

AVON WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

October 13, 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 7:05 pm by Mr. Johansen and noted that the meeting will begin with the Public Hearing portion of the meeting for School Street.

AWPCA

Present: Eric Johansen, Chairman
Terry Ryan, Vice Chairman
Tom Armstrong
Chris Roy
Lawrence Baril, Town Engineer
Tim Foster, Superintendent of Sanitary Sewers
Absent: Keith Jones

II. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING – September 8, 2016

MOTION: Mr. Johansen inquired whether anyone had any comments of the September 8, 2016 minutes. Mr. Armstrong noted one correction to be made on the first page. Mr. Armstrong made a motion for approval of the September 8, 2016 minutes, as amended. The motion, seconded by Mr. Ryan, received unanimous approval.

III. COMMUNICATION FROM THE AUDIENCE – Please see below.

IV. NEW BUSINESS – None

V. OLD BUSINESS -

2015 – 8 Potential Sanitary Sewer Service for School Street

Mr. Johansen invited Mr. Baril to begin the presentation he prepared for the Potential Sanitary Sewer Project for School Street, which included the following: (Note full presentation is on the Town of Avon's web site).

- 1) Primary Drivers for the project – The School Street area is considered a high need area as evaluated with the Sewer Facilities Plan, planned road improvements, there are currently three homes which have private utilities within the public right of way, requests received from several residents, age of septic systems and the School Street area abuts existing public sewer.
- 2) Project Goals – To provide sanitary sewer service to each residence (ideally by gravity), minimize disturbance to environment and resident's lots, locate laterals for each lot with owner input, locate manholes to minimize driver impediments, complete road paving after project is complete (assuming Town budget approves) and to provide the most reasonable cost alternative to the residents who benefit.
- 3) General Project Cost Drivers - Various factors can affect the cost of the project such as the depth of sewer, size of pipe, number of manholes, existence of ledge rock and groundwater, backfill material, access to existing sewer to connect to, bidding contractor's work load and cost of materials.

- 4) Gravity Sewer Path – Mr. Baril provided a map which depicts how it's physically possible to go by gravity to New Road and north to Smith Road, however there are certain issues with going via gravity. Issues include: the topography on New Road near the intersection of Blanchard will require a 20 foot deep sewer, evidence of outcroppings on New Road will likely require blasting, homes on New Road located in the area of blasting are close to the road and have older foundations, significantly longer construction time and impacts to neighborhood. There are significantly higher construction costs and therefore costs to benefitting residents. Another alternative to look into is Low Pressure Sewers
- 5) Pros of Lower Pressure Sewers – Reduces the cost per foot of areas raised (due to shallower sewer and time to construct and material costs reduction), reduces the impact to entire project area (reduces restoration costs), will reduce construction time, reduces the amount of clean dry backfill required, will result in a significantly lower assessment, cost of lateral for pumps is lower and the route is more flexible, (in most cases) can provide basement level access to sewers. Cons of lower pressure sewers – Will require all homes to pump up to the sewer, pumps are owned, powered and maintained by homeowners, pumps generally cost ~ \$4,000 plus installation, pumps are powered by electricity (lose power means lose pump unless on a back-up generator), systems generally have a storage capacity equal to a day – this has options.
- 6) Project Specifics – Approximately 1200 feet of sanitary main, 3 manholes, 18 service lateral stubs, depth of mainline approximately 4.5 feet, road will be partially closed during construction, construction timeline estimate is approximately 2 to 3 weeks, temporary pavement over disturbed roadway, complete road overlay commensurate with other roadway projects. Mr. Baril commented that if one does the cost benefit, the Town of Avon feels low pressure sewers are the most logical choice for this neighborhood.
- 7) Work completed to date – Performed soil borings, identified and evaluated options for the sewer, prepared preliminary design, met with low pressure representative (eOne vendor), spoke to numerous municipalities that have low pressure systems, prepared preliminary cost estimates and prepared the public information meeting. Mr. Baril commented that the Town of Avon does not have experience in low pressure sewers directly. The Town does not own any of these systems, however the Town knows it will get into low pressure systems as noted in the Sewer Facilities Plan. There are numerous areas that are targeted for low pressure systems. Mr. Baril added that he received favorable feedback from area towns regarding their experience with low pressure sewers and the Sewer Superintendent of the Town of Avon lives on a low pressure system and has had a good experience.
- 8) Assessment Estimates – The AWPCA levies an assessment which pays for the cost of the design and construction of the mainline sewers. This is well defined by state statute. The Town contacted a local contractor and their project estimate was \$163,000. The **estimated** assessment per property is \$9,590 to \$10,190. The number of properties serviced is 18. Mr. Baril noted there are three properties that are connected by low pressure sewer to the existing sewer at Volvoski. They were done so as a stop-gap for people who had issues with their septic systems. Mr. Baril mentioned that he believes that either they were going to have to spend a lot on septic repairs or the Town allowed them to connect through the right of way and effectively create a private utility in the public right of way. This is not a desirable situation for the Town or the residents in front of whose homes these properties where the utilities are run. Two properties paid assessments when they connected – 50 and 51 School Street
- 9) Other costs – There are additional costs incurred at time of connection such as the connection charge, connection cost to the contractor hired by homeowner, annual sewer use fee and the sewer permit fee. Residents are not required to connect just because

