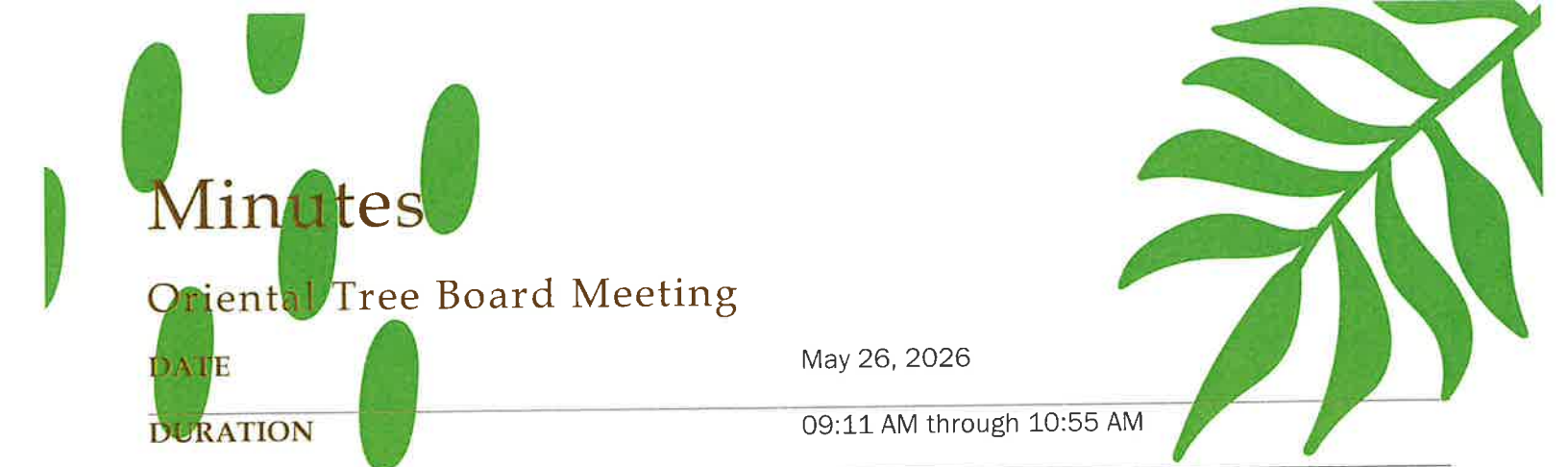




Minutes

Oriental Tree Board Meeting

DATE

May 26, 2026

DURATION

09:11 AM through 10:55 AM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY

John Deaton, chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Pat Allen, Phil Borders, Stephanie Carperos, Janet Chinae (sec'y), John Deaton (chair), Chris Moffat (com.), Lou Ostendorf (com.), Tom Soderholm, Madeline Sutter (em.), Missy Tenhet

Missy made a special request to allow her to begin work earlier in the mornings before the summer heat gets too overwhelming. She can focus on de-suckering crepes, as that can be done safely by one person. Discussion consensus was that pruning times are flexible for members, as long as they remember "Safety First".

Public Comment:

Butch Rasmussen addressed the Tree Board with his concern about the town's plan to remove an ailing pecan tree from Lupton Park. He expressed the opinion that the tree does not need to be removed; but, rather, should be managed with contract structural pruning, mulch, and cabling. He expressed that risk of failure should not be the only consideration when removing a tree, because mature trees contribute so many benefits to the community. In support of his assessment, Mr Rasmussen personally hired a TRAQ arborist, Brent Toler, to perform a Level 2 ISA Basic Tree Risk Assessment (attached), to evaluate the pecan tree in question; which report he shared with the Board. He also claimed that, although it was not part of the ISA assessment, the arborist declared verbally that the maple tree behind the tennis courts, also slated for removal due to root lifting and lean, posed NO risk in his opinion. Mr Rasmussen expressed concern that there didn't seem to be a rigorous procedure in place for determining which trees truly required removal, or significant effort by the Board to manage tree death short of removal.

