the same time, the Town of Waitsfield has engaged in a concerted effort to explore wastewater infrastructure options focused on supporting the development pattern envisioned in the town plan and focused on its twin villages. The [2022](#)

¹ 2017 Waitsfield Town Plan, Policy 12.E-1

Wastewater and Water Feasibility Study explored options for infrastructure improvements, wastewater solutions, and potential expansion of water service connections for Irasville and Waitsfield Villages. Under the direction of the Water and Wastewater Feasibility Study Committee (WWFSC), made up of members from the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Water Commission, engineering consultants DuBois & King (D&K) identified a variety of alternatives and considerations. At its meeting of 12.5.22, the Waitsfield Selectboard accepted the recommendation of D&K, further supported by the WWFSC, to proceed with a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for the study's Scenario 5B (Munn site, 2 existing sites in town, and northern site) as well as for Scenario 2 (connect additional users to the water system). Authorized by the Selectboard, the WWFSC worked with D&K in developing a scope of work for a Wastewater and Water Project Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) and Environmental Information Documents (EID) for the purpose of further defining the preferred solutions' feasibility and costs. The PER & EID scope was approved by the Waitsfield Selectboard on 1.23.23. This marked a transition from feasibility study (Phase 1A) to the engineering work required to advance the project (Phase 1B). The culmination of the Feasibility Study work resulted in the disbanding of the WWFSC and the development of a new project approach and structure to guide this next phase of the project.

On 2.13.23, the Waitsfield Selectboard approved a plan for continuing work on the wastewater project, including engaging with MRVPD to provide project support for the following Waitsfield Wastewater Project Planning Structure (summary below, full detail included in the MOU's Attachment I, enclosed):

- Project Coordination Team (PCT): Oversee big picture planning and ensure tasks assigned to each project team are completed on time
 - Members
 - Joshua Schwartz, MRVPD (lead)
 - Annie Decker Dell'Isola, Town Admin (support)
 - JB Weir, PZA (support)
 - Meets weekly
- Engineering / Technical Team (ETT): Liaise with respective boards, work directly with Dubois & King on the PER and future engineering/design
 - Members
 - Bob Cook, Planning Commission
 - Chach Curtis, Selectboard
 - Robin Morris, Water Commission
 - Jon Ashley, D&K
 - Joshua, MRVPD (support)
 - Meets bi-weekly and as needed
- Funding Team (FT): Lead on pursuing funding sources, preparing funding applications, and grant administration
 - Members
 - JB Weir, PZA (grant application lead)
 - Randy Brittingham, Town Treasurer/Grant Admin (grant admin)
 - Joshua Schwartz (pursuing funding sources lead)
 - Jon Ashley, D&K (grant application assistance)
 - Meets bi-weekly and as needed
- Public Outreach Team (POT)
 - Members
 - Annie Decker Dell'Isola, Town Admin (lead)
 - Joshua Schwartz, MRVPD (support)
 - Chach Curtis (represent the project at meetings, make presentations)
 - Meets bi-weekly and as needed

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley Planning District for the Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project was signed on 3.30.23 (enclosed), establishing the terms and conditions for the Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project to operate and function. Further, the MOU dictates MRVPD's responsibility for the Project Coordination Team Lead, Engineering/Technical Team support, Funding Team Support, and Public Outreach Team co-lead.

Recent Activities

- Project Coordination Team (PCT)
 - Meetings: 3.31 (Kick-off Mtg), 4.10, (scheduled: 4.17, 4.24, 5.1)
 - Activity: Developed a file organization structure and email protocol, provided updates and coordination of various team activities (funding opportunities, engineering questions, etc.), and created the *Waitsfield Wastewater Project Timeline 4.13.23* (enclosed).
- Engineering/Technical Team (ETT)
 - Meetings: 3.14, 4.5, (scheduled: 4.20 & 5.11)
 - Activity: Working with Jon Ashley (D&K) on the Preliminary Engineering Report since January 2023. Clarified PER purpose, clarified PER scope's 4 infrastructure elements, and developed guiding principles of the ETT work. PER's wastewater distribution and connection drawings are 80% complete, and water connection drawings are 90% complete. D&K is currently working on wastewater capacity engineering. Draft PER will include a recommendation to the selectboard for phased capacity, distribution, and connections. ETT & D&K will be preparing a joint PER recommendation to the Selectboard in advance of the 6.5.23 Final PER Meeting.
 - Additional detail in *ETT Update* (enclosed)
- Funding Team (FT)
 - Meetings: 4.17, (scheduled: 4/19)
 - Activity: In March 2023, the Town received approval from the CWSRF for funding to cover the Preliminary Engineering Report work in the amount of \$120,665. The Project Priority List application for Design and Construction funding for FY24 was completed in March and submitted to the CWSRF for inclusion in the FY24 Intended Use Plan. PZA submitted an application for Congressionally-Directed Spending through Senator Sanders' office on 3.10.23. The request was for \$5 million to support design and construction costs and has since been revised for more than \$10M. FT will be submitting an application for construction funding in April to the Northern Borders Regional Commission's Catalyst program. FT is scheduled to meet with VT DEC Engineering Section on 4.17.23 to discuss CWSRF, funding options for design and construction, etc. FT preparing a Design Phase funding recommendation in advance of the Selectboard's 6.5.23 meeting.
 - Additional detail in *Funding Summary* (enclosed)
- Public Outreach Team (POT)
 - Meetings: Scheduling for the week of 4.17
 - Activity: Anticipating May update of town website to accurately reflect project activities. Planning public outreach items on/around 6.5.23 Selectboard presentation. Reaction to this 4.14.23 update, and input from presentation/discussion at 4.17.23 Joint Meeting of the Waitsfield SB & PC, will serve as basis for outreach materials.

