

Holden Water & Sewer Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2024 – 18 Industrial Drive Holden, MA, Holden Public Works Facility and Remote via Zoom

**Call to Order**

Mark Johnson called to order a meeting of the Water & Sewer Advisory Board at 6:00 PM on January 9, 2024 at the Holden Public Works Facility, 18 Industrial Drive, Holden, MA.

**Roll Call**

**Board Members Present:**

Mark Johnson, Larry Kowalczyk, Dawn Michanowicz, Robert Dempski, Michael Andrus and Tito Sanchez.

**Board Member(s) Absent:**

None.

**Other Attendees:**

John Woodsmall via Zoom, Joseph Kenney and Heather Van Hazinga of the Holden DPW and David White.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Review and Approval of November 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Kowalczyk motioned to approve the November 28, 2023 minutes with a grammar change. Mrs. Michanowicz seconded the motion, it was unanimously agreed.

**84 Wachusett Street, Denied Sewer Permit SP-2023-31 Appeal Hearing**

The appellant was not present so it was decided to move onto the Water and Sewer Superintendent Update.

**Water and Sewer Superintendent Update**

Mr. Kenney mentioned that there was a sanitary sewer overflow at a major sewer station in town, which has been repaired. Notifications have been sent to the state. Mr. Andrus questioned what caused the sanitary sewer overflow. Mr. Kenney said they found a 2" hole at the bell and spigot, just before it crosses at the railroad tracks.

Mr. Kenney stated that we have been performing our normal coliform samples. There was a coliform hit at one of our water sources. There has been no follow up from DEP as it manifolds into a chlorinated source, so we did not have to perform upstream or downstream sampling.

Mr. Kenney stated that the Spring Street feasibility study was just received, but still needs to be reviewed.

Mr. Kenney also mentioned that there were a few service leaks and that we have completed our yearly hydrant staking.

Mr. Johnson was wondering who the third party is that does the testing for leak detection. Mr. Kenney said the company is JMR Services. They do leak detection audits, assist with difficult to detect leaks, backflow tests and surveying.

### **Iron and Manganese – Jefferson Area Updates**

Mr. Kenney brought up the feasibility study that was received and needs to be reviewed. It will be reviewed and presented to the Advisory Board with Tighe & Bond coming in to present. The first step will be to compare installing filtration and treatment at our Spring Street well site versus purchasing more water from the City of Worcester. Basically, comparing the construction of the facility, the operation and maintenance cost versus shutting the water off and purchasing the water from Worcester.

### **ECC site Update**

Mr. Kenney discussed EPA doing lead remediation. There was a high amounts of lead found in soil surrounding the property. Mr. Woodsmall mentioned that we should be getting a report or draft from Tighe & Bond by the end of the month. Mr. Kowalczyk stated that he met with Tighe & Bond to discuss his list of concerns that were presented at the November 28, 2023 meeting. They toured the factory and Mr. Kowalczyk showed them the underground tanks, the cave and they were unaware of the area drainage. He also showed them the water outfall and that he did have measurements, from when he worked there, of 40 gallons per minute coming out under the factory. No reason to think it's any different at this time. Any contamination there is coming out and you can actually see different colored grass. They should be looking into this because that water goes into the Asnebumskit Creek which goes into the Wachusett Reservoir. Mr. Woodsmall explained that there are two things going on at the site. Our investigation efforts which are being done solely through the town and separate from that, EPA is doing lead remediation emergency project on the abutting properties to the ECC. That is solely under the control of EPA. DEP is continuing with their liaison coordination efforts. They are making sure all parties are on the same page.

### **City of Worcester – DCR Sewer Rate Court Case Update**

Mr. Woodsmall discussed the latest update. On December 4<sup>th</sup>, the Town filed their response brief and our issues at hand. Worcester was the primary appellant and then we provided a response to their appeal. We appealed against part of the verdict that was against us in regards to DCR. End of last week the City put in their response to our appeal and DCR has until March 1<sup>st</sup> to submit their brief against our appeals. We should have finals briefs in beginning of April and hopefully set up arguments maybe May/June or June/July.

### **84 Wachusett Street, Denied Sewer Permit SP-2023-31 Appeal Hearing**

Mr. White arrived at 6:20 for the Appeal Hearing.

Mr. Kenney informed the Advisory Board that he received a Sewer Connection Permit application for 84 Wachusett Street for Mr. White to connect to the Town's sewer system, which is noted with plans and the letters that have been exchanged between Mr. White and the Holden DPW. It is noted in the letter that the application was previously denied on June 6, 2022 by a previous Engineer. Part of the appeal process, Mr. White petitioned to the Board of Selectmen and is here to give his appeal on his denial for the sewer connection application.

Mr. White mentioned that all have a copy of the documentation, his letter of response to the denial letter. Some of the response stated that he is not a current sewer user and has not contributed to the system. Therefore he does not have a right to connect. He would dispute that somewhat because the enterprise account for Water/Sewer was established in the late 80's. Prior to that it all came out of the general fund. There were fees that were assessed, but everything for Water/Sewer came out of the general fund. There was never really a reconciliation in those days relative to, are those numbers correct, do they work. He would suggest that on more than one occasion, when he was a Board of Selectman, the general fund had to bail out the Water/Sewer division with a loan from the general fund, which did get paid back. The general fund did support Water/Sewer in the early 2000's. There have been years upon years where the DPW's Director supervision of Water/Sewer was paid out of the general fund and no reimbursement