Lou asked if a tree assessment must be done by an ISA certified arborist. Diane defended the town's actions on the strength of Dr Bob Miller's (doctor of urban forestry) professional opinion of the condition of the trees. Once a tree is determined by Dr Bob to be a risk, the town is required to mitigate that risk. Generally, the cost to have a second opinion and the cost of mitigation measures is well beyond the town's resources. Removal is often the best way to avoid multi-million-dollar litigation. When challenged on Dr Bob's credentials, John offered that, although Dr Bob (who was not in attendance at this meeting) is not an ISA certified arborist, he did write the text book and the exam that is still used to train ISA certified arborists. The Tree Board's "process" is to get Dr Bob's professional opinion. But he acknowledged that it would be prudent for the Board to establish a relationship with a regional certified arborist going forward. There are NO certified arborists in Pamlico.

Tom asked about the cost of mitigation measures versus removal costs. Mr Rasmussen paid \$350.00 out of his own pocket for a Level 2 assessment. He suggested that a Level 3 assessment should be required before a tree is removed. \$350 represents 10% of the Tree Board's current budget. Janet pointed out that the town

has approximately 2000 trees; and there are over 14 trees on our current removal list – that is potentially \$4900 just for the assessment, let alone the actual mitigation or removal costs.

Stephanie questioned the urgency of removing a tree that is considered only a moderate risk by the Level 2 assessment. Diane reiterated that even moderate risk has legal ramifications. In practice, Dr Miller recognizes the value of keeping old trees, and does not always recommend removal; often favoring contract pruning and vigilance. John emphasized that while there is certainly every reason to keep large trees as long as possible, the mitigation measures suggested in the report require PROPER, surgical pruning, over a number of years, that is extremely expensive; and there are no local contractors who can do that kind of pruning. Pat reminded those present, that less than 10% of a tree's canopy should be removed at one time; otherwise, the pruning can hasten the trees decline, and may not remove the risk in any one year.

Missy also mentioned that pecan trees are notorious for having weak structures and dropping branches constantly. They are not good park or street trees.

Madeline suggested that perhaps it's time to establish a plan to assess and protect the older trees in town; the tree canopy created by the older trees is precious. Perhaps the town could designate "iconic" trees and take more care/expense on them.

Stephanie asked where is the nearest Level 3 arborist. Perhaps require a Level 3 assessment for anything in the parks. John answered – Raleigh.

Diane offered to submit the Toler report to the town lawyer. She knows payouts for liability claims related to trees has been north of \$18M. She explained that Dr Bob was all the "process" the town had/has; and his assessment was liability dominant. Stephanie was not comfortable with a subjective assessment of risk versus liability based on 'feeling'. Diane suggested that perhaps the Board needs to develop a written process to address the 2000 trees.

Janet suggested that we need to get an estimate for a Level 3 assessment, and an estimate from a QUALIFIED arborist to do the mitigation pruning/cabling suggested in the ISA report. Then the case needs to go to the Commissioners to weigh those costs and the cost of removal, against the perceived value of the tree to the community. The costs/risk/liability versus benefit is up to the Commissioners. But the town no longer has the luxury to do nothing. Either we take mitigating measures *now*, or we remove it *now*.

John said he would cancel the removal of the pecan tree in Lupton Park (currently scheduled for June 4&5. The issues related to it will not be resolved before the June 30th funding deadline. That money will go back into the General Fund, and we will have to make a new budget amendment request once we have some resolution.

After some unrelated discussion, Diane confirmed that the town's lawyer advised that we either implement the mitigation measures outlined or remove the tree. We do not have the option to do nothing.

Tree Removals:

John reported that it does not look like we will be able to address all of the high-risk trees on our list by the June 30th deadline – there aren't enough vendors available with requisite skills. John said he would reach out to a few more contractors this week. There are still at least 14 trees on the "Trees of Concern" list, ... and growing.

Planting:

John mentioned that, the more he studies, the more he understands that the town should be mulching all town trees, whether in parks or along the streets, to help with the issue of herbicide use and root compaction. These are some of the major factors we see contributing to the loss of our trees. While the Board does mulch the new trees we plant, that mulch is rarely maintained. Janet suggested the town invest in a chipper and turn all the pruning into mulch that can be used to maintain the mulch rings. John pointed out that such mulch can contain pathogens. The transfer station in Grantsboro charges for their composted mulch.

