

## AVON WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

May 12, 2016

Selectmen's Chambers, 7:00 p.m.

Town of Avon

### PUBLIC HEARING

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

The Avon Water Pollution Control Authority was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mr. Johansen.

#### AWPCA

Present: Eric Johansen  
Tom Armstrong  
Chris Roy  
Lawrence Baril, Town Engineer  
Tim Foster, Superintendent of Sanitary Sewers

Absent: Terry Ryan

#### II. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING – April 14, 2016

**MOTION:** Mr. Johansen made a motion for approval of the April 14, 2016 minutes. Mr. Armstrong noted a correction on page 3 to clarify the text to reflect what he intended to say which is "...any damage and/or wear and tear ...". Mr. Armstrong made a motion for approval of the April 14, 2016 minutes, as amended. The motion, seconded by Mr. Johansen, received unanimous approval.

**III. COMMUNICATION FROM THE AUDIENCE** – Ms. Namerow from 38 Stony Corners commented on the proposed sewer project adjacent to her neighborhood and submitted a letter and a petition she gathered from her neighborhood. She noted the current proposed sewer project for Stony Corners is slated to end before reaching her section of the neighborhood. She commented the septic systems are about 60 years old, with the exception of one person. She reviewed some of the signatures on the petition and noted she was missing one signature. She believes it's a good selling point for when people are selling their homes. At this point, it seems crazy, people will have to dig up their septic tank when we know, at some point, sewers are very close and therefore we are requesting it is done at this time. Mr. Johansen invited Mr. Baril to provide background information on the project. Mr. Baril noted that the Town has tried, historically, to break up these projects into small components because they are funded from the sewer fund – the Town generally does not bond for them. The Deepwood Sewer project was split into two separate projects. For financial reasons, including bidding the project with prevailing wages, these type of projects have been broken up. The Winding Lane sewer project will be split into two separate projects. In responding to Mr. Johansen's question, Mr. Baril believes the Stony Corners area falls as number three in the priority list. Mr. Baril confirmed Mr. Johansen's comment that requiring prevailing wages can increase the cost of a contractor's labor by up to 45%. The entire cost of that construction is divided among the people who are tying in that area – whether they tie in or not. Ms. Karen Harte of 65 Stony Corners Road inquired how the AWPCA prioritizes sewer projects. Mr. Johansen explained the prioritization study the consultant performed for the entire town identifying those neighborhoods needing sewers. This also ties into the road pavement program. An item that may have a higher importance is when people in the neighborhood want the project to come through. Mr. Baril noted the timing of current sewer projects, such as the Paperchase South project, the Winding Lane South project and the project discussed at tonight's meeting. Mr. Johansen noted that although the other projects have been designed and ready to go, that doesn't mean we can't prioritize and start going ahead and looking at other areas, especially those showing resident interest. Mr. Baril commented on Ms. Harte's comment regarding the water issues in the neighborhood noting

that the high groundwater was a variable included in the consideration for the priority list. Ms. Harte inquired about assessments and how they are calculated. Mr. Johansen noted that the total cost of construction of the project is divided among the people on that street. Mr. Baril noted that parcels who are located in different zones, such as R15 and R30, are typically assessed at different rates. Mr. Baril provided assessments for the past few sewer projects. Mr. Roy provided additional information of costs the benefitting residents pay: in addition to the assessment, when a resident wants to connect to the sewer they pay a connection fee to the Town, and pay a contractor who will connect the sewer from the mainline to the house. The assessment is for design and construction of the main line in the street. Mr. Baril responded to Ms. Namerow's question regarding where the best route for individual laterals would be which is determined by visiting the site and noting potential landscaping issues, driveway, or other concerns that drive cost or are otherwise problematic. Mr. Baril confirmed Ms. Harte's question that typically, a lateral connects close to where the septic tank was located. The Town's typical design intent is to set the depth low enough to facilitate flow by gravity of at least the first floor. The design may or may not include the depth required to guarantee basement discharges. The deeper the sewer is, more expensive it is. Typically, having the mainline deep enough to accommodate the basements of all of the residences will put the sewers very deep and that will drive the costs up. Ms. Namerow inquired about the timing of the project. Mr. Johansen mentioned there are a couple other potential areas we are looking at but this certainly meets the criteria to be towards the top and we will start to do the preliminary surveying of the area to determine what needs to be done. Typically there will be soil borings and a general assessment of each individual house to get an idea on how deep the line will be. Survey work needs to be done. We are looking at some time next year – earliest before we can get it out to bid. Mr. Baril noted the good news it's a continuation on an area we are already planning. That assumes the Winding Lane South project goes. If those bids come in high, if there was an overwhelming negative sentiment because of the cost of the project and that project doesn't go, this project can't go. Mr. Baril responded to Ms. Namerow's question stating if the Winding Lane South project doesn't go, we will have to look at this project in a different way. We will have to look at the Stony Corners project as its own project. Mr. Roy noted that the Winding Lane neighborhood came in with a petition also – just like yours. They have an interest already. It's not like it's been thrown at them out of the clear blue. Mr. Johansen noted that most successful projects we've had had someone like you getting everyone in the neighborhood to understand and have the correct information from a source they trust. Mr. Baril responded to Ms. Harte's question the best way to keep track of the project is to read the AWPCA minutes. The AWPCA meeting is held monthly.