4.17.23 Joint Meeting of the Waitsfield Selectboard & Waitsfield Planning Commission

I will be providing a presentation at the 4.17.23 meeting focused on framing my understanding of the project context and activities to date, updating on recent activities, and highlighting upcoming decision points. It is my intention to leave the meeting with a clear and shared understanding of all items. Do we all agree on the project context and activities to date? Do we have a shared understanding of each player's roles and responsibilities? Questions about next steps? Input on the project timeline?

One specific item that I'd like to highlight now, and we'll discuss at the meeting, is ensuring awareness of the decision crunch time of May-July 2023. D&K will be issuing a PER draft at the end of May, to be presented to the Selectboard along with a recommendation in early June. Should the Selectboard adopt the recommendation and proceed to the next stage of the project, Final Design, a decision would need to be made in early July to meet the currently envisioned timing of a municipal bond vote in March 2024. The details of this scenario, including anticipated meetings and decision points, can be found in the *Waitsfield Wastewater Project Timeline 4.13.23*. I look forward to discussing this and other points on 4.17.23.

It is my absolute pleasure to support Waitsfield through this stage of its wastewater planning process. Feel free to reach out with any questions, thoughts, and/or ideas.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN THE TOWN OF WAITSFIELD AND THE MAD RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT FOR THE WAITSFIELD WASTEWATER PLANNING PROJECT

- 1. Parties.** This Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as “MOU”) is made and entered into by and between the Town of Waitsfield (hereinafter referred to as “Waitsfield”), whose address 4144 Main Street, Waitsfield, VT 05673, and the Mad River Valley Planning District (hereinafter referred to as “MRVPD”), whose address is 4061 Main Street, Waitsfield, VT 05673.
- 2. Purpose.** The purpose of this MOU is to establish the terms and conditions under which the Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project will operate and function. The collaboration between Waitsfield and MRVPD is seen as mutually beneficial for the stated goals of both the Waitsfield Town Plan and the MRVPD created MRV Vision Statement.
- 3. Terms.** This MOU is effective on the date last signed and executed by the duly authorized representatives of the parties to this MOU and the governing bodies of the parties’ respective state and municipalities shall remain in full force and effect until March 5th 2024. This MOU may be terminated by Waitsfield or MRVPD in the event that either is negligent in their stated responsibilities, or if deemed in the best interest of both parties. The MOU may also be extended by written agreement if signed by the duly authorized representatives of the parties.
- 4. Responsibilities of Waitsfield.** The Waitsfield Selectboard assumes responsibility for providing sufficient oversight, expectations, and direction to MRVPD for successful accomplishment of the Waitsfield Wastewater Planning Project. The Waitsfield Selectboard appoints its Town Administrator to act as its agent for this project. The teams, boards, and individuals tasked here within are responsible for providing adequate and timely information and communications to MRVPD. Unambiguous timelines and deliverables for various components of the project will be provided by Waitsfield. There will be no monetary exchange for any component of this project between Waitsfield and MRVPD. Waitsfield asserts the annual monetary contribution made by the Town to MRVPD and the goodwill of the organization to complete this project in good faith on behalf of the Mad River Valley are sufficient for MRVPD’s effort on this project.
- 5. Responsibilities of Mad River Valley Planning District.** The MRVPD assumes responsibility for the Project Coordination Team Lead, Engineering/Technical Team support, Funding Team support, and Public Outreach Team co-lead. These delineations of the planning support structure are made clear in Attachment I. MRVPD will participate in scheduled meetings, meet forecasted deadlines for deliverables, and communicate effectively any recommendations or projected shortcomings of the organization. The project timeline in Attachment 1 illustrates the intended accomplishment of the various tasks related to this project. MRVPD is responsible for understanding the stated timelines and completing all associated tasks. There will be no monetary exchange for any component of this project between Waitsfield and MRVPD.
- 6. General Provisions**

