

Avon Water Pollution Control Authority
June 8, 2023 – 7:00pm
Via GoToMeeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Avon Water Pollution Control Authority was called to order at 7:08pm via GoToMeeting by Chairperson Eric Johansen.

AWPCA – Roll Call:

Present: Eric Johansen, Chairperson
Chris Roy
Micah Rousey
Pam Monroe
Lawrence Baril, Town Engineer

II. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

May 11, 2023

On a motion made by Mr. Roy and seconded by Mr. Rousey it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Authority approves the minutes of the May 11 meeting as drafted.
Messrs.: Roy, Rousey, and Monroe voted in favor.

III. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE

Audience in attendance: Jenna Campbell-114 Stony Corners Circle, Rebecca Sahl-64 Stony Corners Circle, Chip Walters-56 Stony Corners, Seth Hayes-81 Stony Corners Circle, David Sladewski-44 Stony Corners, Emma Leary-104 Stony Corners Circle, Anne Yurch-6 Stony Corners Circle, Elie Joseph-120 Stony Corners Circle, John Ferrantino-7 Stony Corners Circle

The Authority gave consensus to enter into a Public Information Meeting at 7:11 p.m. to discuss item 2023-2.

IV. NEW BUSINESS - None

V. OLD BUSINESS

2023 – 2 Stony Corners – Sewer Extension

Mr. Baril gave a presentation (which is attached and made part of these minutes). Mr. Johansen asked the audience for any questions regarding the information provided and to state their name and address for the recording of this meeting. Mr. Rousey asked to clarify with Mr. Baril if you are not on public water, and on a well service, then your sewer charge if you are connected to the sewer would be the minimum that the Town of Avon levies, not based on water usage? Mr. Baril responded no, the flat rate

for sewer users on wells is what was deemed as the average rate (\$530.46) it is not the minimum charged. Mr. Sladewski at 44 Stony Corners asked if a determination was made on all the homes that would require a pump versus a gravity connection. Mr. Baril responded that Matt Brown, Assistant Town Engineer could answer that question. Mr. Sladewski questioned the size of the low-pressure sewer pipe. Mr. Baril responded that 3" could in fact carry a large amount of sewer. Ms. Sahl at 64 Stony Corners Circle asked when the Town would decide if they could take on the cost of paving, as that would make a difference in what one might choose. Mr. Baril responded that even if the permanent pavement was taken out, the benefit assessments would still be the highest assessments ever levied by the WPCA. Mr. Johansen responded that while it's not necessarily open to a vote, the Authority certainly wants participation from the public and would ask for more feedback to see where residents are coming from as most assessments in the past have been in the \$20,000 range. Mr. Johansen explained that the reason the Authority compares everything to gravity is because gravity sewers require the least maintenance and until recently constructing them could be done at a reasonable cost and once the sewers were installed, the Town would manage them and there was very little impact on the residents. The pump systems obviously require more from the individual user, and they also have the limitation that without electricity they don't work. Mr. Johansen stated that unfortunately because of soil conditions in the town and cost, the Authority is looking into pump systems more, but the preference would always be gravity on the big picture and the best benefit for the Town and residents long-term. But the AWPCA considers cost and to avoid forcing anyone into a very expensive system they may not want or need right now. Ms. Sahl asked if everyone in the neighborhood is on wells? Mr. Baril responded yes; everyone is on a well. Ms. Sahl clarified that if you don't have a generator, you lose your well. Ms. Sahl asked if it is correct that in a low-pressure system that the pump is typically located outside underground? Mr. Baril responded yes typically; they can be located in a basement, but he would highly recommend against that. Resident asked if the decision on which type of system to design strictly come from a recommendation out of engineering? Mr. Baril responded no, the WPCA has the authority to decide how this goes in the best interest of the residents. Mr. Johansen stated that the WPCA has the authority to put system in where needed, as one of the considerations is that residents are in an area where they are on wells and one of the factors people don't consider is even if these septic systems are not outwardly failing and backing up into the house, the soil conditions over the years, the leach fields get clogged up and they don't work very well and there is a tendency for the sewage to not filter through in the way it is intended and hangup into the higher ground water. This is not a very sanitary system and so one of the considerations the Authority makes is if there is any area where there are a lot of failures, in addition to needing to have the option to have sewers in that area, it is also a health issue. But the purpose of this discussion is to get input; the Authority doesn't want to force this on people. Mr. Johansen stated there are also benefits to property values being on city sewers. Mr. Sladewski asked if the assessment, as assessed over the course of 10 years, and the property owner were to sell, is that something that would go on to the new homeowner? Mr. Johansen stated that the assessment gets settled out with the original owner during the sale of the property. Ms. Joseph at 120 Stony Corners asked if there is a percentage of failed septic systems or the number of permits that have been pulled to replace the systems specifically in this neighborhood. Mr. Baril responded that on occasion we get information from the FVHD about failing septic systems, which is a driver in this program. However, the primary driver for this project is not the current number of septic failures in this neighborhood. Ms. Joseph asked if this is a town-wide initiative and what percentage of homes in the town have transferred over to sewer? Mr. Baril responded that it is not a town-wide initiative, and every