from Water/Sewer back to the town. As a matter of fact, this beautiful building we're sitting in, Water/Sewer division is housed in this building and is not paying anything towards the use of this facility. It all comes out of the debt exclusion that went to every taxpayer which he's one of. These are some aspects from the financial side. In the letter it says we don't consider cost to be an issue. I would suggest to you that the local town government should be working to help all of its residents, whatever their issue may be, try to keep Holden affordable. For a gravity system, it would probably be \$30,000 to \$40,000 over what's being planned here. To say that we don't care what it's going to cost, is certainly very insensitive by the town and the departments when Water/Sewer's in trouble they come to the town and the town helps them, which we had done prior to the current administration. It was done several times. So, the general fund bails out Water/Sewer, but Water/Sewer doesn't think it should help the residents and make their life here in Holden affordable. That is his comments on relative to affordability and he finds this decision arbitrary. There is no standard to deny this permit. It's just an arbitrary decision by somebody that says no we're not going to allow this. He thinks from an engineering perspective, engineered by Graves Engineering, it fits the bill. He doesn't think the town engineers have an issue with the way they designed it. We haven't heard it, so the way it was designed is an appropriate way to address this if he was to connect to a force main. Some of the other comments in the denial, relative to environmental issues, right now he has a septic system in his front yard that is 75' from the Chaffins Brook which goes directly to the Wachusett so he would suggest right now effluent his property is making it over to the Chaffins Brook. This would eliminate that. The safety issue relative to if we were working on the line. Between his house and the pump station at Lincoln Ave, there is nothing, it's just the pump station. So, it goes right by his house, up to the pump station and there it lies. So if we're working on the pump station it requires one or two things. Number one, make a phone call to the home owner and tell them to shut their ejector pump off. Or number two, there's a curb valve right down the end of the street where the connection is being made and can just be shut off, which is what we do for every water connection. When there's a water issue, if we have to do something, we shut the curb valve off and we're done. There was a comment about this being a mechanical connections, well, almost everything in the ground is a mechanical connection. We have this saddle that is being proposed, there all over the place in water connections. Why if we use it in this application is it not appropriate? Mr. White feels as though the decision is arbitrary with no engineering denial. We weren't told it's an engineering problem that wasn't engineered properly. They would be putting in a 3,000 gallon tank on the property, so if the curb valve had to be shut off, at 85 gallons a day. With four people in the house, we'll say 400 gallons a day, which it won't be, but there's a 3,000 gallon tank. The storage capacity there would be significant and if the pump station had to be shut off for some time, then we'd have to pump the tank. Mr. White keeps going back to it being an arbitrary decision and truly believes that it is. There should be some kind of engineering reason that this doesn't work. Some reason why it is poorly designed. Some engineering reason why this is extremely harmful to anybody. Has not heard any of that, it's all been smoke and mirrors and no sound engineering reasons why it doesn't work.

Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Kenney if he had a rebuttal.

Mr. Kenney thanked Mr. White. Mr. Kenney stated that as far as the financials of the general fund, they are here to discuss the connection to sewer for 84 Wachusett Street to a forced sewer main, not the financials. Mr. Kenney explained that we have about thirty sewer stations in town. Each one of them has a forced sewer main associated with them. The main reason for those forced sewer mains is to convey forced sewer to a manhole where it discharges from a system. We have over nine miles of forced sewer main in town. We need to maintain all nine miles of those. The sewer in question is a six inch ductal iron cast of forced sewer main to convey sewer from Wachusett Ave sewer station to the Lincoln Ave sewer station. There are many residential sized forced sewer mains throughout town where they are run down the street with two inch service and each individual home connects to that two inch low pressure line to serve that particular area. This was denied because of the nine and a half miles of forced sewer main we have in town. There is not a residential connection set up to any of those water mains, nor do they intersect with each

other. The sole purpose of these force sewer mains is to pick up sewage for a very large neighborhood and move that to a higher elevation. The sewer station in general serves over a hundred houses. This was denied because it sets precedent to allow residential application to be connected to a high pressure industrial force sewer main. Also, there have been no betterments that have been paid for this home. Sewer was not included in the MDC plan, it was not run in front of the home. What we would like to see is other options. Whether you can run a two inch low pressure forced sewer to a manhole either direction up the road, or is a new septic out of the questions? Again, this was denied based on the fact that we have not allowed nor is there another connection of this kind in the Town of Holden.

Mr. Woodsmall wanted to add a couple of things. In terms of the engineering feasibility of the connection, we have obviously not provided comments to whether it's an appropriate design or not. It's the management of connections to the system. This forced sewer main is transmission main, it's not a collector, it's a transmission of large amounts of sewerage under pressure, which happens throughout the system on a day to day basis throughout the country. This is an individual residential connection to that transmission main. The best example of this is that if you have a property that abuts 190, a driveway onto 190 can be designed that meets all the AASHTO, a nationwide highway design organization. You can design a driveway for your individual property, but MASS DOT isn't going to allow that because it's not an appropriate connection. You cannot have individual connections onto the highway. This is a sewer force main. There are no other connections like this in town. We have always advocated for people to make connections and only in circumstances where they cannot do gravity do we then allow them to show us a feasibility low pressure sewer connection. It's been in place for over a decade and we've had numerous instances where people have come to us where it has been technically feasible, but cost may not have been feasible so they chose to not do anything. It's a situation where it's not an existing customer, we have offered to do a low pressure system. We don't deny to connect to the town system, but in a manner that matches with how all the other low pressure sewer connections in town occur. Also, want to note the ability to construct a new septic system on the property has not been disproven to us and is still a viable option. The town has not been shown anything to say that is not the case. When we talk about adding risk to the system, the past two days we've been dealing with a sewer force main break. When there is a force main break there needs to be immediate response and making a phone call to a resident is not on our priority list, nor should it be. We shut things down and in this particular case, we'd have to look for the curb stop and shut that down. If we had a force main break in today's conditions, we would have to dig out a foot and a half of snow looking for the curb stop to shut off to the private property. If this was a low pressure sewer connection that was just going to the gravity system downstream that would not be the case. Ultimately, what it comes down to is the water/sewer system is being asked to deviate from its existing procedures drastically for no benefit to the water/sewer system. We have consistently taken a strong position against this. We have thought about this quite a bit. I can assure this applicant that this is not arbitrary.

Mr. Johnson mentioned that Mr. Woodsmall and Mr. Kenney say this is not arbitrary and not based on any standard. He asked for a comment on the decision not being based on a standard.

Mr. Woodsmall stated, anything can be designed, but it is based off of the standard that we do not allow and we don't think it is good practice to allow a residential connection to a sewer force transition bay. That's been the standard and when speaking to other professionals in the industry, there has not been anybody that disagrees or provide a counterpoint as to why it would make good sense in the absence of other feasible options to allow this connection.

