

Sewer District Update

For the past several years, the Woodridge Lake Sewer District (WLS D), its Planning Committee and its engineering consultants, Woodard & Curran (W&C) have been working on a new Facilities Plan, as required by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The WLS D's treatment plant is 40 years old and the new Facilities Plan will guide its replacement. Two options are under consideration: building a new treatment plant adjacent to the existing plant; or, building a pipeline and pumping stations to pump the WLS D's wastewater to Torrington.

This past spring and summer, the WLS D met with DEEP management to discuss our recommendations and submitted a preliminary report (the Report), prepared by W&C, to be reviewed by DEEP staff. We asked DEEP for a certain amount of flexibility in their Guidelines for NEW groundwater disposal systems to enable us to continue using our "after treatment" disposal fields and to accommodate the connection of newly constructed houses to our wastewater collection system. The Report recommends a new treatment plant adjacent to the existing plant. Not only do we believe this option will be environmentally sound, but, W&C estimated its cost at \$ 11.5million as compared to \$ 20.5million for the Torrington option. Either option will be expensive for the WLS D taxpayers.

In October of 2012, the taxpayers of the WLS D approved two major capital projects: a project to reduce the inflow and infiltration (I/I) into our sewer system; and a project to upgrade our existing pumping stations. The taxpayers also approved a loan of \$983,000 from DEEP for 20 years at 2%, unless another lender offered more favorable terms.

The 20-year loan was approved by DEEP, and we expected to execute both capital projects this fall. However, earlier this year, we were advised by officials of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), that the WLS D was likely eligible for a 40 year loan from the USDA for the implementation of the new Facilities Plan, inclusive of the I/I and pump station projects. Since, if approved, the USDA loan terms appear superior to those of DEEP we have delayed the I/I and pump station projects to develop a

USDA application, and to make sure that the bidding process for these projects complies with USDA rules. The USDA application has now been submitted. In addition, USDA advised that, under USDA rules, they can only fund the on-site replacement project and not the Torrington pipeline. This makes agreement with DEEP on the on-site solution even more important.

After a review of the preliminary Report last summer, in September DEEP staff asked for a final report and all of W&C's studies and test data, particularly the studies and data related to the disposal capacity of our groundwater disposal fields. The final report and all of the requested data was delivered to DEEP in October. DEEP staff is currently reviewing the final report. When DEEP has completed its review of the final report, we have asked for a meeting at which we will advocate for the on-site replacement of our treatment plant, the continued use of our groundwater disposal fields and an increase in our current treatment limit. WLS D has retained the environmental law firm of Shipman & Goodwin to assist

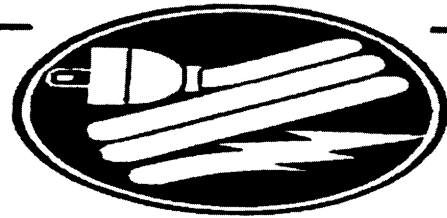


us in these discussions with DEEP. We hope to reach agreement with DEEP on an environmentally sound and economically acceptable Facilities Plan for the WLS D's long-term wastewater treatment and disposal requirements. An article in Breezes advised the taxpayers that, under any circumstances, implementing an approved Facilities Plan will be expensive and our sewer taxes will go up.

As indicated above, W&C inspected our 16 miles of sewer pipe and recommended repairs, which have been included in the I/I project. Several of the problems with the collection system were deemed "serious or severe" by W&C. The Board of the

WLSD therefore determined to go forward this fall with repairs to the segments of our sewer pipe with problems deemed "severe." We have received bids for the work and the two most serious repairs are being completed now. The balance will be addressed later in 2014. Correcting these problems will extend the useful life of the collections system and therefore our audit partner has advised us that the correct treatment of this estimated \$100,000 expense is to charge it against our capital account.

The Board believes its proposed new Facilities Plan complies with all DEEP requirements. The Board has also investigated financing options for implementing the Plan. As developments unfold with DEEP and the financing options, the Board will keep the WLSD community informed.



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