 - A. Amendments.** Either party may request changes to this MOU. Any changes, modifications, revisions or amendments to this MOU which are mutually agreed upon by and between the parties to this MOU shall be incorporated by written instrument, and effective when executed and signed by all parties to this MOU.

B. Applicable Law. The construction, interpretation and enforcement of this MOU shall be governed by the laws of the State of Vermont. The courts of the State of Vermont shall have jurisdiction over any action arising out of this MOU.

C. Entirety of Agreement. This MOU represents the entire and integrated agreement between the parties and supersedes all prior negotiations, representations and agreements, whether written or oral.

D. Severability. Should any portion of this MOU be judicially determined to be illegal or unenforceable, the remainder of the MOU shall continue in full force and effect, and either party may renegotiate the terms affected by the severance.

7. **Attachments:** The attachments listed here and included here within the MOU are integral components of the agreement and are as binding as the MOU.

Attachment I: *Waitsfield Wastewater Project Planning Structure and Timeline*

8. **Signatures.** In witness whereof, the parties to this MOU through their duly authorized representatives have executed this MOU on the days and dates set out below, and certify that they have read, understood, and agreed to the terms and conditions of this MOU as set forth herein.

The effective date of this MOU is the date of the signature last affixed to this page.

MAD RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT

Robert M Ackland

Bob Ackland, Mad River Valley Planning District (Chair)

3/30/2023

Date

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD

Annie Decker-Dell'Isola

Annie Decker-Dell'Isola, Town Administrator

3/29/23

Date

Attachment I: Waitsfield Wastewater Project Planning Structure and Timeline

Project Teams

- **Project Coordination Team (PCT)** - Oversee big picture planning and ensure tasks assigned to each project team are completed on time
 - Members
 - Josh, MRVPD (lead)
 - Annie, Town of Waitsfield (support)
 - JB, Town of Waitsfield (support)
 - Meets weekly (1 hour)
- **Engineering / Technical Team (ETT)** - Liaise with respective boards, work directly with Dubois & King on the PER and future engineering/design,
 - Members
 - Bob Cook, PC
 - Chach Curtis, SB
 - Robin Morris, WC
 - Jon Ashley, D&K
 - Josh, MRVPD (support)
 - Meets bi-weekly (1.5 hours) and as needed
- **Funding Team (FT)** - Takes the lead on preparing funding applications, grant administration, and pursuing funding sources
 - Members
 - JB (grant application lead)
 - Randy, Town of Waitsfield (grant admin)
 - Josh (pursuing funding sources lead)
 - Jon (grant application assistance)
 - Meets bi-weekly (1.5 hours) and as needed
- **Public Outreach Team (POT)**
 - Members
 - Annie (lead)
 - Josh (support)
 - Chach (represent the project at meetings, make presentations)
 - Other?
 - Meets bi-weekly (1.5 hours) and as needed, especially before events

Project Timeline

Duration: January 2023 - March 2024 (Town Meeting)

- **Preliminary Engineering Report (now - June 2023)**

- **Engineering / Technical Team**

- Ongoing Tasks
 - Meeting Frequency: Bi-monthly
 - Share weekly summaries (meeting & work) to PCT via GDoc form (for further distribution)
- Work with Dubois & King to go over their work and review questions they might have (ETT)
- Work with D&K to make sure they are sticking to the project calendar (ETT, JS minor)
- Communicate progress of work and capacity scenarios
 - Debrief at monthly ETT meetings (ETT)
 - Prepares updates to respective boards (AD, JW)
 - Community meetings (POT, ETT, SB, PCT)
- Develop a WW scenario recommendation (ETT, PCT)
 - Present to SB and PC (PCT)
- Select a WW scenario (SB)
 - SB and Water Commission to coordinate in order to make a determination on water connections. (SB, WC, AD)
- Begin work on Project Design Agreement/Contract (ETT, AD/Selectboard)