Mr. Andrus stated that he is a licensed professional Engineer in this state and have designed many sewer systems across the state. On the question of the typical standard that is used in this state is a document called TR16, technical report number 16. In looking it up today, prior to the meeting, it is silent on this issue and does not state either way

whether this type of connection should be allowed. The comments on this are two fold, Mr. White did state that he should have a right to connect to the sewer system and I do believe that right does exist. Especially in this case where he does have an existing cesspool and is adjacent to water by's. Therefore, I think it is in the public interest to have Mr. White connect to the system. Is this the appropriate way to connect him to the sewer system? Absolutely not. As someone who has designed many of these systems before and this issue has come up in several towns and in Mr. Andrus' experience, it has never been allowed to connect a low pressure sewer to a high pressure force main. He would not have put his professional stamp on this particular plan for just that reason. Mr. White disagreed that it is not a low pressure sewer. Mr. Andrus explained that when it is a brand new pump it is a low pressure service. Mr. White stated that it is a positive displacement pump which even if the sewer system is pumping it will still pump against it. Mr. Johnson then explained that it is not a positive displacement pump, it is a vortex, it's basically an open vane centrifugal pump. You can technically tell what the TDH is at the connection point and then match that. Then we'd have some idea what you'd be pumping with. All he's really putting here is what the flow is capable of at the discharge pressure. Has anyone asked what the TDH is at the proposed connection point? We don't even know if this is going to pump, it's a centrifugal pump not a positive placement pump. Mr. White discussed how he puts an awful lot of faith on Graves Engineering and they would not design anything that, as you articulated, he never should've put on paper and respectfully disagrees with that. The Town has used Graves Engineering and if they were fly by night then they wouldn't have used them. Mr. White has been told it's a positive placement pump so if it is not, then that would be a point of contention. Mr. Johnson then explained this is the technical part and doesn't believe this has been the issue here. As Mr. Woodsmall mentioned, it is more the management of the connection rather than the technical feasibility of it.

Mr. Johnson then inquired with Mr. White if a septic option has been considered. What is in the denial and Mr. White's two letters, it's just a comparison of the two delivery options to the sewer system. Mr. White stated he received a ballpark estimate and was told it would be about \$50,000, with connections being proposed at about \$13,000. Mr. White suggested if the Alden Woods project was being built today, the contractor would be required to make accommodations for the houses along the way to connect if they would choose to do so. Right now to connect, they would have to dig up Wachusett Street and that would be a significant expense. Mr. White received a price on that and it would be \$40,000. He also has a price to connect with this design for \$15,000. When he said it's arbitrary, in the sewer regulations, it states that sewerage will not be allowed to enter any public sewer or particular sewer under pressure without the permission of the Superintendent. So, it was anticipated. It does not say here, you cannot do it. They did address and anticipate the potential for connecting to a force main. It's right here in the regulations. The desire, way back when this was done, to never allow connection to a high pressure main, it would've said so. That's why it's arbitrary. There has been no engineering criticism, except for what was just heard. No criticism from the town departments. Yet, we say no because we've never done it before. Mr. White also wanted to suggest, the current rate system the town has, was changed when he was on the board of selectmen as a commissioner, a water/sewer commissioner. It was something that no one anywhere had done. A base fee for whatever size line was going into the house. A base price for that and then a separate price for actual commodity. Quite frankly, it's worked out well, so when someone says, we haven't done that before, he just doesn't like it. In Mr. White's opinion, these aren't good reasons to say we're not going to consider this and we're not going to potentially do it. What Mr. White hears is we haven't done it before. Mr. Johnson questioned Mr. Woodsmall, more of the management of this than we've never done it before. Mr. Woodsmall agreed and stated that never having done it before is not a good reason not to do something, if it makes sense. In this particular instance, from an overall engineering and sewer system management perspective, it doesn't make sense when there are other options available.

Mr. White questioned, if Alden Woods were being built today and a force main was going in, every place sewer was bypassing, would they be required to make some accommodation while the road is dug up. Would they be told this

property is not going to line up to the nearest gravity, so if they choose to connect, they can put a pump station in and do a connection. His guess, is probably yes. Especially where this is right on Chaffins Brook. We've gone to great lengths to get rid of septic's in this town and especially those that affect the water shed and this is a case and point. To not be concerned with the expenses of the home owner, quite frankly, as a resident and a former town official, this is pretty lousy that we don't feel the expense someone has to go through to do business in town doesn't matter. We don't care what the expense is. It is what it is, so deal with it. Mr. White has been in that property since 1954. His parents owned it and when Mr. White got married, he bought the property. This house was there when the town was 7,000 people and they have endured every sub division, everything that has happened in this town that has brought us to about 20,000 people, we've endured all of that. Mr. White also mentioned that his daughter would like to buy this house and the only way she'll get a mortgage is with a Title 5 and you'll never get a Title 5. There is a leach pit in the front yard that's been there since 1954. There's no way she'll get drawings of it, there's nothing. It's her desire to buy the house and be the third generation of this property. What we're saying is, we don't care whether it's affordable or not. Affordability be damned, we just don't really care about that. Mr. White thinks this is a very harsh opinion. Mr. Johnson responded that it is a very harsh accusation too. Mr. White believes this to be true.

Mr. Andrus asked the town representatives what the closest either gravity or grinder pump fed main to this area. To extend the sewer to Mr. White's property would require approximately a 300' extension. Mr. Kenney confirmed that would be the approximate length. Mr. Woodsmall stated that Mr. White's engineer did show there was no feasible connection currently available. Mr. Andrus was not stating that a gravity connection is appropriate to Mr. White. The grinder pump connection is the most appropriate solution. The only objection to this is strictly on an engineering standpoint that the connection to the force main is inappropriate, therefore, trying to find a middle ground where he could connect in an appropriate way to another grinder pump fed force main or a gravity sewer. Mr. Woodsmall agreed that this would be an option for Mr. White to pursue. We do not object to a low pressure sewer connection extension within Wachusett St. back towards the Alden pump station. Mr. Andrus then asked if it's the town's opinion that this connection would have to be entirely privately funded or is there any possibility of a publicly funded sewer in the right of way that the town would then own. Mr. Woodsmall stated it would be like any other sewer extension where it's privately funded and then turned over to the town for operations and maintenance. The only time the town has done publicly funded expansion was most recently back in the late 90's, early 2000's which was done in conjunction with the NDC as far as the old Wachusett Reservoir Protection Plan. At that time the entire length of Wachusett St., between Chapel St. and Lincoln Ave. was not considered for sewage. Mr. Woodsmall was not around at that time. Numerous parts of town that wanted to have sewer, but from what was in the meeting minutes, records and letters, there's a lot of back and forth between the state and the town as to what areas would or would not be sewered. The state sewered the areas that they thought were necessary for the protection of the Wachusett Reservoir. The areas that were not sewered, for whatever reason, were not a high priority for the state for protecting the Reservoir.

