January 8, 2023

Director Jason Mead, PE
Wyoming Water Development Office
6920 Yellowtail Rd
Cheyenne, WY 82002

RE: Sheridan Northeast Transmission Main Extension 2023 - Supporting Information

Dear Director Mead,

Herein, I am providing additional clarifying information for the Select Water Committee to review prior to considering funding for the above project at their January 11th meeting.

Testimony from the public during the November 8th Joint Meeting, caused a great deal of confusion which raised several questions from the Wyoming Water Development Commission and Select Water Committee that could not be addressed in a meaningful way at that time. My hope is to provide some clarity and understanding by providing more detailed answers to questions raised and by providing some specific things that were recommended we acquire.

In a “Question and Answer” format, the following information is intended to do just that:

**How is the Sheridan Area Water Systems owned, operated, and maintained?**

The Sheridan Area Water System is a homogenous, seamlessly interconnected water system comprised of mountain reservoir, supplemental water storage, 1882 direct flow water rights from Big Goose Creek (City Owned), water intake facility, two conventional water treatment plants totalling 18 MGD in capacity, 80 miles of water transmission main, 13.8 MG in water storage, 243 miles of water distribution lines, 17 pump stations, all supplying treated water to customers within Sheridan and adjacent areas of Sheridan County. See the attached map (Sheridan Area Water System) giving an overview of the entire water system and its components.

The water system components required to supply treated water to the rural water customers are owned, in whole and in part, by the Sheridan Area Water Supply Joint Powers Board (SAWS). SAWS was created in 1988 through an Agreement between the City of Sheridan and Sheridan County. In accordance with the Agreement, the SAWS Board is to be comprised of three County Commissioners and three City Councilman, by appointment from their governing bodies, with each serving a three year term. SAWS provides governance over their part of the system which was built from 1990 through 1997 as an interconnected, expansion and extension of the City’s System to serve rural water individual customers, water districts, and small communities (Town of Big Horn and Powder Horn). There’s presently 2,116 water customers being served by the SAWS system. SAWS sets the water rates for the rural water customers they serve. The Sheridan City Council provides governance over the part of the system the City owns. The City presently serves approximately 8,153 customers. The City Council sets water rates for City customers.

In accordance with an Operating Agreement (dated 1990 and amended in 2007) between the City of Sheridan and SAWS, the entire water system is operated, maintained, and administered by the City of Sheridan utilizing the City of Sheridan’s resources. SAWS pays the City, in accordance with the
Operating Agreement, to operate, maintain, and administer its part of the water system for SAWS’ rural water customers.

The water system functions as one “regional system”. Planning for the water system considers, at a minimum, serving to the limits of the Water Service Area Boundary as shown on the attached map (Sheridan Area Water System). Our 2019 Level I Study, funded by the WWDC, utilized the Sheridan Joint Planning Area Land Use Plan, jointly adopted by the City and Sheridan County in 2009 and then updated in 2017, as the guiding document for developing water system supply needs, and identifying system developments necessary to supply water areas within the Water Service Area Boundary.

What are the responsibilities of the City of Sheridan and those of SAWS?

The responsibilities of the City of Sheridan are to operate, maintain, and administer the water system for all water system customers. This also includes the provisions of:

- All utility billing and collections of water system accounts (City and SAWS)
- Long term planning and development of capital plans for the water system
- Technical and non-technical analysis to ensure effective water system management, effective operations, timely maintenance activities, and fiscal responsibility
- By delegated authority from WDEQ, reviewing and permitting water system infrastructure for new subdivisions and system expansions

One of the primary responsibilities of the Sheridan Area Water Supply Joint Powers Board (SAWS) is to maintain the existence and proper functioning of the joint powers board for the provision of water service to Sheridan County rural water customers. SAWS has the responsibility of establishing rates for its rural water customers to create a financial vehicle to pay for the construction, operation, maintenance, administration, and governance of the rural water system in service to its customers. SAWS establishes and approves an annual budget to pay for its own administrative costs, capital costs (identified and recommended by the City), and to pay the City to operate, maintain, and administer the water system in service to the SAWS customers.

Describe Joint City/County Land Use Plan and how it may or may not support the City doing this Project:

The City of Sheridan and Sheridan County established, under the provisions of Wyoming Statutes Sections 15-1-503 and 18-5-202 a Sheridan Joint Planning Area Land Use Plan (Land Use Plan) which was concurrently adopted first in 2009 and then again in 2017 after being updated. This plan defines a Joint Planning Area Boundary (JPA on attached Map A-3) located around the City of Sheridan of approximately 60 square miles, of which approximately 10 square miles were within the City Limits. The JPA encompasses the area where future development and conservation activities and future decisions are of joint interest to residents and government of both the City and County.

