



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date:	February 13, 2024
Agenda Title:	Septic Remediation Grant
Requested Action:	Authorize Town Manager
Department / Agency Lead:	Community Development
Staff Lead:	Denise M. Harris, AICP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) authorized and reserved \$750,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (APRA) funding for the Town of Warrenton through the Septic Local Partners Program (SLPP). The resolution before Town Council authorizes the Town Manager to sign the SLPP grant for the SLPP implementation. A future public hearing will be required to amend the budget with the awarded funds. The grant agreement must be executed by the Town and DEQ by March 31, 2024.

BACKGROUND

Since April of 2021, a group of residents have begun assisting the Town in meeting this policy by exploring funding opportunities, providing research, and collecting data. This led to the creation of a Septic Remediation Committee that met for the first time on July 13, 2021. The Committee proposes the following mission:

1. To locate all properties that are not connected to Town water and/or sewer.
2. To determine the age and condition of these wells and drainfields.
3. To identify funding available from private and public sources to help enable the most endangered properties to connect to Town utilities.

Town Council members appointed to this Committee include Councilmen Brett Hamby and James Hartman.

The Committee identified approximately 150 properties within town boundaries that are served by private septic systems. These systems are of varying age and condition across all five wards. The Committee surveyed the identified properties through mail and door-to-door visits regarding confirmation of septic, demographics and income limits, and interest in participating in potential grants. Two public workshops were held for interested property owners.

The Committee identified two Virginia Department of Environmental Quality grants utilizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and the Town applied in 2022. In March, 2023 the Town was informed that

it did not receive the Septic to Sewer Conversion Program grant that would have provided funding to extend sewer lines where they currently do not exist. However, DEQ did authorize and reserve \$750,000 from the Septic Local Partners Program for qualified in-town residents to connect their septic to existing sewer lines. DEQ approved a Design Agreement in October, 2023, allowing for first come, first serve qualified property owners to be reimbursed for connecting to the Town's sewer system. This grant must be executed by the Town and DEQ by March 31, 2024 with 50% of the funds distributed by December 31, 2025. Final grant completion by December, 2026. The Town selected an engineering firm with septic experience, RK&K, under the ARPA requirements procurement process to help the Town administrator the program.

It is anticipated after the grant agreement is executed that RK&K will work with Town staff to develop a strategy to fully communicate to the Town residents about this opportunity. Once the notice(s) has been provided, qualified private property owners will be able to participate in the program on a first come, first serve basis until the funding is fully obligated. Property owners on an existing sewer line that are under the income limit will be eligible for 100% reimbursement of eligible costs up to \$40,000, while qualified property owners above the income limit will be eligible to be reimbursed 50% up to \$20,000. Per DEQ, the median income limits are defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development <https://www.huduser.gov/Portal/datasets/il.html>.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Town Manager to execute the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Septic Local Partner Program grant to implement the Septic Local Partner Program.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

The grant will enable private property owners to connect to the Town's sewer and increase the utility level of service for its residents.

Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

Plan Warrenton 2040 policy CF-4.8 states to *"Explore resources to help property owners and promote connection to public water and sewer within the Town boundaries."*

Fiscal Impact

The DEQ reimbursable grant covers cost, in-full or in-part depending on individual qualifications, of connections, tap fees, and associated Town administrative costs.

Legal Impact

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Resolution
2. SLPP Design Program