Mr. Johnson questioned the Alden Woods sewage and if it was constructed to get away from Quinapoxet. Mr. White explained that it was constructed and the pump station was put in at that time to serve as the discharge of all the offloading from the houses. Mr. Johnson was wondering if they were able to get more houses in by putting them on sewer instead of septic. Mr. White said absolutely, but thinks it also has to do with the proximity to Chaffins Brook. Mr. Johnson confirmed that we don't really know.

Mr. Johnson asked if anyone else had any comments. Mr. White wanted to comment that when the Chairman suggested it was harsh for Mr. White to say that the town, in this case water/sewer doesn't necessarily care about the affordability of the town. Mr. Johnson doesn't believe there's any evidence of that. Mr. White then stated it's in the denial letter, we don't consider cost to be an issue. It's right in the letter, that's why it was said. Mr. Kenney answered

and never did he state he doesn't care about the cost of a project or how much it's going to cost an individual. This is a denial based on the mechanical connection between a high pressure forced sewer main and a low pressure grinder pump residential sewer pump. Mr. Woodsmall then added that it was described cost difference is not a factor that we consider when we make the decision. It doesn't mean we don't care about the cost. When looking at how it affects the operations of the town's sewer system, the cost to construct is a private matter and it's up to each private individual to determine what is their budget, that is not a consideration we can ever take into account fairly because that measure drastically varies from customer to customer. It was looked at from a system management point of view, this is not good and does not make sense for us. There may be two other options available, while they need more cost, that is not our consideration. Mr. Kowalczyk stated that his concern is the people of Alden Woods, if something happened to this connection. Then asked what the gallons per minute of raw sewerage could be coming out. Mr. Kenney responded that there are a lot of variables. It's approximately 120 homes, 110 gallons per bedroom. Mr. Kowalczyk then mentioned that if there's damage, then that would need to be shut down. Mr. Kenney confirmed that the sewer station would need to be shut off to make the repair. Tanker trucks would need to be brought in to transport the sewer that would normally go to the sewer station and then transport that to another location, which would be costly and time consuming or could have a substantial spill. More than likely, the force main would break and that will cause a spill in between the time we find it to the time we can shut the station off and trucking sewerage out of the station. Basically, we would have to let it run until we get tanker trucks in to remediate the flow at the station. So, it would run into the brook until the time we get trucks out here to actually bypass the sewerage out of the station and pump that elsewhere. Mr. Kowalczyk asked if there was a check valve at the street for our connection. Mr. Andrus said there is a check valve, but you're putting a lot of faith into a check valve. Mr. White stated there is also one at his pump station. We're talking about a six by two cast fitting, so what is the likelihood, everything is risk management no matter what we do. Right now, the four bedrooms in his house are putting five hundred gallons in the ground right across the street from Wachusett Brook, every day of the year for the last sixty nine years. There has been a lot of effluence that has gone into the ground over the years. A lot more than what happened in a very short couple of hours. A six by two saddle, that's installed properly, what would you say the likelihood that you would anticipate that failing? Mr. Kenney replied that there is a lot of factors when being installed. Proper pipe support when installed, if it's not properly compacted underneath where the installation is, it could settle and break the pipe. Mr. Woodsmall then stated, the life expectancy is about fifty to seventy five years. If anything goes wrong or there's a manufacturing issue. Anytime we have a water service break, a lot of times those services are less than fifty to seventy five years old. We can't put a probability on it. Mr. White stated that we could certainly say it's less probable that it will happen. Everything is risk management that we all do every day. Mr. Woodsmall replied that we could say it's a lot less risk if the connection was not there.

Mr. Kowalczyk noticed that in the drawing the manhole cover is at the edge of a gravel driveway. Is that a problem? Mr. White stated the tank can go wherever we want it to. Mr. Kowalczyk said the drawing has it in half the driveway. He's just looking at what was submitted. Mr. White said everything is a discussion and negotiation. He does not like the idea of that being in the driveway. There is a fifteen foot grass strip right next to it and can go right there. Mr. Woodsmall let them know it is not ideal but we do have some gravel roads that have sewers in them with castings and gravel road. It's not ideal but it's not a bone of contention for us. Mr. Kowalczyk then brought up that this line is force main pressure. Mr. White stated the manhole cover is to the tank, so if that gets damaged, the system continues to function as it's supposed to until that got repaired. Mr. Kowalczyk's concerned if there's an issue with the pipe. Mr. White doesn't believe that should be an issue because of the three thousand gallon tank. Mr. Johnson stated they may need to go for a variance if that's the case. Mr. Kowalczyk added they could move it twenty feet east. He also wanted to mention, as far as connecting to force mains, according to the map, he easily found eleven around town. If this is approved, there's no reason anyone else can't put in applications to connect to them. We think it's not a good practice and it could be opening Pandora's Box. Mr. White went back to the regulations. It anticipates this

type of connection. If not, then why doesn't it say we will never allow connection to a high pressure force main? Mr. Johnson replied that he doesn't believe this has ever come up. Mr. Kenney then let them know the regs are quite old and written in 1964? Mr. Woodsmall believes the most recent update was 1991. Regulations should be a living document. Clearly it flagged pressure connections as special cases that need to be examined individual by the Superintendent. If these types of connections were allowed previously then we wouldn't be in this situation. The fact that they are not anywhere present in the system, or certainly since twenty three years ago when the sewer was expanded. We have no record of anyone applying for this type of connection. It's one of these things where a connection to a high pressure force main was not envisioned at the time and that is why it wasn't specifically called out. The regulations provide flexibility to the Superintendent to exam each situation as it comes up. Mr. White believes that what Mr. Woodsmall just said contradicts this. It was anticipated. Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Woodsmall said it was flagged as special. Mr. White believes it anticipates the right to do it. If not, then it would state it's not allowed. It was anticipated when the regs were written. It was anticipated when they were revised in 1991 because it specifically talks about it. We can only go by what's written. What's written is that it was anticipated and they're allowing for it with review by the Superintendent. Mr. Woodsmall stated that low pressure connections were clearly anticipated. Again, not saying pressure connections are not allowed. The type of pressure connection being performed is not something we are recommending.

Mr. Johnson made sure there were no other comments. He then confirmed that the board had to vote on their recommendation to the Selectmen.

Mrs. Michanowicz made a motion to recommend the approval of the appeal of the denial. Mr. Andrus seconded the motion. Mr. Johnson asked all in favor, no response. All opposed, unanimously denied.

