

AVON WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

March 8, 2018

Selectmen's Chambers, 5:30 p.m.

Town of Avon

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

AWPCA

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

Absent: Terry Ryan

II. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING –

MOTION: Mr. Johansen made a motion for approval of the February 8, 2018 minutes. Mr. Armstrong noted the statement made reference to the prevailing wages noting the prevailing wage is \$1 million rather than the half million range listed. Mr. Armstrong's second comment is the reference to the 10 year payback amount for assessments noting the rate is tied to the bond rate. Mr. Armstrong believes the statute reads reasonable rate. Mr. Armstrong clarified his comments are statements and a correction does not need to be made. The motion, seconded by Mr. Armstrong, received unanimous approval.

III. COMMUNICATION FROM THE AUDIENCE – Please see below.

IV. NEW BUSINESS –

2018 – 3 Annual discussion to establish sewer use (EDU) rate
Mr. Baril suggested members conduct the public hearing for April to set the sewer use rate.

Mr. Johansen followed up by referencing the sewer study and noting the timing of the rate increase and also noting it should be a fair one which should include available information such as metered water use since most of the homes that are sewered are on public water. The rate should be based on this and raised questions how to base the rate for residents that are not on public water. Discussion included the option of using a meter on a well to gauge water usage, using the number of bedrooms or plumbing fixtures in a house to estimate usage. Mr. Baril noted Mr. Foster has contacted Connecticut Water regarding obtaining usage reports. Mr. Baril noted the Town's budget is fixed while water usage is volatile which will make it challenging to determine revenue. He noted it may make sense to have a base minimum with addition based on consumption and also commented that if a use-based method is chosen, there is time to review that process. Mr. Jones noted it would be fair to use a rolling 12 month average of consumption to use as a sewer rate. Mr. Johansen noted we can't do that for the next meeting [data not available] but agrees the Board should come up with something that is fair. Mr. Foster discussed the challenges faced with using meters such as staggered reading results and issue with irrigation. He mentioned he spoke to other towns which use a flat rate system.

Mr. Baril noted reasons for an increase include the Raftelis report, increase cost of treatment and the Town of Farmington plant upgrade with the direct impact to the sewer budget. Mr. Armstrong has questions for the Raftelis report and will call Mr. Fox per Mr. Baril's suggestion. Mr. Armstrong noted an increase for the Town of Farmington treatment plant is a justifiable reason for increase. Mr. Baril replied to Mr. Armstrong's question noting a check for 20% (based on the amount of Avon's share will be) will need to be made to the Town of Farmington. This amount is not in reserves. The current estimate is \$1.2 million and then there will be an annual charge for 20 years. Mr. Jones noted a smart meter will allow for analytics. The fairness issue will be solved if the Board can get smarter around the data that's available. Mr. Jones inquired whether the water company can provide the data to make better decisions. He noted the Board's decisions for fairness is an analytical one. Mr. Johansen noted the increase has to cover the costs.

Mr. Roy noted if the potential 50% increase were associated with a power, cable, telephone, or cable bill customers would be upset and the increase would need to go through PURA. Discussion continued regarding the various factors leading to a recommended increase of the annual sewer use (EDU) rate and the announcement for the proposed increase for the public hearing. Mr. Johansen noted an increase needs to be done and noted there has been a study and the Board will look at metering which will take time to calculate and make it as fair as possible. Revenue needs to be required to meet the requirements from the Town of Farmington and what it costs to run a program. Mr. Foster recommend that members look at the connection fee as it's low compared to other towns in the Farmington Valley. There are large bills coming. Members discussed how often the sewer bills should be sent although that decision will not be made for the next AWPCA meeting regarding the potential sewer increase. The proposed sewer rate increase of \$535 annual was an amount members discussed. Mr. Armstrong commented he wouldn't approve the Highwood and the Stony Corners sewer projects tonight unless connection money comes in soon.

Members further discussed the amount of the proposed increase to \$550. Mr. Armstrong referenced the sewer report, which hasn't been finalized but questions have been raised such as tiered rates and how it can be structured. Once that comes through, there will likely be another public hearing. Mr. Johansen commented the notice should include the amount of the increase to \$550.

Mr. Foster responded to Mr. Armstrong's question if there were a problem with a tier system if the water company were to handle the Town's billing. Mr. Foster explained that he told the water company the Town will go with a flat system to start but noted the Town may go to a tiered system. The payment remittance logistics will need to be worked out.

V. OLD BUSINESS -

2018 – 1 Potential Sewer Extension for the Highwood Area

Mr. Baril reviewed the survey results and noted he would focus on the results for the sewer question posed on the survey: 23 in favor of the proposed sewer project / 10 are opposed to the sewer project / 25 did not respond.

Discussion included the potential inferences why people would not return the survey.

