

## **SEWER DISTRICT UPDATE**

### **Facilities Plan**

Last July, the Woodridge Lake Sewer District (WLS D) submitted its proposed new Facilities Plan to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), for approval.

The proposed plan contemplates the replacement of our 40 year old sewage treatment plant with a new plant adjacent to the existing one and discharging the treated effluent to the existing beds. In our opinion, the proposed Facilities Plan meets DEEP's Water Quality Standards, but, does so in a manner somewhat different than DEEP's "guidelines". And as prepared, represents the most cost effective alternative.

On April 10, 2014, we received a letter from DEEP outlining various policy and technical concerns with our proposal. DEEP believes our groundwater disposal fields (to which our wastewater is discharged after treatment) can not absorb the quantity of wastewater we will produce in the future consistent with their technical guidelines. . For that reason, and others, DEEP believes that connecting to the Torrington treatment facility still remains a technically and economically feasible alternative wastewater management option that must be explored further. A copy of the DEEP letter has been posted on the WLS D website.

Before proceeding to respond in writing to the DEEP letter, on May 15, WLS D Board and Planning Committee members, W&C and our environmental counsel from the firm of Shipman & Goodwin met with DEEP staff to discuss our proposal and their letter. We believe DEEP has flexibility in implementing and interpreting the guidelines. However, DEEP advised us that they would continue with their strict interpretation of certain technical elements of their "guidelines" such that they would not approve our local plant alternative as proposed. There was extensive discussion of what upgrades to our proposal would be necessary to gain DEEP's approval. We left the meeting to explore how implementing the DEEP required upgrades to our treatment system would compare to the cost of the Torrington alternative. In the past, W&C had estimated the cost of our "local" alternative at \$11.4 million as compared to \$20.5 million for the Torrington alternative. At the Budget Meeting of taxpayers held on May 24, all of this was explained to the WLS D taxpayers in more detail. We have 30 days from May 15 to indicate to DEEP how we plan to proceed.

### **Funding**

Some time ago, the taxpayers approved two capital projects estimated at \$980,000 to minimize infiltration and inflow (I/I) of water into our sewer system and to upgrade our pumping stations. The Board delayed these projects when we became aware that the United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD) might fund them. On May 12, 2014 the Board received a commitment letter from the USDA-RD that they will fund these projects with a 45% grant and a loan with an interest rate of about 4% for 40 years. The USDA also committed to reimburse us for our costs in the planning for our Facilities Plan, at the same terms.

DEEP had earlier agreed to fund the I/I and pump station projects with a 20% grant and a 2%, 20 year loan although it has yet to be confirmed. The Board has concluded that the terms from the USDA are superior, resulting in lower annual costs to the taxpayers and we plan to proceed with that funding. We believe this project should proceed regardless of the treatment

alternative because it will improve the efficiency of running our collection system and reduce the amount of wastewater to be treated.

### **Sewer Pipe Repairs**

Last year, W&C completed a video inspection of our 16 miles of sewer pipe. W&C identified three locations with serious problems needing of repair. Last winter the WLSO fixed one of these locations at the north end of the lake on West Hyerdale and plans to execute the necessary repairs on the other two this summer on Wellesford Drive near the southern intersection with Sherbrook Drive and on Brynmoor Drive between the two Dresden Circle intersections. This will inevitably cause some inconvenience for residents, but cars will continue to have around the construction areas. We apologize for this inconvenience and will do our best to expedite these necessary repairs.

### **2014/15 Budget**

At the annual Budget Meeting of the WLSO taxpayers, held on May 24, the taxpayers approved the WLSO's proposed new budget and a mill rate of 4.30, the same as the rate for 2013/14.

### **July Taxpayers Meeting**

There will be a public meeting of the taxpayers on in July, 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss the method of distributing the costs of the I/I and pumping station projects among the taxpayers.