Mr. White then asked Mr. Andrus' full name.

Mr. Johnson asked if there was any other business. Mr. Andrus asked if there should be a recommendation to revise the regulations. It will be discussed at a future meeting after the regulations have been reviewed.

There was discussion on the reason for the Board of Selectmen, when they will have their next meeting. The process of the appeal was also discussed.

## **8. Discuss Next Meeting Date**

It was discussed to change from Tuesday to Thursday. The next meeting will be Thursday, February 1, 2024.

## **9. Adjourn**

On a motion by Mr. Kowalczyk to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Andrus, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting by roll call vote at 7:37 PM.

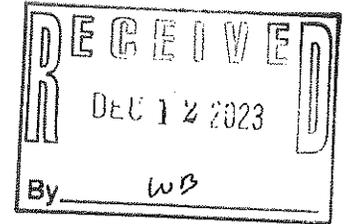
### **Documents Presented and Sent via Email:**

- A. Mr. White's Appeal Letter.
- B. SP-2023-31 Permit Denial Letter.
- C. Mr. White's Letter to Mr. Kenney.
- D. Mr. White's Appeal Plans.

Minutes taken and submitted by: Heather Van Hazinga  
Minutes approved by: WSAB on 4/4/2024

David J White  
84 Wachusett St,  
Holden Ma. 01520

[fivewhites@charter.net](mailto:fivewhites@charter.net)



**Subject: Sewer Connection Appeal**

**To: Holden Board of Selectman**

I am writing to request a hearing with the Water Sewer Commissioners regarding our recent sewer connection denial.

The White family has lived at 84 Wachusett St. for 69 years. We are the second generation to own this property. Our intent is to have my daughter take ownership of the house making her 3<sup>rd</sup> generation. In order to pass the house to her it will require a Title 5 inspection. The existing on site septic is 69 years old and there are no drawings or calculations to refer to. So a connection to the town sewer main is the very best option for all.

In the early 2000's C. B. Blair and Sons were constructing their Alden Woods subdivision. Because of the developments close proximity to Chaffins Brook the development required a connection to the town's sewer system. In order to accomplish this Blair constructed a sewer pump station north of my house on Wachusett St. All of their new homes connected to that pump system and then is pumped up to the towns pump station at Lincoln Ave. When they passed our property there was no provision to allow my house to connect. I would suggest that if the same work was being done today the builder would have been required to make such a provision.

My current septic system is roughly 75' from Chaffins Brook. Chaffins Brook is a direct tributary to the Wachusett Revisor. It seems that from a strictly environmental perspective connecting to the towns system is the most responsible option before us. For us to connect to a gravity system would be extremely expensive. It would require roughly 300' of pipe installed in Wachusett St. This would burden us with the cost of opening the road for that distance and then repaving the road. This option would mean roughly \$30,000.00 in additional unnecessary expense.

The denial letter says cost is never a determining factor in making these decisions. I suggest it certainly should be. I believe the town should take into account the burden of living in Holden and take its residence financial wellbeing into account.

I believe the denial was arbitrary. It also places additional unnecessary financial burden on the home owner.

Respectfully

David & Bonnie White



**Town of Holden**  
Department of Public Works



Water & Sewer Division

Joseph R. Kenney  
Water & Sewer Superintendent

November 21, 2023

David White  
84 Wachusett Street  
Holden, MA 01520

Re: Sewer Connection Permit Applications SP-2023-31 and SP-2023-33  
84 Wachusett Street

Dear Mr. White:

This office is in receipt of two (2) Sewer Connection Permit Applications submitted by you. The first is application SP-2023-31, dated September 25, 2023. The second is SP-2023-31, dated September 26, 2023. Both permit applications are substantially similar, but only the first application has both the calculations and plans for the project attached. As it is duplicative of SP-2023-31, but contains less information, for administrative purposes SP-2023-33 is denied. This office will consider SP-2023-31 as the application to be considered in full.

Application SP-2023-31 is substantially the same as Application SP-2022-70, which was originally submitted on May 13, 2022, supplemented with additional information on June 6, 2022, and subsequently denied by Patrick Wood, Senior Civil Engineer, on July 6, 2022. That denial letter is attached for reference.

As previously noted, 84 Wachusett Street is not an existing sewer customer, has never paid a betterment for sewer improvements within Wachusett Street, has no inherent right to connect to any public sewer that may exist in Wachusett Street, and is under no statutory or regulatory requirement to connect to a public sewer system. However, that does not preclude you as the owner of this property from applying for a connection to the public sewer system, assuming that it meets the technical requirements of the Water & Sewer (W&S) Division and is installed in a manner that does not create an undue environmental, financial, or operations and maintenance concern to the existing sewer ratepayers via the Water & Sewer Division.

When considering a request for a sewer service or main extension, the W&S Division has always required that a gravity option be used, and only if deemed physically impossible to construct, is a pressure application considered. Paragraph 31 of the Town's "Rules and Regulations Relating to the Construction and Use of Particular Sewers" states: Sewage will not be allowed to enter any public sewer or particular sewer under pressure without permission of the Superintendent of Sewers.

As part of the application process for SP-2022-70, your engineering representative, Graves Engineering, Inc. ("Graves") demonstrated that a gravity connection to the existing public sewer was not possible. At that time, you and Graves were asked to demonstrate whether a low pressure sewer connection to the existing gravity system in the vicinity of either the Alden Woods or Lincoln Avenue sewer pump stations was feasible. This construction feasibility analysis was not completed, rather Graves provided a general statement that the cost of such work would far exceed the cost for a direct connection to the higher pressure sewer force main in Wachusett Street. No additional information regarding a construction feasibility analysis was provided then, nor has it been submitted now with current permit application.

As stated in Mr. Woods' July 6, 2022 denial letter, "Our evaluation of a sewer connection for any individual property is not predicated on which is the lowest cost, but which is technically feasible and provides the least amount of risk to the operations of the sewer system. We believe the low pressure sewer extension is technically feasible, and represents a standard amount of risk to the system, as a number of types of systems/extensions exist in the system and have been installed by private citizens."

As currently submitted, your application continues to propose a direct connection to the sewer transmission force main from the Alden Woods pump station. Nowhere else in the existing sewer system is there such a connection. Such a connection does not exist because it is simply a poor operational practice.