John was approached by the owner of 207 Neuse Street for consideration of some street trees. Several substantial trees on private property there had been removed last year. There is a crepe myrtle in the town ROW at the far edge of this property, but plenty of room for up to three more. There are overhead wires running the entire length – we must be careful to select varieties that will peacefully coexist. The soil in the ROW is likely badly compacted as the area was used as a parking strip through the years. Janet suggested that we wait to see what color is the existing crepe myrtle before making any decisions before the spring planting season next year.

502 South Ave – The owners have expressed interest in possibly replacing the dying dogwood tree with a couple of camelias. There are other large, established camelias on the property. However, the Tree Board has concerns that shrubs in that very narrow planting strip will be a constant sidewalk clearance pruning issue. There is still plenty of time to explore alternatives.

Pruning Activities:

The Tree Board crews have concentrated on the parks ahead of special events there. But will be moving to John's list of 'new' trees for training, before spending the rest of the year in pruning area 2.

- All Zones: John is gathering a list of young trees that need to be trained NOW before they become tomorrow's problem trees;
- Zone 2: This area will be the Board's focus for the rest of the year;
- Zone 3:
 - Corner of Gilgo and Starboard Circle private limbs overhanging the ROW;
 - 501 Ragan: owner requested additional crown lifting of live oaks;
 - 503 Ragan: owner requested lower limbs of live oaks pruned up for driveway clearance;
 - 1207 Lupton Drive: request that the Yaupon hollies on the ROW need pruning;
 - The crepes around Brantley's need thinning and clearance pruning;

Private Tree Issues:

403 Neuse Street – Dead tree in their side yard, potential ROW hazard; Diane has sent a letter to the owners; awaiting response.

1002 Neuse Street – Dying pecan beside John Bond Beach; tree is flushing out, somewhat; continue to monitor.

1413 Seafarer Road – While inspecting the property for a building permit, John noted several dead trees, and alerted the owner of the concern to the ROW; two trees were later removed; but the last tree, closest to the road was still standing; John will alert Diane to send a letter.

On May 12th the Town Commissioners hosted a Volunteer Fair, where each of the volunteer boards in town presented the public with what they do, and recruited participation. The Tree Board set up a selection of flyers. But the event was not well attended.

Croaker Fest is July 3-5 this year. It is the nation's 250th birthday. Janet ***insisted*** that the Tree Board have a float in the parade on the 4th. John offered the use of his mini-truck. He said he would ask Bob Miller for the Tree Board banner. Madeline offered one of her TreeCity USA banners. More detail planning was needed. So, Janet volunteered to lead an ad hoc committee to plan this year's parade presence.

New Business:

Joan Allen was officially recognized to fill the Board slot left by Cathy Washburn's resignation. All members should continue to consider themselves 'recruiters.' Anyone who thinks they MAY be interested should join us for Tuesday pruning sessions to see if they like, and can commit to the work.

NEXT MEETING

The next full Board meeting will be **Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 09:00 AM** in the town hall main conference room. Pruning crews meet at the Town Hall most Tuesdays at 9:00AM throughout the year. Volunteers are always welcome to join us.

Special Dates to monitor:

