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Photo by David Prenatt

Sherman Wastewater Plant Manger Jay Irwin stands by some of the areas at the plant that will be upgraded.

Sherman receives award for Sewer Project

By David Prenatt
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SHERMAN – The Village of Sherman has received official award acceptance from USDA Rural Development for its Sewer Project Funding, but a long road lies ahead, Mayor Colleen Meeder told board members and members of the public.

The USDA's commitment is the foundational piece, Meeder said, as it secures the venture's success and it is the first step to financing the proposed \$6.2 million project. Meeder noted, however

that the paperwork and requirements needed for financing the project are very involved.

"This is just one loan," Meeder said. "The documentation was two inches thick." She then reviewed some of the numerous requirements which must be met before Rural Development will provide the authorization to go to bid.

Meeder told board members that they must accept an official loan resolution, and must accept the USDA RD grant before they can proceed.

She also said the village is required to have a fiscal advisor as well as an auditor. Furthermore, the village is advised to open a separate checking account strictly for the sewer project.

Meeder noted that the bond counsel has been selected, and the Village will have the assistance of Catherine Rees, Water Resources Specialist for RCAP (Resources for Communities and People), with compliance review.

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The Village must provide a certification that a vulnerability assessment and emergency response plan have been completed, as well, Meeder said. "It's a whole plan that does not exist and we are required to have it," she said. Meeder told the board that Rees

will also assist the village with this matter.

Prior to voting on the resolutions, board members were informed that the proposed \$6.2 million project does not include the sequential batch reactor. According to Wastewater Treatment Plant Superin-

tendent, Jay Irwin, sequential batch reactors are a special form of activated sludge treatment in which all of the treatment process takes place in the reactor tank. "They are more automated," Irwin said. "They automatically perform necessary tests."

Meeder told the board that the SBR is a necessity because of the difficulty municipalities are facing with qualified wastewater treatment plant workers. She also said there should be no problem including it in the project, and it won't change the \$6.2 million funding.

Board members subsequently passed a resolution accepting the USDA RD grant for \$2,265,000 and the loan resolution form, authorizing the amount of \$3,922,000, to be paid over 38 years, at no more than 2.125% interest.

The board also passed a resolution to open an additional checking account with Community Bank in the name of the Village of Sherman USDA Sewer Project, for the purpose of collecting and expending funds related to the sewer-wastewater plant upgrade.

Meeder noted that achieving compliance with all USDA RD requirements will take some time, but these resolutions will get thing in motion. USDA RD specifies that "once all items have been provided, reviewed and found acceptable, the Rural Development Area Specialist will provide the authorization to go to bid."

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