- **Funding Team**

- Meeting Frequency
 - Bi-monthly
- Pursue opportunities for funding the Design Phase and potential future construction Phase (FT)
 - Step 2 Design Loan
 - PPL
 - Project Based TIF
 - NBRC
 - EDA
- Work on funding applications (FT)
- Reporting for CWSRF Repayments for Feasibility Study and PER Loan (FT, Randy)

- **Public Outreach Team**

- Ongoing Tasks
 - Meeting Frequency: Bi-monthly and as needed
 - Share weekly summaries (meeting & work) to PCT via GDoc form (for further distribution)
- Explore opportunities to visit communities that have successfully implemented similar wastewater solution projects (POT, PCT)
- D&K outreach (Chris Sargent)
 - Story Map
 - Support of other outreach efforts
- Community Meeting (April)

- Focus: Provide a complete project overview to date (no new info presented)
 - Prepare materials and outreach (POT)
 - Reserve room/day of logistics (POT)
 - Attend, present, and answer questions (POT, PCT, ETT, SB, PC)
 - 30/60/90 meetings for D&K to present the findings of their PER work to the Selectboard
 - website/newspaper/front porch forum updates (POT)
 - Presentation and questions (ETT, PCT)
 - Community Meeting (June/July)
 - Focus: Present the selected wastewater scenario
 - Prepare materials and outreach (POT)
 - Reserve room/day of logistics (POT)
 - Attend, present, and answer questions (POT, PCT, ETT, SB, PC)
 - Town Webpage w/ project overview and regular updates (POT)
 - VR / pamphlets / FPF (POT)
- **Project Design (July 2023 - March 2024) - Start date due to state fiscal calendar**
 - **Project Management Team**
 - Check-in meeting with Selectboard ETA Summer 2023
 - Revisit Timeline
 - Revisit Target Dates
 - Revisit Project Organization Ideas document
 - Coordinate with PC's bylaw & Irasville Master Planning efforts
 - **Engineering / Technical Team**
 - Ongoing Tasks
 - Meeting Frequency: Bi-Weekly and as needed
 - Share weekly summaries (meeting & work) to PCT via GDoc form (for further distribution)
 - Negotiate final Project Design contract (ETT, SB/AD)
 - Work with D&K on design including answering questions they have (ETT)
 - Work on acquiring potential easements and landowner permissions as needed (SB, ETT, PCT)
 - **Funding Team**
 - Submit funding applications for Design Work (Step 2 CWSRF) - 7/1 their priority list released. Waitsfield will be on it due to existing PER efforts (FT)
 - Pursue funding opportunities for construction/build out (FT)
 - See above
 - Make applications for funding opportunities (FT)
 - Prepare a funding plan to bring to voters for Town Meeting '24 (goal) and prepare Article of Town Meeting warning (potential bond vote) (SB, FT, PCT)
 - **Public Outreach Team**
 - Website updates / VR articles / pamphlet (mailer?) / FPF / other print media (POT)
 - Multiple Community Meetings - build support for potential bond vote in March '24 (POT)

- Meet with stakeholder groups, engage in dialogue to understand and address concerns (POT)
- Prepare presentation for SB budget meetings and Town Meeting '24 (POT)

MRVPD Role (*in detail, as included above*)

- Project Coordination Team Lead
 - Oversee big picture planning and ensure tasks assigned to each project team are completed on time
- Participate in all Team activities
 - Project Coordination Team
 - Lead
 - Engineering / Technical Team
 - Support and connector
 - Funding Team Support
 - Pursuing funding sources lead and participation on Funding Team
 - Support & connector
 - Public Outreach Team
 - Co-lead with AD
- PCT Lead Weekly Update
 - GDoc form updated weekly team meetings
- Participate in all presentations
 - Key for organization activities (party planning) and outreach

Waitsfield Wastewater Engineering and Technical Team (ETT)

April 11th, 2023 Update

Engineering and Technical Team (ETT)

- Bob Cook, Waitsfield Planning Commission
- Chach Curtis, Waitsfield Selectboard
- Robin Morris, Waitsfield Water Commission
- Jon Ashley, Dubois & King
- Joshua Schwartz, MRVPD (Support)

The ETT has been working with Jon Ashley of Dubois & King (D&K) on the Waitsfield Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for Wastewater and Water Infrastructure since January 2023.