Mr. Baril prepared a map which illustrated the results noting the legend: the parcels shaded in green are for the project, red parcels indicate opposition to the project, cross hatched are those parcels who did not respond. He also pointed out the north / south section phasing lines

indicating where the project would logically be divided into two phases. Mr. Baril further noted that the vast majority of people who attended the public information meeting are also in favor of the project. Mr. Foster noted he received a couple comments from residents at the public information meeting who asked if they really have a say in the project. Mr. Foster questions perhaps the residents think the Authority will make the final decision. Mr. Johansen mentioned it was clear that the residents in the project area received a notification of the potential sewer project and noted they will be responsible to pay for a certain portion of the project should the project go forward. Mr. Armstrong inquired whether calling those residents who did not respond is a possibility. He noticed from the map the northern section is out considering all the responses not received and those opposed to the project. Mr. Jones noted that one should take into consideration that if those residents who did not respond are in favor of the project, it becomes a high percentage of those in favor. If one needs to really find inferences of the survey, one needs to find a way to obtain 100% participation rate which Mr. Jones advocates.

Mr. Johansen reviewed the AWPCA's mission for water pollution control in Avon which is done by maintaining the system that is there, make sure it works well and it's effective. The other reason is to make available sewers for other areas that for various reasons in our study are not a good area to have a septic system and systems are failing. It is not a favor for people to save them money – that's not the intent to put sewers. All the areas that are under consideration, most of the septic systems don't work now. Mr. Johansen noted they are not failing by the fact they are backing up or leaking - they have a high water table. The sewage going in there is not being treated the way a septic system is supposed to treat it. Most of it is percolating into the ground water – it's a mess. We're supposed to be preventing that. Mr. Johansen noted the Board is setting up a good system for the Town – similar to a building inspector. A contractor needs to take out a building permit to protect the electrical work which is helpful for the next homeowner for assurance.

Mr. Armstrong inquired about obtaining more information from residents such as making telephone calls or sending a follow-up notice. Mr. Johansen noted there is more solid information to back up going forward with the project compared to any prior project. It's been a comprehensive survey. Mr. Armstrong inquired from Mr. Johansen if he believes the area (North, South or both) should be sewerred. Mr. Johansen mentioned the Board should move forward with the whole project – it met all the criteria initially and the majority of the people who were canvassed want it to go forward. We will never get 100% or close to that in agreement and that's not a factor. Mr. Jones noted that if it's a high risk area, that coupled with the respondents that we did receive is justification to at least take it to the next step to make a decision whether to go forward or not.

Mr. Baril noted the neighborhood received a score about 14 out of 17 from the sewer facilities plan. Mr. Armstrong noted a concern he has about funding the project. Mr. Baril noted there's money to fund the design and explained the costs for borings in addition to the costs of staff time. Mr. Armstrong asked Mr. Baril if there is enough staff time to do any more projects this year. Mr. Baril responded that if the Board approves the Highwood area project from a design perspective, he will get it done. However, it won't be the Highwood area and Stony Corners, unless the Board wants to dedicate more money to the project. For example, the Town hires an engineering consultant to do the design work rather than using Avon staff. Mr. Baril noted he believes there's time to do one project given other Engineering projects. Mr. Jones asked if Stony Corners is at the same level of risk as Highwood Drive area. Mr. Baril noted it's about the same environmental risk but what's different is the Town has accepted sewer petitions from residents and it would be in part an extension of a recent project. In a chronological sequence,

Highwood Drive comes in sooner. Also, Public Works started to do road work on the Highwood Drive area. Mr. Johansen noted it would cost more money to pave the Highwood area and then go back and put sewers in. Discussion continued about timing of paving for both areas and its potential affect with the sewer project.

Mr. Baril offered the costs associated with hiring the cost of engineering to go outside rather than using staff, is an approximate cost of \$50,000. Mr. Baril might consider doing the Stony Corners design in the fall of 2018 with a possible bid in January. Mr. Jones commented on a few comments he read from the survey sent to the Highwood area noting there were comments made about groundwater contamination and referencing better for the environment. Mr. Jones recommended the Board move forward with the engineering study for the Highwood area. Mr. Armstrong suggested a survey is sent for the Stony Corners project with a note indicating that no opinion/no response is added as a category. Members provided feedback on sending out a survey.

MOTION: Mr. Johansen made a motion that the AWPCA approve going forward with the engineering study for the Highwood area sewer extension. The motion, seconded by Mr. Roy, received unanimous approval.

2018 – 2 Proposed Sewer Extension for the remainder of Stony Corners and Stony Corners Circle

Mr. Baril noted that the preliminary design is completed for the proposed project. The public information meeting can happen at any time. Mr. Baril noted a survey could be handed out at the public information meeting.

2017 – 5 Cost of Service Analysis – Mr. Baril noted he spoke to his contact at Raftelis to request the final draft report and will forward to the Board. He suggested members read it and send any comments to Mr. Baril who could forward to Raftelis.

VI PLANNING & ZONING MATTERS – Mr. Armstrong provided an update on the Sylvan Road and the Nod Road projects. Mr. Baril provided further details regarding the Nod Road project noting there will be a sewer study. There is a proposed development at Bailey Road.

VII COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF – None

VIII COMMUNICATION FROM MEMBERS – None

IX OTHER BUSINESS – None

X ADJOURNMENT – Mr. Roy motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. The motion, seconded by Mr. Jones, received unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Essex, Clerk