neighborhood is treated uniquely. Currently out of roughly 7,200 parcels about 3,600 are connected to public sewer. There are a number of parcels that have access, but have not yet connected to sewer. Mr. Baril indicated that there are 36 homes that would front on the sewer. All 36 properties will be able to connect, but the cost to make the physical connection to the house is variable because it depends on the specific situation at each lot and how the lateral is routed to the connection point for each house. Mr. Rousey stated the connection cost is going vary from house to house. Mr. Johansen stated he wanted to make clear it is not an agenda or plan of the Authority to put sewers in the entire town. The wastewater management plan needs matrix that was put together was strictly to guide the Authority towards areas that would have the most need and also managing that against the Town's plan of paving roads to make sure they are not going into a road where they have already paved a road and going in with sewers afterwards. Most of the projects in the last several years have gone on resident request and need to look into the feasibility of putting a system in their neighborhood. Seth Hayes at 81 Stony Corners Circle asked about the contractor price for a low-pressure sewer connection. Mr. Baril responded that with low pressure sewers the contractor will have more flexibility about where the pipe is run on the property in addition to lower costs for pipe size and that the machinery used by the contractor is generally smaller because it is a smaller line. There is a downside in that the resident has to buy a pump and it requires electricity to run which is not required for a gravity system. But there is no guarantee a low-pressure system will be less expensive. Ms. Sahl asked with the pump and connection to the house, if you have a septic in the back, does that mean you have to have a hook-up in the back or is there a way to hook-up in the front, and how big is the pump and where does it go? Mr. Baril responded typically the most logical connection point for gravity or low-pressure is close to your existing septic tank. Having said that if you don't have a finished basement and your basement is setup such that it makes sense to reroute your exit point from the back yard to the front yard, often times people can save money by doing that, but that means doing some plumbing in your basement which will come with a cost, but the connection can come out the front of your house, then that could potentially be financially beneficial. The pump is in 24"-34" in diameter and 4'-5' tall. Mr. Johansen asked Mr. Baril if a questionnaire was sent to residents. Mr. Baril responded that a survey was done approximately 2-3 years ago, and Stony Corners neighborhood had about 60% respondents with the majority in favor. Mr. Johansen stated he would like to engage in an additional survey before any further decision was made. Mr. Walters at 56 Stony Corners stated in the chat that he would be happy to go door to door to help get people to respond. Mr. Johansen asked the residents to encourage everyone in the neighborhood to respond to the survey so that we get a lot of feedback so the Authority can move forward and make a decision. Ms. Sahl asked if the changeover for the water quality in the river? Mr. Johansen stated that Avon doesn't have a wastewater treatment plant, all affluent goes either to Simsbury, Farmington, or Canton. There is potential for areas specifically close to the river with failed septic systems for sewage to go directly into shallow ground water and can go directly into the river. For the overall good of the Town, having sewers in his opinion is the best option for the Town and the environment. Mr. Baril stated that a survey would go out to all the residents and realistically the results would be shared at the September meeting. Mr. Rousey read a comment as written from Ms. Yurch at 6 Stony Corners Circle, there are residents that have been waiting to get this underway. Unfortunately, some have moved. The worry is if a system fails, as was mentioned by Larry, residents have an option if the sewers are constructed. Mr. Rousey responded that he agreed with conducting another survey when 60% of the residents responded in favor from the last survey and he would hate for a system to fail in the next two months while waiting for responses. Mr. Johansen stated his concern is