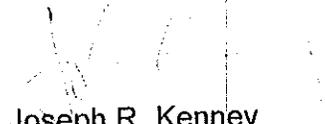
This type of proposed connection:

1. Creates a circumstance where a small residential sewer pump is attempting to pump against the industrial sized pumps contained within the upstream pump station. While such a scenario can be designed, it then relies on mechanical mechanisms to prevent surcharging of pressurized sewerage in to the on-site, privately owned pump chamber, which can lead to threats to the environment and public health if it exits the pump chamber.
2. Increases the burden on the Water & Sewer Division if needed to shut down and maintain the sewer force main, as the Division cannot simply shut the pumps down in the pump station. They must also track down and shut down the direct connection to the force main, to prevent the backfeeding of the sewer force main. When there is snow on the ground or vegetation has grown that prevents easy access to shutoffs, this delays shutting down a force main in an emergency, which can increase damage that may be occurring to the environment, if a sewer overflow is occurring.
3. Compromises unnecessarily the existing force main, possibly creating a weak point that may be a source of failure in the future.
4. Relies on the property owner to maintain sewer check valves in the sewer vault outside of the dwelling in order to prevent surcharging of sewerage into the pump chamber.

The direct connection to a sewer force main transmitting flows from a sewer pump station is not a recommended practice in the existing sewer system. While technically feasible, it is a drastic and unnecessary change of practice in the existing operations of the Town's sewer system. It increases the risks and potential costs that could be incurred by the existing sewer rate payers of the system, for the benefit of a non-sewer customer, with no demonstration of a physical hardship that prevents a low pressure sewer connection to the existing sewer network in the area nor the construction of an onsite sewer disposal system.

For the above stated reasons, the Sewer Connection Permit Application SP-2023-31 is denied. If you have any questions regarding this denial, or wish to submit additional information regarding the application, please contact me at 508-210-5550 or by email at [jkenney@holdenma.gov](mailto:jkenney@holdenma.gov).

Very Truly Yours,



Joseph R. Kenney  
Water & Sewer Superintendent

Cc: Peter Lukes, Town Manager  
John Woodsmall, Director of Public Works

Attach: SP-2022-70 Permit Denial Letter, 7/6/2002

David J. White  
84 Wachusett St.  
Holden Ms. 01520

Dear Mr. Kenny:

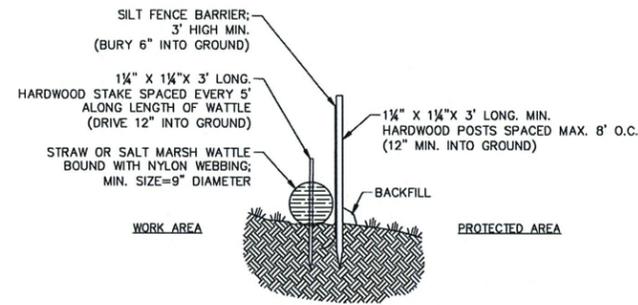
I have received your denial for my proposed connection to the forced main in front of my home. The existing on-site septic system is 69 years old. We are selling the property to a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation and the existing system will not pass a title 5 inspection. There are several statements in your letter which caught my eye.

1. It is correct we are not yet a sewer customer. The current situation was created by C. B. Blair and Sons when they built the Alden Woods subdivision. Because of the proximity to the river which feeds the Wachusett Reservoir, it was determined on-site septic was not going to be allowed nor was in the best interest of the environment. The current septic system is within approximately 75' of the said river. At that time, the contractor's only option was to construct a pump station and connect it to the Lincoln Ave. pump station. During this process 84 Wachusett St. was not taken into consideration when the force main was constructed. I believe the Town should have had the developer take 84 Wachusett St. into account and provided a connection point for our property. This is why a betterment wasn't accessed. If the connection provision had been required for the Alden Woods project, we would not be having this discussion.
2. I fail to see how this connection places any undue risk to the existing system. All the connection work will be performed by a licensed contractor. The work will be inspected by the Town to ensure that quality products are used and installed correctly. The connection into the existing 6" force main running by my house would be very similar to a water connection. Once the connection is made and a curb valve installed everything else would be the homeowner's expense and risk. So, my question is what is the undue risk to the Town?
3. The installation would include a positive displacement pump which is designed to pump into the Town's force main. I do not see how there is a threat to the sewerage backing up onto the owner's property causing an environmental issue when there are two proposed inline check valves to prevent a backup coming from the Town's pump station. In addition, there will be a 1000-gallon tank on-site where the grinder pump is installed. The pump chamber will also have liquid level alarms to alert the homeowner when the level in the tank exceeds a safe level, as yet to be determined. You also mention safety for the Town employees. I would never propose something that places employees at risk. Quite frankly I see no additional risk to the Town's employees beyond what they face on a daily basis. You are correct that if something were to happen to the main downstream of 84 Wachusett St. then our system would need to be shut down. There are two ways to accomplish the shutdown. One, a phone call can be made to the

homeowner and two, Water Sewer (WS) employees would shut off the curb valve, much the same as if there was a water main issue. Also, downstream of my system the only other "connection" is at the pump station itself. Again, I find it almost impossible that a safety issue would exist.

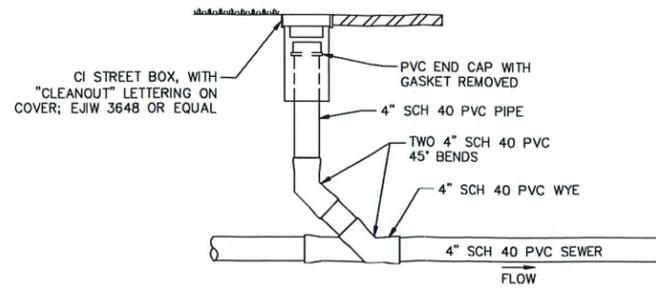
4. You say a determining factor is not driven by homeowner cost. That is very sad to hear that the Town isn't concerned about individual residents. We have lived at 84 Wachusett street for 69 years. In that time there have been multiple sewer connections made simply because septic systems have failed and many residents required a sewer connection to greatly minimize their cost. This work was completed with cooperation from the Town and DCR People were assessed a betterment and allowed to connect to the new system using 0% loans.
5. I would disagree that my connection would greatly increase a risk put upon the existing sewer users . This statement has been used throughout your communication however you don't allude to the real risk that exists. It is stated this connection poses a "unacceptably high amount of risk to the system". The only place we would impact is the connection point, where the saddle onto the forced main connection is made. This connection performed with high quality products and installed by qualified contractor poses little to no risk to the Town's existing WS customers.



