



Office of the Town Manager
Frank Cassidy

STAFF REPORT

Warrenton Town Council

Carter Nevill, Mayor
Roy Francis, Ward 1
William Semple, Ward 2
Larry Kovalik, Ward 3
Michele O'Halloran, Ward 4
Eric Gagnon, Ward 5
Paul Mooney, At Large
David McGuire, At Large

Council Meeting Date:	April 8, 2025
Agenda Title:	Water and Sewer Capacity Discussion
Requested Action:	Discussion
Department / Agency Lead:	Steven Friend, Utilities Director
Staff Lead:	Frank Cassidy, Town Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the January 2025 Town Council Meeting, the Mayor made recommendation to council to create a committee for the Water and Sewer Capacity issues and concerns. The fundamental idea was to establish an informational link with Town Council to ensure future developments and projects meet the capacities of our essential services. Two Council members were selected for this committee- Council member O'Halloran and Council member Francis. Our objective remains ensuring an effective long-term plan that is transparent, thoroughly vetted, and addresses the Town's needs today and well into years to come.

Steven Friend and I contacted the selected Council members, and a meeting was set up to discuss. The meeting focused on the current capacity study, the previous capacity study, the information provided to the council in previous meetings and memos, and the operational objectives of staff when it comes to applying and updating the results of these reports as we move forward. It also included assurance that no developments that have not already been taken into consideration by the most current report is not prematurely approved without first careful consideration of the effects to our plants, the capacity, the status of the required upgrades to the plant, and all outstanding developments and utility obligations currently identified. Any development of the project will be brought to the council for review and discussion prior to any staff approvals.

Both Council Members agreed that a committee was not needed at this time as long as staff continues to provide updates to council, operates within the established processes in regard to approving additional utility services, and we engage in the next capacity study dure in 2027.

This was presented at the March Council meeting, a committee was determined as not necessary at this time; however, there is the continuation of a line of information and updates between the two Council Members and our Utilities Department. This also includes presentation of all developments and projects that have not been factored into the capacity studies for Council review.

We have also been asked to address some specific questions regarding DEQ, a meeting we had Friday, March 28, as follows:

How did/does the capacity study factor into the decision for the VSA? The capacity study, as well as our memo/" white paper" factored in the impacts of the Arrington BLA project. Based on the studies and our report, the impacts of the VSA were considered and found to be in line with the scheduled upgrades and

capacity of the plant. The numbers staff used were more than the numbers in the final proposal. The comment in the VSA referencing the capacity and the improvements is a mention to reemphasize the importance and the need to continue with our plan, outlined in the CIP, for the upgrades at the plant. Regardless of today's capacity or the next few years, if the plans to upgrade the plant are not continued, we will not be able to provide the required treatment necessary for any capacity. This is a reminder in the development to stay on our plan for the upgrades.

At what point do we need to change our permit from 2.5 MGD to 3.0 MGD? Permits are on five-year cycles. Our permit will be up for renewal in two years. Given our plan for the plant upgrades, we will be requesting a 3MGD permit at this time. We do and will continue to work with DEQ through this process. On a broader note, we do not request a new permit until such time our plant can handle, and is designed and equipped to handle, the requested amount. In other words, the permit request will take place when our plant is nearing completion with its currently planned upgrades and equipment replacements. Following our planning and projections, this will be in the next five-year permit cycle.

When will DEQ require the Town to investigate another WWTP? We do not want to be in a position where DEQ requires us to upgrade our plant or build another plant. We want to stay ahead of this through long-term planning. Our long-term planning includes holistic understanding of our operations in all aspects of water and sewer. Our capacity studies, our routine assessments of operations, our hard looks at new developments and projects, our reporting concerns to the council are all part of our long-term planning.

This will be dependent upon the continued developments and or projects that directly impact the capacity of the plants. The current plant will not be capable of exceeding the 3 MGD as the property is not large enough. The objective is to maintain our current processes in looking to the future to assess when another plant would be necessary. This will also depend on whether or not the Town would even be capable of providing such service. This includes access to land, finances, and operational capabilities. Also, if we continue to monitor and assess the plants progress in upgrades and take into consideration the development in and around Town that impacts our service, we may reach a point where we cannot provide any more services than we already offer. This is the objective of our approach to looking beyond tomorrow but looking into years ahead. Our CIP and our capacity reports are a major part of this growth assessment.

Does our I&I have us violating our permit? I&I represents inflow of water into our system when a natural event, rain, infiltrates our system, this produces a larger amount of inflow into our plant. This puts our plant under stress, and it exceeds our permitted flow values. These are short-term events. The true concern with I&I is how quickly and effectively our plant recovers from the event. We currently operate at an average of 1.7MGD. Our permit level, at 90%, is 2.25MGD on average. This is a monthly average. For us to violate the permit requirements our average must be over 90% for three consecutive months.

Our I&I, after a major rain event for example, can create an inflow of up to 4MGD. This obviously exceeds the permit amount for a day, or a small period of time; however, the permitted amount takes this into consideration and is based on a long-term average, over a month, not a single-day event. Our continuing efforts for infrastructure include addressing I&I issues. This has been effective as over time we have seen our impacts lower from similar events from 6MGD to 4MGD. We do have a way to go, and we will continue to address I&I as a part of our continuing efforts regarding infrastructure.

Also, RRRC and DEQ have requested The Town Council review the attached resolution. This resolution is explained in a corresponding email from Steven Friend. In short, this provides the RRRC and DEQ the opportunity to assist the Town with additional funding resources.

BACKGROUND

Over the last several years, staff have been providing updates and discussions on the status of our plants. Two capacity studies, one in 2015 and one in 2022, as well as a staff “white paper”/memo is also a part of these discussion. These documents and continued monitoring of our plants, working with financial advisors and engineers, staff worked on the needed upgrades into the CIP for the required improvements to the plants. We are not in our second year of the CIP projects focused on the required infrastructure projects for our utilities.

The documents referenced are included in the attachments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Continue moving forward with the staff updates and planning for the next capacity study. The next capacity study will begin next year, 2026, at which time staff will re-engage the two Council Members.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

N/A- Continuing with our planned process and future assessments and presentations to the Council to ensure a long term plan.

Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

All aspects are included in this project given Utilities are an essential service and impact all Town operations.

Fiscal Impact

N/A

Legal Impact

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2015 Study
2. 2022 Capacity Study
3. Memo to Council from Steven Friend, Frank Cassidy, and Rob Walton regarding capacity
4. Most current emails from Council member Semple
5. DEQ Resolution and Memo from Steven Friend