The purpose of this work is to address:

- Health, Sanitation, and Security
- Aging Infrastructure
- Growth

D&K scope is addressing 4 infrastructure elements:

- Wastewater capacity
- Wastewater distribution
- Wastewater connections
- Water connections

The guiding principles of the ETT work include:

- Analysis of potential future development and estimated wastewater demand.
- Considering phasing of capacity and connections.
- Limiting initial distribution and connections to 500ft of Route 100.
- Prioritizing wastewater distribution lines to serve older and failing systems.
- Prioritizing water connections to parcels with overlapping well shields.
- Wastewater Service Area includes Irasville Village and Village Residential/Business District. (Similar to existing Water Service Area)

Preliminary Engineering Report

Following the approval of the PER ESA Amendment by the Selectboard and State of Vermont, the ETT have met with D&K twice (3/14/23 & 4/5/23) and have two further meetings scheduled (4/20/23 & 5/11/23). D&K have confirmed they are on schedule to submit the draft PER by May 23rd, 2023, and the final PER by June 9th, 2023.

The wastewater distribution and connection drawings are 80% complete and the water connection drawings are 90% complete. D&K are currently working on the wastewater capacity engineering.

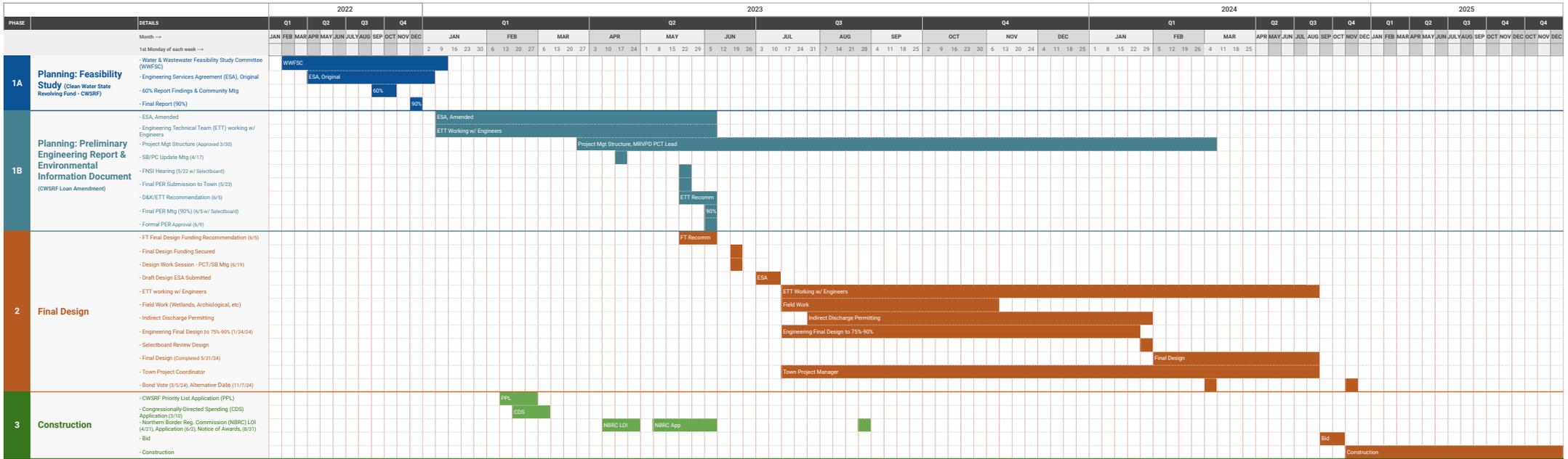
The draft PER will include a recommendation to the Selectboard for phased capacity, distribution, and connections.

Waitsfield Wastewater Project

Funding Summary

- In the Spring of 2022, the Town received \$78,753 from the CWSRF to fund the Feasibility Study done by Dubois & King
- In March of 2023, the Town received approval from the CWSRF for funding to cover the Preliminary Engineering Report work in the amount of \$120,665
- The Project Priority List application for Design and Construction funding for FY24 was completed in March and submitted to the CWSRF to get included on its Intended Use Plan for FY24
- The PZA has completed an application for Congressionally-Directed Spending through Senator Sanders' office and it was submitted on 3/10/2023. The request was for \$5 million to help cover design and construction costs. The PZA received several follow-up emails from Haley Perot at Bernie Sanders' office asking for more information on the project in relation to the Congressionally-Directed Spending application submitted by the PZA in late February. In early April, Ms. Perot then asked why the Town did not ask for more funding given the anticipated costs of more than \$13M in design and construction. The PZA followed up with a revised request for more than \$10M (given the required non-federal match of 20%)
- The funding team will also be applying for funding from the Northern Borders Regional Commission this April in anticipation of getting on its priority list

Waitsfield Wastewater Project Timeline 4.13.23 Overview



Waitsfield Wastewater Project Timeline 4.13.23