In accordance with the Land Use Plan, the zoning identified in the County within the location of the Northeast Water Transmission Main project (Project), and well beyond to the water service area boundary is designated as Urban Residential (See Map A-3). The Project is necessary in order to develop the water system capacity to serve growth in accordance with the adopted Land Use Plan. The Project aligns perfectly with, and in support of, the Land Use Plan which is also why it is identified in our Sheridan Water System Master Plan, Level I Study as a needed water transmission main extension.
Explain the USA Boundary - what it means and its relevance toward creating synergistic growth into the County:

One of the directions and policies established within the Sheridan Joint Planning Area Land Use Plan in 2009 was to designate an Urban Service Area (USA) boundary around the City to be designated (zoned) for urban development intended to have municipal water and sewer. The development within the USA Boundary creates a transitional zone from urban growth with municipal services into rural growth slightly further out into the County with SAWS water service and decentralized sewer systems and/or individual wells and septic systems. The USA boundary is shown on the attached map (A-3). The Northeast Water Transmission Main is planned and designed to supply the water necessary to serve the demands forecasted within the City Limits, within the USA boundary, and to the limits of the Water Service Area farther out into the County. The 2019 Sheridan Water System Master Plan, Level I Study (Master Plan) considered the Sheridan Joint Planning Area Land Use Plan in defining the water system development improvements necessary to properly support that plan. The Northeast Water Transmission Main is in direct alignment with the Master Plan and supports the growth plans of both the City of Sheridan and Sheridan County.

Restate the justification for the project:

The Sheridan Northeast Water Transmission main was identified in the 2019 Sheridan Water System Master Plan, Level I Study as a water supply system (transmission main) needed within the underserved area of northeast Sheridan and Sheridan County. The water supply from this line is necessary to effectively supply water to growth being actively planned in the surrounding area.

This project is considered the first leg of a two leg, east-west cross valley transmission system also identified in the 2019 Sheridan Water System Master Plan, Level I Study. It will provide system looping while improving the City’s water transmission system with redundancy and increased capacity. Future growth demands requiring water from the system’s high pressure zone (4160 zone) will trigger the need for the second, and last, leg of this transmission system.

Resolution or Letters from the County, SAWSJPB, and Local Legislators supporting the Project:

- The City of Sheridan sought a letter of support from the Sheridan County Commissioners. A letter was drafted expressing the County’s support for the project as it pertains to the project’s alignment with and support of the joint City/County Land Use Plan and infrastructure service objectives of the community. This letter of support was considered by the Sheridan County Commissioners at their 1/2/2024 meeting where it failed on a 2-3 vote.

- The City of Sheridan sought a letter of support from SAWS. A letter was drafted expressing SAWS’ support for the project as it pertains to the project’s alignment with the water system’s development objectives in accordance with the Master Plan. This letter of support was considered by SAWS during a special meeting held on 1/3/2024 where it failed on a 3-3 vote.

- We have three of our five local legislators who have verbally expressed their support for the project and would support funding the project with General Fund monies if so proposed by the Select Water Committee. Two of the five legislators did not express their support one way or another upon initial discussions. They wanted to deliberate on the matter more and converse with the other Legislators before making a determination. The three that had provided verbal support,
have prepared draft letters with intentions of making them available to the Select Water Committee prior to, or at the time of, their January 12th meeting.

I have attempted to be as informative and as objective as possible in providing this information. It’s my desire for the Select Water Committee to have as clear an understanding of things as possible, so they can make the most informed decision in regards to our project. If there are other things I should be prepared to clarify or provide information on, please don’t hesitate to let me know.

Best Regards,

Dan Roberts, P.E.
Utilities Director

enclosed: Sheridan Area Water System Map
Map A-3
Sheridan Area Water System

Proposed Northeast Transmission Main

243 Miles of Distribution
80 Miles Of Transmission
4.0 MGD Big Goose WTP
14.0 MGD Sheridan WTP
13.8 MG Storage Tanks
6 Pressure Zones

DISCLAIMER:
The City of Sheridan GIS Division produced this map for informational purposes only.
The City of Sheridan provides this map on an "as is" basis without warranties of any kind, 
either expressed or implied, and shall not be liable for any direct, indirect, incidental, 
special, exemplary, or consequential damages (including, but not limited to, 
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General questions about the map including errors, omissions, and/or updates should be 
submitted to the City of Sheridan GIS Division.

Legend:
- Water Tank
- Water Treatment Plant
- Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Northeast Transmission Main
- Distribution Water Line
- Transmission Water Main >=16"
- City Corporate Limits
- Urban Service Area
- Water Service Area

Date: 1/4/2024