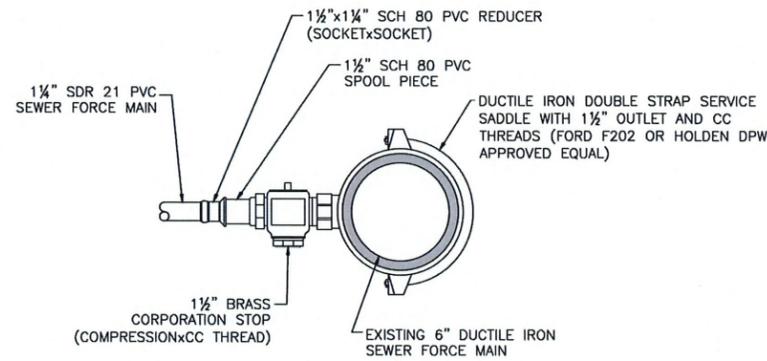


WATTLE & SILTFENCE NTS

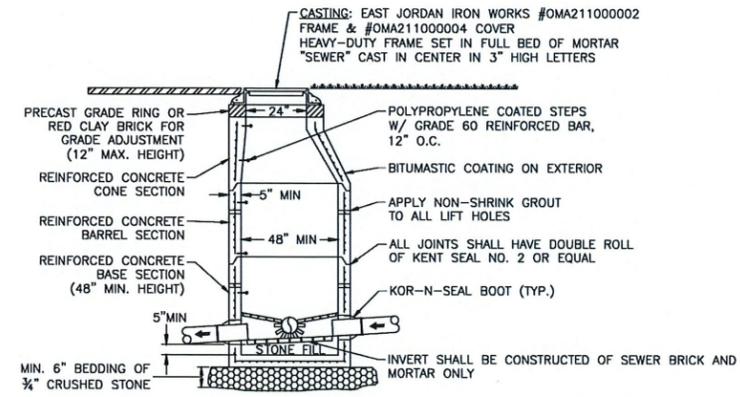
NOTE:  
1) PROVIDE A 3' TO 6' LEVEL AREA BETWEEN THE WATTLE AND THE TOE OF ANY SLOPE TO PROVIDE AREA FOR SEDIMENT ACCUMULATION.



SEWER CLEANOUT NTS

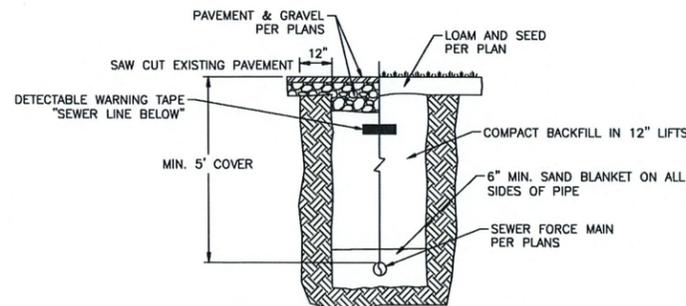


EXISTING FORCE MAIN CONNECTION NTS



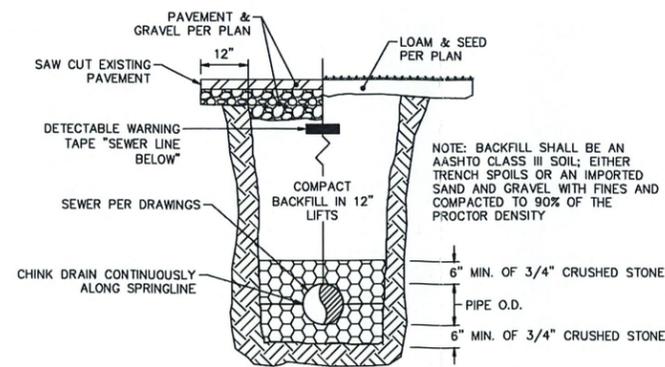
SEWER MANHOLE NTS

NOTE: NO INVERT TROUGH IS REQUIRED; SEE "SEWER VALVE MANHOLE" DETAIL FOR INTERIOR VALVING AND PIPING.

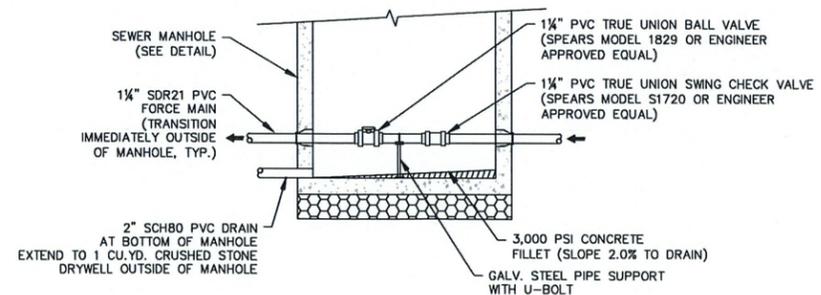


SEWER FORCE MAIN TRENCH SECTION NTS

NOTE: BACKFILL SHALL BE AN AASHTO CLASS III SOIL; EITHER TRENCH SPOILS OR AN IMPORTED SAND AND GRAVEL WITH FINES AND COMPACTED TO 90% OF THE PROCTOR DENSITY



SEWER TRENCH SECTION NTS



SEWER VALVE MANHOLE NTS

NOTE: REFER TO SEWER MANHOLE DETAIL FOR ALL OTHER MANHOLE CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS.