that the original survey is now dated, there could be new people living in these neighborhoods, and also the pricing for construction and pavement is staggering. Mr. Johansen asked Mr. Baril what happens if a septic system does fail in a neighborhood where there is already a plan to install sewers, is there an alternative. Mr. Baril responded if there is a failed septic system and Farmington Valley Health District knows that there is a possibility of bringing in sewers, they will try to work with the homeowner to limp the system along. Another option is to pump weekly, which can be costly. FVHD will not kick the residents out of their home for a failed septic system in these neighborhoods. Mr. Baril stated that the survey and getting the results back in September will not affect the timeline for construction.

On a motion made by Mr. Rousey and seconded by Mr. Roy it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Authority close the Public Information portion of the meeting at 8:23pm. Messrs.: Johansen, Roy, Rousey, and Monroe voted in favor.

2021 – 7 Benefit Assessments – Sub-dividable lots – No Update

VI. PLANNING & ZONING MATTERS – No Update

VII. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

Mr. Baril stated that Towpath sewers is still on the docket to happen. The easement was placed on the Town Council agenda at their June 1, 2023 meeting and should be acted on the end of July when the easement will be grantable. Mr. Baril expects their project to begin construction in the first or second week of July. Mr. Baril shared that Timber Lane project hasn't started yet which is to our benefit to a degree because there was concern the contractor would affect school bus traffic, but as it happens there have been some delays with this contractor. Mr. Baril stated that the contractor was awarded the contract and getting ready to do shop drawing submittals and calls the department to say they have a problem with some of the unit numbers. Mr. Baril went to meet the contractor in the field and all of sudden there is a problem with pavement and other concerns, to which the contractor stated they never look at the details until awarded a project. Mr. Baril stated he had never heard of such a thing. The contractor has one issue with manhole spec that should be ironed out shortly, and then under construction in the next couple weeks. Mr. Rousey asked if the contractor was demanding more money? Mr. Baril responded that the contractor was trying.

VIII. COMMUNICATION FROM MEMBERS

Mr. Johansen stated that a new Vice-Chairman needed to be appointed. Mr. Rousey is currently working on a new member for the board as well. Mr. Johansen suggested the Vice-Chairperson be elected at this meeting.

On a motion made by Mr. Johansen and seconded by Ms. Monroe it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Authority appointed Mr. Chris Roy to the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Avon Water Pollution Control Authority.

Messrs.: Johansen, Rousey, and Monroe voted in favor.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Johansen addressed Mr. Thomas Armstrong to thank him for his 10+ years of service to not only the Town of Avon's WPCA, but all his hard work overall. Mr. Armstrong responded that he is already in talks to join additional town boards in the town of Reading, MA where he has moved. Mr. Armstrong stated he really enjoyed his time on the board and working with everyone on the board. Mr. Rousey reiterated his thanks for Mr. Armstrong's help in orienting him to the board and doing the same for Mr. Rousey's wife as an alternate on the Planning & Zoning committee. Mr. Rousey hopes to do the same for any incoming members.

X. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Ms. Monroe and seconded by Mr. Roy, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Authority adjourn the meeting at 8:40pm.

Messrs.: Johansen, Roy, Rousey, and Monroe voted in favor.

Attest: Nicole Chambers, AWPCA Clerk