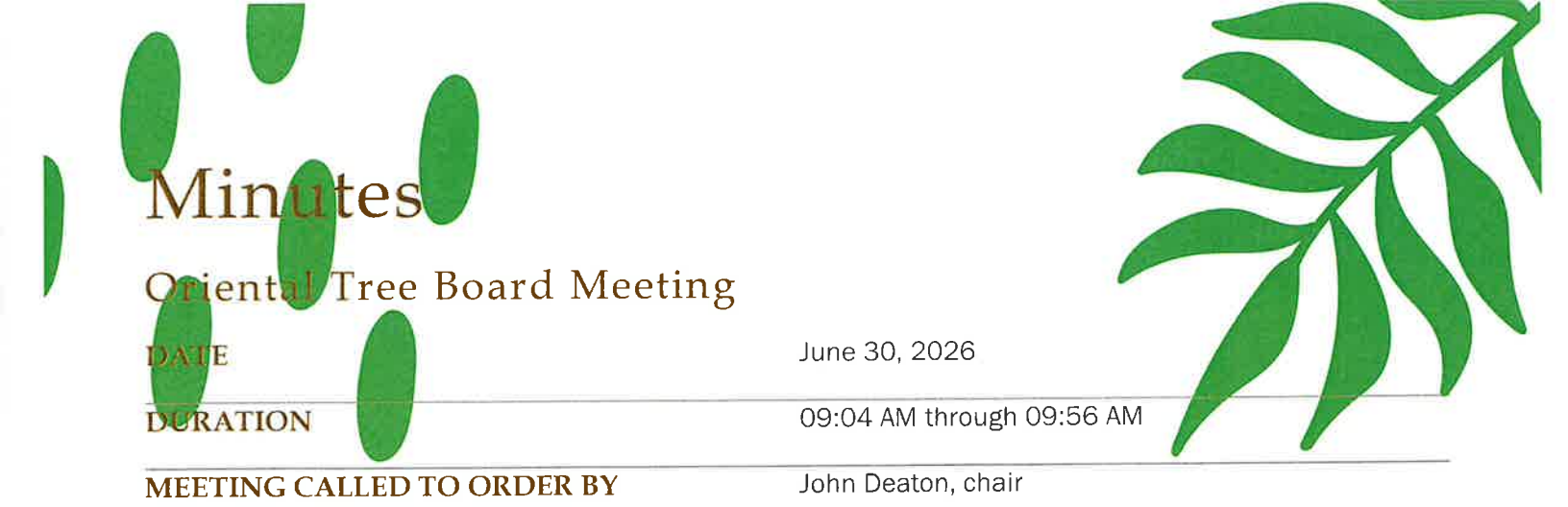
June 30, 2026 – Tree Board Meeting

July 3-5, 2026 – Croakerfest & USA 250th birthday bash!

October 2-3, 2026 – Ol' Front Porch Music Festival

December 10-12, 2026 – Spirit of Christmas

Attachments: ISA Level 2 Basic Tree Risk Assessment Report dated May 20, 2026



Minutes

Oriental Tree Board Meeting

DATE

June 30, 2026

DURATION

09:04 AM through 09:56 AM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY

John Deaton, chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Joan Allen, Pat Allen, Phil Borders, Stephanie Carperos, Janet Chinae (sec'y), John Deaton (chair), Anne Frederick, Tom Soderholm, Madeline Sutter (em.), Missy Tenhet

Tree Removals:

Pat relayed to the Board that the feedback he was getting from residents on the quality of the pecan removal at the Lupton Park, and the pruning Missy did on the camelia on South, was generally favorable.

Today is the last day of the fiscal year. At their Friday, June 26th meeting, the Commissions approved an interim budget through September. The state legislature still has not resolved the issues related to property valuations that directly impact local revenue projections and budgets. There was only a balance of \$2100 in the tree removal budget amendment; but that has now lapsed. We will have to wait until the September continuing budget to request a new budget amendment to address the growing list of "Trees of Concern".

John asked how long do you wait before planting a new tree in or near the spot where a diseased tree has been removed. Janet offered to verify the NC State Extension recommendations.

- Additional Contract Removals Needed:
 - 200 Neuse Street: willow oak on the corner of South Ave and Neuse Street has limbs hitting the house and power lines; someone has been heading back some limbs, but more removals are needed. This is a town tree, and some work can be done by the Board; but there may be some concern about working around the power lines.
 - 602 Church Street: a hanger behind/beside the Captain's Quarters.
 - High Street & Second Ave: large hangers over the ROW.
 - Seafarer & Whitaker Point Roads: large hanger over the ROW.
- Private Trees in ROW:
 - 403 Neuse Street: this tree is scheduled for contract pruning on July 23rd to remove limbs overhanging the town ROW.

- 1413 Seafarer Road: two trees in the front yard could fall into the road and powerlines. The Board will continue to monitor their condition and advise Diane if a letter needs to be sent to the owner.
- 101 Starboard Circle: a dead pine next to the stop sign; needs a letter to owner for removal.
- 501 Mildred Street: a dying willow oak next to the stop sign; needs a letter to owner for removal.

Planting:

The Tree Board has begun the very slow process of creating mulch rings around younger trees instead of using plastic collars. We are learning that the mulch rings are a better solution for the health of the trees than use of herbicides or weed whackers. The Board is researching a reliable and inexpensive source of mulch.

The Tree Board's recent work on some of the young oaks has also brought to light a significant problem with root girdling. Root girdling can kill a tree over time. We all agreed that we must be much more assertive about teasing out the roots of new trees as we plant them to forestall this problem in the future.