there is sewer available. If there is a failing septic system, the jurisdiction is under the Farmington Valley Health District who may request a homeowner to connect to Town sewer if it's available.

- 10) Possible project schedule – The final design will be completed in December with other scheduled projects to consider such as bidding the project, awarding the project and ending with anticipating complete construction in Spring 2017.

Mr. Baril reviewed the commonly asked questions handout which answered such common questions as whether a resident is required to connect, questions regarding the assessment and other costs and additional information about the pump system.

At the conclusion of Mr. Baril's presentation, Mr. Johansen invited audience members to ask questions, requesting they state their name and address for the record.

Mr. Baril replied to Mr. Richard Bunnell's question of 65 School Street that the slide presentation will be on the Town of Avon's web site and also his question that assessing a property by frontage is not done.

Mr. Del Tepley of 10 High Wood Circle inquired about the potential sewer project for his neighborhood noting a petition was circulated. Mr. Baril noted design for that project will happen over the winter and more information will be forthcoming in the coming months.

Mr. Baril replied to Ms. Mauro's question of 60 School Street, that a letter noting her support for public sewers will be accepted should she not be able to attend another meeting in person.

Mr. Baril clarified for Mr. Grant Hagedorn of 64 School Street on how the assessment is calculated based on the number of properties serviced if the project were to include Volovski and Smith Roads.

Mr. Baril replied to Mr. Mauro's question that the size of the mainline is approximately 2 ½ inch.

Ms. Sally Noonan of 61 School Street inquired what costs are involved to discontinue use of one's septic system. Mr. Baril replied what's required by Farmington Valley Health District such as crushing and filling the tank with soil. At the time of hiring a contractor, that needs to be part of the job. Licensed contractors in the Farmington Valley are aware of this requirement. Mr. Baril replied to Ms. Noonan's question that the pump will still work should the power go out and the homeowner is the only home on the street with a generator. Mr. Baril explained the technical specifics of how the process works.

Mr. Baril replied to Mr. Paul Dowd's question of 4 Highwood Drive noting potential sewer extension for his neighborhood could happen in 2018.

Mr. Baril provided additional specifics for the pump based on Mr. Hagedorn's request. There is a control panel and alarm system with a built-in transfer switch. Mr. Foster provided additional information and encouraged residents to look at the eOne web site which provides illustrations on how the system works and also noted he has been on an eOne system for 11 years and has never had a back-up.