Mr. Baril responded to Ms. Namerow's question about utilities noting he will reach out to the gas company and Avon Water to gauge their interest. Mr. Foster added that the water company will install water only if there's an interest. Mr. Baril encouraged residents to reach out to the utility companies directly with a petition, similar to how you prepared one for those residents interested in sanitary sewers. Mr. Armstrong replied to Ms. Harte's question to contact the Farmington Valley Health District regarding any questions relating to water quality.

Mr. Johansen invited anyone else from the audience to speak. Noting there was no further discussion from the audience, the meeting will continue.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS –**

##### **2016 – 7 Public Hearing regarding proposed increase for sewer use fee**

**MOTION:** Mr. Johansen made a motion to open the public hearing. The motion, seconded by Mr. Armstrong, received unanimous approval.

Mr. Johansen provided background on the agenda item noting it's an item that is looked at this time of year. Mr. Armstrong noted the current fee is \$335 and prior discussion included increasing it to \$350. Generally speaking, it is in line or below with the Valley use fees. We expect major increases to the Farmington upgrade system, which is a \$58 million upgrade to their system. Avon will be asked to pick up a portion of the share of that charge. When there are upgrades, there are amendments to these agreements that increases the cost to Avon for the delivery of sewage to those towns. Mr. Baril clarified that the amendment is typically related to our having to pay our proportional share for the upgrade cost. We don't pay any more for the transfer of the effluent. We pay for the treatment of effluent, which increases annually due to energy or chemical costs or regulatory requirements. Mr. Armstrong noted we have increased it a small amount in the last several years by somewhere between \$10 and \$15 just to keep in base with inflation and knowing we have Farmington coming down the road. Mr. Johansen noted that most people's preference is to have smaller increases every year than to react to a substantial increase every time. The increase is in line with what the Town budget increase is every year.

Mr. Armstrong explained the public hearing process involved before raising the rate. He invited people from the audience to comment. Ms. Harte mentioned it seems like a reasonable increase. With no additional comments from the audience, Mr. Johansen closed the public portion of the hearing.

**MOTION:** Mr. Armstrong made a motion to increase the annual rate for sewage use charge by \$15 to \$350 annually effective July 1. The motion, seconded by Mr. Roy, received unanimous approval.

#### **V. OLD BUSINESS -**

##### **2016 – 4 Potential Sewer Connection Charge Increase**

Mr. Baril noted the current rate for a residential connection is \$2,500. Mr. Foster reviewed area towns' connection charges. In response to Mr. Armstrong's question, Mr. Baril explained that you can't really differentiate where the connection fee goes because we don't have separate accounts that include the connection fees and revenue accounts and what is paid from those accounts. We have one fund of money whereby we do all the sewer extensions, operations, maintenance, treatment costs, treatment plant upgrade, quarterly payments. Essentially it all comes out of one fund. As more connections happen, the number of connections potential will continue to drop. Sometime in the future, Avon will be 100% sewerred and there won't be any more connection fees. Once you pay for a connection fee (with the current regulations), you don't pay again. When that happens, the user fee will have to make up the difference. An increase has not happened for about 7 years. We should keep our revenues above our costs so we can continue to do our sewer extensions without bonding them.