207 Neuse Street: Tabled until the homeowner weighs in on the plan to wait to see what color is the existing crepe myrtle before making any decisions for the spring planting season next year.

209 Neuse Street: A redbud tree in the ROW failed – only a stump remains. The owner requested the stump removed and a live oak planted there instead.

502 South Ave: The owners have expressed interest in possibly replacing the dying dogwood tree with a couple of camelias. There are other large, established camelias on the property. However, the Tree Board has concerns that shrubs in that very narrow planting strip will be a constant sidewalk clearance pruning issue. There is still plenty of time to explore alternatives.

803 South Ave: The very large live oaks on the Oriental waterfront here are failing; root girdling appears to be a significant contributor. John said he would approach the owner with the Board's suggestion that the town plant new live oaks this planting season in between the failing trees.

Pruning Activities:

The Tree Board crews will continue work on John's list of 'new' trees for training and mulching, before spending the rest of the year in pruning area 2.

- All Zones: John is gathering a list of young trees that need to be trained NOW before they become tomorrow's problem trees;
- All Zones: street sign clearance on Ragan & Lupton, Church & Broad;
- Zone 2: This area will be the Board's focus for the rest of the year;
- Zone 3:
 - 101 Starboard Circle, corner of Gilgo and Starboard Circle: private limbs overhanging the ROW;
 - 901 South Ave: owner requested additional crown lifting for driveway clearance

- 501 Ragan: owner requested additional crown lifting of live oaks;
- 503 Ragan: owner requested additional crown lifting for driveway clearance;
- 1207 Lupton Drive: request that the Yaupon hollies on the ROW need pruning;
- The crepes around Brantley's need thinning and clearance pruning;

Private Tree Issues:

1002 Neuse Street – Dying pecan beside John Bond Beach; tree is flushing out, somewhat; continue to monitor.

1413 Seafarer Road – While inspecting the property for a building permit, John noted several dead trees, and alerted the owner of the concern to the ROW; two trees were later removed; but the last tree, closest to the road was still standing; John will alert Diane to send a letter.

A side meeting on the Croakerfest/250th Birthday parade preparations was held after the official meeting.

New Business:

John asked if there was any interest in starting a tree growing program. The NC Forestry Service announced the start of the next growing season inventory of trees available for purchase. The trees are small whips, and are available to anyone while supplies last. John thought we could purchase whips and nurture them for use in ROW plantings in the future, or make them available to residents. Janet reminded everyone that many years ago the town DID have a nursery program in the back of the Recreation Park. Further discussion is needed.

John reminded the Board members that, when approaching property owners regarding planned Tree Board activities or best practices for tree care, remember to be kind and careful.

On the agenda of the Commissions' meeting last Friday was the expiration of terms on the volunteer boards. The commissioners decided to standardize the renewals to June 30th of each year. While all current appointments to the Tree Board were approved, Janet suggested we might discuss the pros and cons of removing term limits from the Chapter M Ordinance. Diane reminded us that, if we were to eliminate term limits, NC statutes only provide for censure for misconduct and removal for missed meetings. After some discussion, Stephanie moved and Pat seconded a motion to leave the term limits as written in the current ordinance.

NEXT MEETING

The next full Board meeting will be **Tuesday, July 28, 2026, at 09:00 AM** in the town hall main conference room. Pruning crews meet at the Town Hall most Tuesdays at 9:00AM throughout the year. Volunteers are always welcome to join us.

Special Dates to monitor:

July 3-5, 2026 – Croakerfest & USA 250th birthday bash! PARADE!

October 2-3, 2026 – Ol' Front Porch Music Festival

December 10-12, 2026 – Spirit of Christmas

Minutes from WAB June 2026

Present: Commissioners Ostendorff and McGuire, Chair Roger Huth, Manager Miller, Pamlico ORC Sanders, Oriental ORC Early, Member Rasmussen, Harry Bailey (consultant-by phone) and Marla Ashworth and David Britt (by phone from TRC)

Valve Project -

All parts have now been ordered and are expected to arrive at the end of June or beginning of July. We should have an NTP after the 4th of July and expect to begin work by mid July.