Mr. Kevin Royer of 70 School Street inquired what would happen should the three homeowners who are currently connected to public sewer resist a potential assessment should they be assessed. Mr. Johansen noted the Avon Water Pollution Control Authority has the

authority to determine whether a system goes in or not. He explained the authority does not take a vote but takes a consensus into consideration. Once the project is approved, everyone who is on in the area has to pay the assessment. It's levied regardless of whether you want to participate or not. Mr. Johansen provided a personal narrative noting he was able to hook into the Town's sewer system once his septic system failed. Mr. Johansen further noted that a payment over ten years offers the homeowner insurance that there's an alternative should anything happen to one's septic system. He has heard around town that having the sewer available is worth a lot more than the cost of an assessment in terms of trying to sell one's house and having a septic tank is considered a stigma. Almost every septic tank requires work, testing and slows down the process at the sale's closing. Mr. Johansen mentioned people are finding that if an assessment is \$10,000, one will get at least that much back on the sale of your house. It is adding value to your house.

Ms. Mauro inquired whether the three homes which currently have private sewers be allowed to keep them. Mr. Johansen replied that the Authority will look into the situation noting there is a concern with the Town's right-of-way and it's Mr. Johansen's understanding those were temporary fixes instead of putting in a new, expensive septic system, there was allowance for pumping. If someone has a pump, the Authority will make sure the pump system is compatible.

Mr. Armstrong provided clarification that the benefit assessment is the only cost the Authority considers for the ten-year payback period. It does not include other costs such as the sewer connection charge and running the line from the mainline into your house. He further clarified which costs a homeowner is responsible for (if the project does move forward) should he/she choose to connect or not connect.

Ms. Rose LeBlanc of 107 New Road inquired how one's property valuation and property tax is changed should a homeowner decide to connect. Mr. Baril suggested the question is appropriate for the Town Assessor to address but believes it does not affect one's property tax value.

Mr. Mauro inquired about next steps. Mr. Baril noted the public hearing portion of the meeting will close and decision is with the AWPCA whether the project moves or does not move forward. Mr. Armstrong added that if the public information is closed and if there is a vote to go out for a bid, nothing happens. There will be another public hearing, once the bids are received. You will receive notice again as to the results of the bids and then the Authority has to vote again if the discussion is to go forward with the project. If this hearing is closed today, the project is not necessarily going forward. The public will have another opportunity to comment. Mr. Johansen noted the Town completes the design phase and is independent of the cost. This is completed before the Town goes out to bid.

A question was raised about how the assessment is handled when a house is sold. Mr. Baril noted the Authority made a change to the regulations that at the time of the property transfer, the assessment is to be paid in full. Mr. Roy added there is a lien placed on a property for the value of the assessment until the assessment is paid off.

Mr. Hagedorn thanked the commission for the helpful information and inquired how the process works to let the Board know how the residents feel. Mr. Johansen noted the decision time is when the costs come in. Mr. Hagedorn mentioned he is in favor of the project. Mr. Foster invited residents to show how they feel by either writing a letter, voicing an opinion at an AWPCA meeting or stopping into the Engineering Office – whatever way they feel comfortable.

Ms. Mauro noted she has an older septic system and mentioned potential buyers did not want to buy her house given the age of the septic system. She spoke to the Farmington Valley Health District who mentioned they would prefer she does not replace her septic system due to the high water table in her area. Ms. Mauro said she is in a waiting period until the Town decides if they move forward with sewers. Her home is off the market. Ms. Mauro said she and Mr. Mauro vote “yes” for the project.

Mr. John Noonan understands the two obstacles going down with the sewer line and asked what the greatest obstacle is and inquired if anyone has explored potential subsidies from the state or federal government to reduce the cost. Mr. Baril responded that there is a risk to the homes that are near the street and the cost for blasting are two factors considered for choosing not to blast. He added it's not impossible but it's not physically practical. Mr. Baril confirmed Mr. Noonan's question that residents will learn more about project costs once the bids come in.

Ms. Noonan inquired about the life of the pump and whether there is a warranty. Mr. Foster noted that eOne offers a warranty. Mr. Baril noted it would be ideal to have the eOne representative attend the next meeting. Mr. Foster added there is about a 10 year (minimum) for the life of the pump but it also depends on how homeowners take care of the system.

Ms. Mauro inquired about the agenda— Potential Sewer Connection Charge Increase and wondered about if the potential increase will happen before the residents are ready to connect. Mr. Armstrong replied “yes” but added Ms. Mauro could ask to be grandfathered into the existing fee.

Mr. Bunnell expressed his appreciation for all the hard work and noted he is in favor of continuing the project.

