

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Special Meeting

Date: October 26, 2022
Time: 6:00 P.M.
Location: E. Taylor Hatton School (158 Meade Hill Road)
Purpose: Public Forum/Q&A session on PFAS Contamination of the E. Taylor Hatton School and surrounding properties.
Speakers: Morgan Town Select Board, Meredith Maskell and Richard Spiese from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and Craig Jewett from Otter Creek Engineering.

1. Call the meeting to order.

The Select Board Special Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Town Moderator Kathy Austin.

2. Introduction of Guest Speakers.

Town Moderator introduced the Select Board and guest speakers to town residents and interested parties, including parties affected by PFAS contamination.

3. Discussion of Morgan PFAS contamination and potential solutions.

Craig Jewett (Otter Creek Engineering) explained his role as the consulting Engineer from Otter Creek Engineering, which has been retained by the Town of Morgan to support the town PFAS investigations, reporting requirements, and engineering solutions to remediate the PFAS contamination. Mr. Jewett described the history of the discovery of PFAS at E. Taylor Hatton School and the investigations that identified other contaminated wells in the nearby vicinity to the school, as well as potential solutions to the PFAS issues.

Richard Spiese described the State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources role in determining the source of the PFAS contamination, including ongoing well sampling and analysis.

Meredith Maskell (Vermont Agency of Natural Resources) described the state's proposed solution of identifying an uncontaminated alternate water source and a funding program that would offset all capital costs of identifying a viable location, drilling a new well, and installing infrastructure to support all currently identified sites where PFAS contamination exceeds State limits. Costs to the Town of Morgan would then consist of Operations and Maintenance costs of the new system once it was installed.

The Morgan Select Board commented that this option of fully funded development of an uncontaminated water source was the Select Board's favored alternative, rather than other proposed alternatives such as filtration of contaminated water sources. It was noted that it was at the discretion of each property owner with a contaminated source to connect to the new town water source, or to fund an alternate solution at their expense. It was also noted that after the installation of the uncontaminated water system, it is likely that connected properties would be assessed a cost of the annual operating and maintenance costs.

Local residents and PFAS affected property owners then participated in a question and answer period with the Select Board, Otter Creek Engineering, and Vermont Agency of Natural Resources personnel to discuss topics including the funding of the selected alternative, health impacts of PFAS ingestion, ongoing sampling to investigate the original source and boundaries of the PFAS contamination, locations of potential uncontaminated water sources, interim solutions for contaminated water during the period where the new source is being developed, Town liability for the contamination (not yet determined), and the role of the Town of Morgan which primarily has responsibility to find a solution to PFAS contamination at the town school. The Select Board noted that the board intends to submit an application for funding to the State of Vermont for the alternate water source and desired to hold the Special Meeting to provide an opportunity for community awareness and feedback prior to our submission. The Select Board also noted that our priority in the selection of a solution to the PFAS contamination issue is to limit additional tax burden for Morgan town residents as well as to maintain property values that could be negatively impacted by PFAS contamination. For this reason we are being very deliberate and thorough in evaluating the engineering and funding options, and in engaging with town residents on the proposed path forward.

The discussion closed with an offer to residents that they could reach out to the board or Otter Creek Engineering with additional questions at any time.

4. Adjourn the meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.