Booster Station -

Design is now 100% complete. Next step is to update and review a few of the key design calculations (week of June 8th) and submit to DWI later that week or the beginning of the following week. At that point we will be waiting for DWI approval

Water System Rehab -

NTC is updating and finalizing calculations for their part of the plans. Layout of design has started. Electrical plans are with engineers and should be back and complete in 2-3 weeks. Some discussions relating to the installation of testing ports in different parts of the current system to get a more clear understanding of the filtration systems/types of filters needed in the new build. Also discussed the use of GAC filters to help remove turbidity including minerals in suspension that can accumulate and affect appliance like water heaters, pipes etc. Looking at the possibility of adding this to the build.

From a cost perspective - as we get more clarity on the cost of this project, we may have to look at removing some less critical items or considering applying for additional funding. Not enough detail yet to know where we are on this yet.

Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting Notes

July 7, 2026

Meeting began at 3:00 pm

Attendance:

Barbara Miller

Alice Flannigan

Klm Langson

Commissioner Jordan

Commissioner McGuire

- 1) Diseased pecan tree removed from Lupton**
- 2) 2 resignations from committee, Butch and Vicki Rasmussen. Olga Herman's application approved. Possibly Beth Obenschaine may be interested. Volunteer Robin would like to paint the two 8' tables at Lou Mac.**
- 3) Croaker Festival HOT. Kids enjoyed themselves. Need to tackle heat of bouncy slide. Had to shut down early for safety.**
- 4) Budget for 26-27 unsettled, possibly next week.**
- 5) Fall festival estimated expenses. Possibly consider moving to Lupton or Lou Mac. Activities on hold until budget approved.**
 - a) Hoff and Finch \$400 for 3 hours**
 - b) petting zoo @ \$795**

- c) Gary Shelton, magician available \$295 for 30"
- d) Toilet/handwashing \$400
- e) Signs @ \$100
- 6) Discussed using youth grant to help create masterplan for Rec Park
- 7) New grill on hold until budget confirmed
- 8) Inventory for Lou Mac completed

Fall Festival Planning Meeting to be held on MON JUL 20, 2026 at Alice's House

Meeting adjourned at 4:25

Barbara Miller

May 13th Water Advisory Board Update/ Minutes

In attendance: Roger Huth, Diane Miller, Daniel Early, Jeff Sanders, Steve Drew, Lou Ostendorf, Butch Rasmussen,

Project Updates:

1. Valve Project –

- a. parts have been ordered by the contractor.
- b. Delivery time is not confirmed but still anticipated to be within the range provided by the contractor.
- c. Once confirmation is received on delivery date for all materials, we will set the Notice to Proceed.
- d. The expected start time is mid to late July based on the information we have at this time

2. Booster Station

a. Remaining design work:

- i. Electrical design for SCADA configuration and electrical connections ongoing (TRC has passed this off to their electrical engineering contractor)
- ii. Nick is meeting with structural engineer tomorrow to finalize wording and details for the pre-engineered metal buildings and footing loads under the hydro tank. Once this is complete, Nick will submit to DEQ for the Distribution Extension Permit. This review period has a maximum time limit of 45 days which puts the timing for DEQ approval in July.
- iii. Confirmed that TRC can submit for DWI review in parallel with DEQ review – however, DWI cannot approve until the permit is granted by DEQ. So we can request a timeline extension for the grant once we submit to DWI and this can happen in parallel with the DEQ review.

b. WTP Renovations – still not at 50% design

- i. Survey was on site last week. Once finalized survey is on file hitting the 50% design milestone and providing this to you should be pretty quick. Already have info from chemical suppliers as well as aerator and detention tank manufacturers and TRC has worked up the schematic for what needs to happen – just waiting on survey to put the design on paper.
- ii. The current scope of the project is for “Replacement of the aerator and detention tank, relocation of the brine tank, new building and equipment for chemical treatment, and associated electrical and SCADA upgrades.”
 1. Daniel sent a list of needs that includes work outside of the current scope.
 2. Our design engineer thinks that all of the upgrades on the needs list will exceed the budget for this project (estimate was close to \$5M). The Town and TRC needs to discuss if

we are expanding the scope of the current contract, or if we want move forward with the current contract (taking into consideration future upgrades when designing where things are going and how the connect to SCADA) and making a second WTP project to help with the other needs.

3. Ultimately, this may come down to whether the Town is accepting the SRF loan or not. This could provide additional funding to help expand scope.