

Ashuelot Pond & River Watershed Residents  
Washington, NH 03280

22 October 2023

From: APDVD Commissioners  
RE: APDVD Redistricting & Updates

Dear Ashuelot Pond & River Watershed Resident:

The Ashuelot Pond Dam Village District (APDVD) is a municipality that exists to maintain the dam on Ashuelot Pond in Washington, NH (Dam #D245005). Per the requirements outlined in New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) 52:5, the Ashuelot Pond Dam Village District (APDVD) submitted a petition to the Town of Washington, NH Selectmen requesting that the village district boundaries be redrawn to include all properties in the town of Washington that have deeded water access rights to Ashuelot Pond or River or lie in the immediate watershed of the river. Three reasons were given as the basis of the petition: (a) financial hardship due to the current and future upkeep of the dam maintenance warranting an expansion of the district to those properties benefiting from the dam, (b) non-APDVD members with water access rights to Ashuelot Pond enjoy financial benefits that would not otherwise exist if the dam were to be removed, and (c) non-APDVD members with water access rights to Ashuelot Pond enjoy recreational benefits that would not otherwise exist if the dam were to be removed.

You are receiving this letter as you either currently reside in the APDVD or you own property that has been identified for inclusion in the APDVD boundary expansion. Per the requirements of RSA 52:5, the selectmen will send notice of a hearing to discuss the boundary-change proposal. Any boundary changes require ratification by a vote of the voters domiciled in the district and any area proposed to be added to the district. That vote will take place at the 2024 Annual APDVD meeting.

Currently, 322 properties reside in APDVD with a total assessed value of approximately \$89 million. An additional 129 properties that currently do not reside in APDVD but have deeded water access rights have been identified for inclusion with a total assessed value of about \$16.9 million (excluding some tax exempt properties). Between 2007 and 2017, the annual APDVD budget ranged from \$3000/yr to \$5000/yr. Excluding 2021 when sandbags were used as a preventative measure to maintain water levels due to leakage through the gate and difficulty completing work due to the global pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the cost to maintain the dam has steadily increased since 2018, along with the ratio of the dam expenses to total APDVD expenses, with 2022 dam expenses accounting for about 94% of the total budget.

From 2018 to date, the APDVD has spent approximately \$140,000 making necessary repairs to the dam and gate to bring the dam into compliance with state safety standards and conditions outlined by the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) in a 2012 and 2022 Letter of Deficiency (LoD). Item #11 in the 2022 LoD requires, by August 1, 2024, the submission of an application for the reconstruction or removal of the dam consistent with the findings and recommendations from an engineering analysis and approvals from NHDES.

The APDVD is committed to complying with the actions required in the 2022 LoD by the August 1, 2024 deadline and maintaining the dam for the safety of all residents within the Ashuelot Pond and River

watershed. As such, the APDVD voters approved \$100,000 for the capital reserve fund at our 2023 annual meeting and a total budget of \$132,000. The 2022 approved budget was approximately \$31,500 which resulted in a tax rate of \$0.54 per \$1000 of assessed value. For reference, a \$140,000 budget based upon an \$89 million total assessment results in an estimated tax rate of approximately \$1.57 per \$1000 of assessed value. Whereas, a \$140,000 budget based upon a \$106 million total assessment results in an estimated tax rate of approximately \$1.32 per \$1000 of assessed value.

It is too soon to predict the 2024 budget as the APDVD is actively looking for federal grants to supplement our funds. However, the APDVD recognizes the need to increase our budget from average years when dam repairs were not being made due to increased yearly maintenance costs and a means of contributing to the capital reserve fund to ensure funding for future repairs of the dam. For reference, the estimated tax rate per \$1000 of assessed value on a hypothetical \$60,000 budget based upon the current properties in APDVD is about \$0.67; whereas, the estimated tax rate based upon the same budget with the inclusion of the proposed additional properties to APDVD is about \$0.57 per \$1000 of assessed value.

Additional details and documentation will be presented at the upcoming hearing, which provides an opportunity to discuss the budget, history of the maintenance of the dam, current projects, future projects, advantages to becoming an APDVD member (e.g., ability to be a board member, potential for a commissioner who lives local to the dam), and the 2022 letter of deficiency issued by the NHDES.

The APDVD is committed to preserving the recreational and economic benefits of Ashuelot Pond for future generations. The full details of the petition, dam updates, and list of properties to be included by tax map lot numbers are on the APDVD website at <https://www.laeinc.org/copy-of-dam-district>.

Sincerely,

APDVD Commissioners

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Rich Andrusiak  
Gary Carney (Commissioner Chair)  
Gary Mahaffy