Mr. Armstrong noted recent projects such as easement clearing and the pumps that needed to be replaced. Mr. Armstrong discussed a Two Tier System concept in which if there's new connection with no leach field, no existing system whatsoever - maybe it gets a connection fee that is higher. For existing structures, if there is a leach field of some nature, that will have a lower connection fee. He rationalized it in a number of ways. Under a new construction type project, that can be financed in the resale between contractor and developer. In the existing

structure, it may have to be financed by some of the owners. Their systems potentially have some existing value to them, whereas the new construction, they need to connect or pay for a septic system. The cost of the connection fee to them would be far cheaper than laying in the leach field. He would like to consider requiring a lower fee, hypothetically, if they connect within a year, but after that they may have to pay a higher rate. This is a concept he wanted to throw out for everyone to think about for the next month. Mr. Foster replied to Mr. Armstrong's question that he's aware of one town who charges based on a tier system. The Town of Simsbury provides a tier system for apartments based on square footage. They're providing a break for the smaller apartments.

Mr. Johansen inquired if there were any further discussion regarding connection fee increases. Mr. Jim Thompson, Engineer from Buck & Buck introduced himself stating he was in attendance on behalf of the Towpath Condominium Association. He was asked to attend the meeting by their attorney. He is in the process of revising the cost estimates of sewers to serve that condominium. Mr. Thompson noted he was in attendance to see what the Commission is considering regarding sewer connection fees. He believes that there are 75 units in that complex. He's been working on getting the project since 1999. He noted that he's conveyed to them that the price keeps on going up and the problem gets worse. Mr. Thompson is designing the project so that it is being constructed by one contractor. The people just have to pay the bill. Ms. Harte inquired how the residents will be assessed. Mr. Thompson replied the condo association will pay for the entire installation. They will also have to pay for the connection fee and pay for the inspections. Mr. Armstrong mentioned he couldn't tell Mr. Thompson where the Commission is going in terms of the connection fee because we don't know yet.

Mr. Thompson mentioned he could tell the people the fee is going up but doesn't know how much. Mr. Johansen noted the public hearing is a couple months away. Mr. Foster noted it's in their best interest to get this area connected.

Mr. Armstrong mentioned Mr. Thompson should focus on when it's going to get done because there will be a commencement date for any new rate.

Mr. Foster provided calculations for the Towpath connection at the current connection rate vs what it may be at a potentially increased amount.

#### **2016 – 6 Potential Sanitary Sewer Service for portions of Winding Lane and Stony Corners South (previously 2015 - 1)**

Mr. Baril noted he has the bid document and hopes to get it out next week.

He anticipates receiving bids around June 6. Mr. Baril reviewed the bid process and indicated that the Commission will need to plan on the public information meeting to review with residents.

#### **2016 – 8 Potential Sanitary Service for Paperchase Trail South**

Mr. Baril noted the project is ready to go out to bid.

#### **2016 – 2 Annual Discussion to establish sewer use (EDU) rate**

*Please see above agenda item 2016 – 7 Public Hearing regarding proposed increase for sewer use fee*

**VI PLANNING & ZONING MATTERS** – Mr. Baril provided a report on the Avon Village Center. They are providing design updates on a weekly basis although there has been limited design on infrastructure. Further information will be provided as it becomes available.

**VII COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF** – Mr. Baril provided an update on the Garden Home project in Simsbury noting the developer's attorney has provided a draft amendment for the intermunicipal agreement with Simsbury to address the flow route. He is working with the Town of Avon's attorney to revise the draft. One question of concern is whether Avon should collect fee(s) for the connection.

In response to Ms. Essex's question, Mr. Baril reviewed the letter received from Mr. Keith Yoreo of 76 Paperchase Trail, who is opposed to the Paperchase project. Mr. Yoreo had a thought on reversing the connection fee vs. the assessment fee. He brought this to the Commission's attention to go on record saying this is Mr. Yoreo's position and he wanted you to be aware. Mr. Armstrong noted he understands his point but it doesn't pay the cost to put the pipe into the ground.

**VIII COMMUNICATION FROM MEMBERS** – Mr. Armstrong provided feedback from a recent CAWPCA annual meeting he attended where he received a clear sense that the State will be tighter on grant money and I&I grant money has fallen off the priority list. He commented on low flow systems based on conversations he had at the annual meeting.

**IX OTHER BUSINESS** – None

**X ADJOURNMENT** –

**MOTION:** Mr. Johansen motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. The motion, seconded by Mr. Roy, received unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Essex, Clerk