

Sewer District Update

CURRENT PROJECTS

The Woodridge Lake Sewer District (WLS D) is currently engaged in two major capital projects approved by the taxpayers of the WLS D: a project to reduce the infiltration and inflow (I/I) of water into the WLS D's 16 miles of sewer pipe to minimize the amount of wastewater to be treated; and a project to upgrade the WLS D's 8 pumping stations which send our wastewater from the collection system to our treatment plant. These projects, together with necessary engineering, are estimated to cost \$1,250,000. The United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD) is funding the costs of these two projects with a 45% grant and a 40 year loan at 3.25%. The USDA-RD has also supervised the competitive bidding process.

The Board expects to complete both of these projects by the fall of this year. Because of the variability of rainfall and the amount of snow-pack, it's difficult to tell with precision, but the portion of the I/I project completed thus far appears to be having a significant impact on the amount of water flowing into our collection system.

FACILITIES PLAN

Almost two years ago, the WLS D submitted its proposed Facilities Plan to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to replace our 45-year-old treatment plant with a new on-site plant. The Board continues to believe that replacement of the plant, on-site, is environmentally sound and should be considerably less expensive than the alternative of building a pipeline and pumping stations to transport our wastewater to Torrington for treatment. However, in response, DEEP staff indicated that they prefer the Torrington alternative and have added elements to an on-site plant replacement that have increased the cost of that alternative considerably. As a result, the Board and its engineering consultants have again reviewed the Torrington alternative in detail to see if the cost of that alternative can be reduced. At this point, the estimated capital costs of the two alternatives are not far apart.

In order to determine how to proceed, the Board and its legal and engineering consultants have continued discussions with USDA-RD and DEEP to determine the amount of grants and loans each agency would be willing to provide to support the two alternatives. Once estimated capital costs and funding are finalized, and if it appears that the Torrington alternative is desirable, the Board will need to meet with Torrington to agree on the cost to the WLS D of having Torrington treat our wastewater. The annual cost of a DEEP approved Facilities Plan to the taxpayers of the WLS D will be the annual cost of the loan from USDA-RD and/or DEEP (after any grants) plus the operating costs of a new plant, or Torrington's charges for treating our wastewater.

Provided there is significant progress on approval of a Facilities Plan and funding, the Board expects to have a meeting with the WLS D taxpayers this summer to update everyone on the Facilities Plan and to understand the annual cost to the taxpayers of an approved Facilities Plan.

ANNUAL MEETING

On Saturday, April 25th there will be a meeting of the taxpayers of the WLS D to elect five taxpayers to serve as Directors as well as one taxpayer to serve on the Sewer Authority and an alternate to serve for a three-year term.

BUDGET MEETING

On Saturday, May 23rd there will be a meeting of the taxpayers of the WLS D to consider the Board's recommended budget for 2015-16. The Board invites all taxpayers to attend.

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