Mr. Foster addressed a resident's question regarding specifics on the electrical load and noted additional information is on the eOne's web site. The resident from 75 School Street said he is in favor of a sewer system.

Mr. Royer inquired about the high water table in the area. Mr. Baril replied that it's been a factor of consideration for the project.

Mr. Johansen closed the public hearing and expressed appreciation to the members in the audience. Mr. Baril handed out the ‘frequently asked questions’ document to audience members.

MOTION: Mr. Johansen made a motion to move forward with the design of the system and move forward to the point of putting it out to bid. The motion, seconded by Mr. Roy, received unanimous approval.

Mr. Johansen reviewed the situation with the three parcels who have connected to the Town's sewer and discussed the best way to manage the assessment process and the current pump equipment, which is privately owned. Mr. Baril reviewed the assessment history of the three parcels on School Street who have connected to the Town's sewer system. He noted the third parcel signed a sewer connection agreement in 2013 which stated the homeowner realizes they will connect to the Town's sewer system once it's available and also realizes there will be an assessment owed. Mr. Foster offered additional background regarding the fees paid by the parcels and noted the feasibility study was just starting and inquired whether the projection of going down School Street may have not even been on the table in the Engineering Department

at that time. Discussion continued regarding how many parcels to ultimately use in the assessment equation.

2016 – 4 Potential Sewer Connection Charge Increase

Mr. Armstrong recommended going out to a pre-bid RFP and inquired about members' input as he would like to receive some preliminary information so the Board has something substantive to act upon. Mr. Baril noted it's possible to issue an RFI (Request for Information), put together a brief scope of services inquiring about costs, recommended approach and then send it out publicly. Mr. Baril noted there is an interest to get the sewer connection changed in a timely manner such as before the Town Center is constructed. There has to be some justification. Mr. Ryan noted the cost for the Town of Farmington upgrade. Mr. Armstrong acknowledged he understands there is a consensus from members to move forward with an RFI and there isn't a need for a vote.

2016 – 8 Potential Sanitary Sewer Service for Paperchase Trail South

Mr. Baril noted he received an approval letter from Inland Wetlands Commission allowing the Town to go through the property (at 30 Paperchase Trail). The next step is to secure the easement (from 30 Paperchase Trail). Mr. Baril noted the Town needs a letter or some description from the lawyer that gives an agreement that the homeowner can live with, such as the AWPCA acknowledges that the homeowner will have no out of pocket expenses for the installation of sanitary sewers including the restoration of her property and the connection of her two buildings to the sewer. Mr. Baril confirmed the Town is waiving the assessment and the connection charge but there will be an annual sewer use fee. Mr. Baril replied to Mr. Roy's question that once the easement is in place, the Town does not make the connection right away. The key is to get the easement in place. Mr. Baril replied to Mr. Roy's question that the intention is to go out to bid in late December or early January for both the Paperchase Trail and Winding Lane / Stony Corners project.

2016 – 10 Potential Sanitary Sewer Service Extension for Jackson Street

Mr. Baril clarified Mr. Armstrong's question regarding the developer's intention for low pressure systems relative to imposing a benefit assessment. Mr. Foster provided additional information based on a conversation he had with the developer. Mr. Baril noted the agenda item should be tabled until the project becomes more specific.

VI PLANNING & ZONING MATTERS – Mr. Armstrong noted the owner of Avon Mill Apartments/Condos approached Planning & Zoning with a possible intention of adding additional units to Avon Mill. Mr. Baril noted he recently heard of the possibility of Avon Mill adding two new buildings, which would have 60 units each. He further noted the sewer allocation should be reviewed as the Town did not anticipate the additional 120 units, which would all go through the Route 44 Pump Station. The capacity of the piping should be evaluated. Avon Place condos go through the same structure that Avon Mills which goes through the same structure as River Meade.

VII COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF – None

VIII COMMUNICATION FROM MEMBERS – None

IX OTHER BUSINESS – None

X ADJOURNMENT –

MOTION: Mr. Johansen motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. The motion, seconded by Mr. Ryan, received unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Essex, Clerk