ELECTRONICALLY STAMPED BY MICHAEL ANDRADE, P.E. 09/25/2023



**SITE DETAILS - 1**  
**MUNICIPAL SEWER CONNECTION**  
84 WACHUSETT STREET, HOLDEN, MA 01520

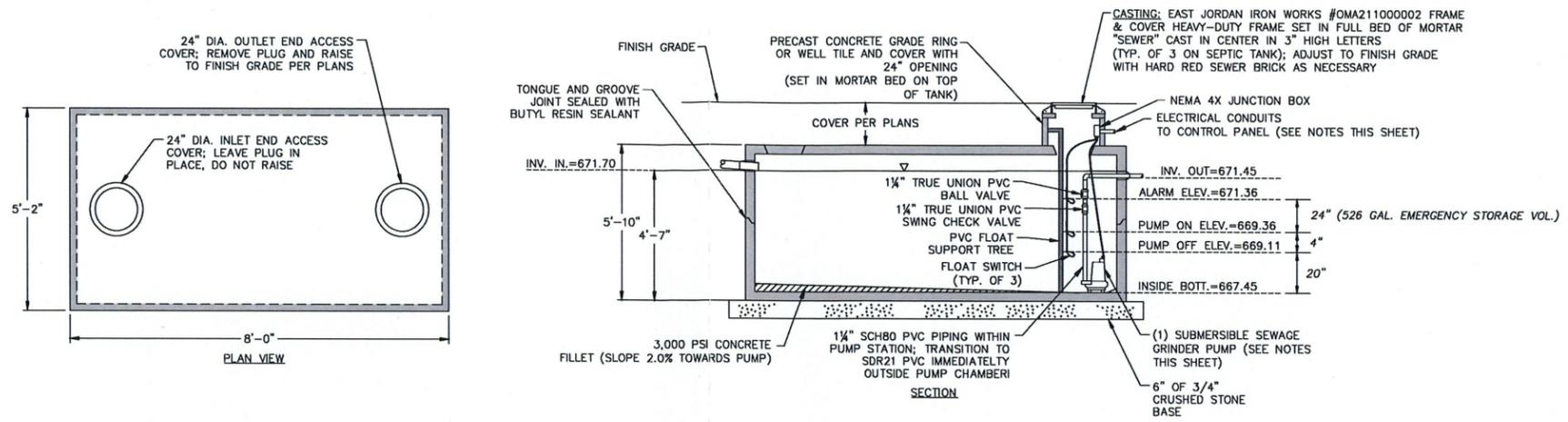
CLIENT: DAVID WHITE  
84 WACHUSETT STREET, HOLDEN, MA 01520  
DATE: 05/11/22 SCALE: AS NOTED DES. BY: DAG DRW. BY: DAG CHK. BY: MRA PRJ. NO.: 22117

NO.	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	REVISIONS
2	09/25/23	MRA	REVISED FOR PERMITTING	
1	05/11/22	MRA	ISSUED TO HOLDEN DPW	

**GRAVES**  
**ENGINEERING, Inc.**  
100 GROVE STREET | WORCESTER, MA 01605  
T 508-856-0321 | F 508-856-0357  
gravesengineering.com

C500

SHEET 2 OF 3



**DESIGN CRITERIA**

**AVERAGE DAILY FLOW (ADF):**  
SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING: 110 GPD/BEDROOM (TITLE 5 MassDEP)  
3 BEDROOMS x 110 GPD/BEDROOM = 330 GPD

**PUMPING CAPACITY:** 23 GPM @ 34.5' TDH  
NORMAL OPERATING VOLUME = 83 GALLONS  
PUMP CYCLE (OFF) TIME @ ADF = 3.6 MIN.  
PUMP RUN TIME @ ADF = 356 MIN. (5.9 HOURS)

**EQUIPMENT**

**PUMP:** ZOELLER MODEL E807 SEWAGE GRINDER PUMP, SINGLE PHASE, 230 VOLTS, 1.0 HP, 3400 RPM, 60 HZ, 5.0 AMPS. THE PUMP SHALL BE CAPABLE OF DELIVERING 20 GPM AT 38 FEET TOTAL DYNAMIC HEAD. PUMP DISCHARGE IS 1.25-INCH NPT.

**CONTROL PANEL:** ZOELLER SINGLE PHASE SIMPLEX MODEL 10-1036 WITH HOA SWITCH, VISUAL ALARM LIGHT, AND AUDIBLE ALARM SIREN WITH SILENCE

**FLOAT SWITCH:** ZOELLER VARIABLE LEVEL FLOAT SWITCH (3 REQUIRED)

**CHECK VALVE:** SPEARS MODEL S1720 PVC TRUE UNION SWING CHECK VALVE

**BALL VALVE:** SPEARS MODEL 1829 PVC TRUE UNION SWING CHECK VALVE

**NOTE:** SUBSTITUTION OF ANY OF THE ABOVE EQUIPMENT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE ENGINEER PRIOR TO INSTALLATION.

**SEWAGE GRINDER PUMP STATION NTS**

- NOTES:**
- 1) THE CONTRACTOR SHALL PROVIDE ALL ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT, DEDICATED CIRCUITS, BREAKERS, EXPANSION OF EXISTING ELECTRICAL PANEL(S), BUCK-BOOST TRANSFORMER, ETC. TO PROVIDE POWER TO THE CONTROL PANEL AND PUMP STATION TO RENDER IT FULLY FUNCTIONAL AND COMPLETE.
  - 2) THE CONTRACTOR SHALL FURNISH AND INSTALL AN ELECTRICAL DISCONNECT ON THE EXTERIOR OF THE POOLHOUSE IN VIEW OF THE PUMP STATION AS REQUIRED BY CODE.
  - 3) THE CONTROL PANEL SHALL BE INSTALLED IN A LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED IN THE POOLHOUSE; COORDINATE WITH THE OWNER.
  - 4) THE DESIGN IS BASED UPON THE DIMENSIONS OF A 1,000-GALLON SEPTIC TANK MANUFACTURED BY SHEA CONCRETE PRODUCTS, AMESBURY, MA (MODEL 1000). INSIDE DIMENSIONS=7.5'Lx4.7'Wx5.0'H. TANK VOLUME=263 GALLONS/VERT. FT.
  - 5) TANK SHALL BE DESIGNED TO BE WATERTIGHT AND WITHSTAND HS-20 LOADING MINIMUM.
  - 6) INLET AND OUTLETS SHALL BE ORIENTED AS SHOWN ON THE PLAN AND WATERTIGHT WITH FACTORY-INSTALLED RUBBER BOOTS AND CLAMPS.

ELECTRONICALLY STAMPED  
BY MICHAEL ANDRADE, P.E. 09/25/2023



NO.	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	REVISIONS
2	09/25/23	MRA	REVISED FOR PERMITTING	
1	05/11/22	MRA	ISSUED TO HOLDEN DPW	

**SITE DETAILS - 2**

**MUNICIPAL SEWER CONNECTION**  
84 WACHUSETT STREET, HOLDEN, MA 01520

CLIENT: DAVID WHITE  
84 WACHUSETT STREET, HOLDEN, MA 01520

DATE: 05/11/22 | SCALE: AS NOTED | DES. BY: OAG | DRW. BY: OAG | CHK. BY: MRA | PRJ. NO.: 2217

**C501**