



Thursday, September 05, 2013

Mr. Frank Martin
Ashland Water and Sewer District
P.O. Box 340
Ashland, ME 04732
RE: Assistance with Water System Evaluation

You may be familiar with the GROWashington-Aroostook initiative. GROWashington-Aroostook is a regional planning process focused on job creation, modern infrastructure, and healthy, affordable communities in the counties of Aroostook and Washington. You can find details at the GROWa web site (www.gro-wa.org).

The Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) and the Washington County Council of Governments (WCCOG) are 2 primary partners in this work - hence this letter from NMDC Senior Planner, Jay Kamm, WCCOG Executive Director, Judy East, and our consultant from RCAP Solutions, Art Astarita.

A significant driver for growth is water infrastructure investment (see www.gro-wa.org/water-infrastructure-investment) and we have developed an extensive one-of-a-kind inventory of water systems that serve the greatest population in both Washington and Aroostook Counties. We would like to take this work to the next level and three primary goals in mind including:

1. Support to the water systems in the region,
2. Protection of safe drinking water for residents in the region and
3. Assistance in the description of need and prioritization of capital investments that will support growth into the future.

System performance information was collected from various agencies and respective systems:

1. Maine Drinking Water Program's Sanitary Survey and Source Protection Plans
2. Maine PUC annual reports and
3. 2000 US Census. The 2000 census was used due to yet approved final 2010 numbers.
4. Feedback from the system operators/superintendents.

For your reference, the actual data for your system is provided below (on pages 3-5) following the specific observations and questions we have about your system. Please help us ensure that our inventory is accurate and that it is a useful tool for investment and future growth.

We would appreciate all questions, edits and/or comments to be returned to Art.

Thank you for your time and input,

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| Art Astarita | 766-3065 | aastarita@rcapsolutions.org |
| Judy East | 454-0465 | jceast@wccog.net |
| Jay Kamm | 498-8736 | jkamm@nmdc.org |

Pages 3-5 below contain the raw data and calculations based upon them. Please be sure to review all data but especially those attributes that are bold and blue highlighted.

1. As we do not have your customers' median household income (MHI), the census was used. However, that number is only available for the whole town from the 2000 Census. Rows 10-15 report that the water system serves 808 people or about 55% of the town. With respect to the ratio of water rates to MHI on Rows 44-46, the "rule of thumb" is that a ratio of 1.5% or higher is needed to be eligible or have greater success in obtaining grant funding.
 - a) *Please comment on the system's ability to obtain grant funding from the Maine Drinking Water Program, USDA Rural Development or the Community Development Block Grant program.*
2. It is reported on Rows 30-32 that the system has 10% of unaccounted for water, having no asbestos cement pipe and total assets have been depreciated by 47%.
 - a) *Please comment on future capital improvement plans, the estimated cost, and timeframe (more or less than 10 years).*
 - b) *Are you using an asset management plan to monitor equipment fatigue and/or help with capital budget planning?*
 - c) *Are you planning on increasing your water rates to cover future capital reserves needed for improvements?*
3. From looking at Rows 33-40, it can be estimated that the system can provide water for an addition 2963 people. However, other factors can decrease this additional population such as fire protection demand/reserves.
 - a) *Please comment on the validity of the capacity figures.*
 - b) *Please comment on the additional estimated customers*
 - c) *What do you feel is a comfortable estimate of gallons needed for fire protection reserve?*
 - d) *Please comment on your source capacity to deliver additional water.*
 - e) Of course, it would be based upon the size of business but from your experience:
 - i. *What would be the gallons per day limit that the system could current service?*
 - ii. *What would be the estimated critical assets that would need to be improved if it exceeded that current limit?*
4. From Rows 62-65, it can be calculated that the system obtains ~35% of its' revenue from traditional metered water sales. The balance of 65% is from hydrant and other fees.
 - a) *Please comment on the stability of this other revenue. For instance, is the town moving toward decreasing the hydrant payments?*
5. *Other Comments please.*