

**Town of Newington Board of Selectmen
Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Public Bond Hearing Minutes
Town Hall Saturday, February 8, 2014
9:30am**

Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Rick Stern, opened the public hearing at 9:30am.

Present: Chr. Rick Stern, Selectman Jan Stuart, Selectman Cosmas Iocovozzi, Sewer Commission Chair George Fletcher and Commission member Skip Cole, Wright Peirce Engineering Consultants Ed Leonard and Dave Romilly; Utility Partners Consultant & Plant Manager Dennis Messier; Gail Pare, Justin Richardson, John Lamson, Margaret Lamson, Curt Stone, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and various other members of the public.

The Town Meeting warrant was available for all public hearing attendees. The Public Hearing focused on Article 2 which stated:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,180,000 (gross budget) (eight million one hundred eighty thousand dollars) for the purpose of designing and constructing a Waste Water Facility upgrade, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$8,180,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33) and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and to apply for such grants as may be available to pay for the improvements and further to raise and appropriate an additional sum of \$277,465. (two hundred seventy seven thousand four hundred and sixty five dollars) for the first year's interest payment on the bond. Without impairing the nature of the bonds as general obligations of the Town, it is intended and expected that debt service on the bonds and any cost for the first year's interest payment shall be paid by sewer user fees.

**THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN (3-0)
THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED /NOT RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0/0)
(Two thirds ballot vote required)**

The proposed project will upgrade the existing wastewater treatment facility in order to provide continued reliability, address safety and code items, and to meet the requirements of the USEPA and the NH DES with respect to reducing or removing sources of nitrogen in the Great Bay estuary. Failure of this article could result in reduced reliability and safety and continued high concentrations of nitrogen in the Great Bay estuary.

Ed Leonard gave an overview of the article on the Town meeting warrant to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant and asked for public input or questions.

He stated that in 2009 the NH Department of Environmental Services issued a report which discussed serious concern with water quality in the Great Bay due to nitrogen influence from discharge of treatment plants and storm water. He stated they would discuss why Newington needed the upgrade, the recommended plan, costs involved and the proposed schedule.

Discussion and questions from the public focused on: growth study of town resident septage versus sewer user totals, State grant funding currently and principal forgiveness programs, Davis Bacon Act being introduced with a federal grant may add more cost than a general obligation loan, had input from

the actual users been received, concern that if business were to leave would the Town be responsible for funding their upgrade costs, supportive comment for the upgrade project to protect the Great Bay.

Ed explained that there were 2 public pump stations, roughly 10 private pump stations as well as 11 miles of sewer line in Newington. He displayed a map of the town and sewer plant infrastructure.

He explained that clean water is discharged into the Piscataqua River once it has been treated by the Newington plant.

The Sewer Commission had a Facilities Plan completed by Wright Pierce. This showed that Newington should maintain the plant capacity and proposed a 5 milligram per liter nitrogen level with comprehensive pump upgrades. They propose a plan that would take 1 year to design and 2 years, approximately, to build completing it by 2017-2018. Sewer users would see a large cost increase, approximately 36%, if the town was to receive the DES grant or 55% if no grant available. The non-residential average bill will be \$9,100-\$12,000 monthly. The Commission will receive a 5 or 8 milligram per liter requirement by DES. It is expected that Newington will receive it's permit this year. A no vote would mean status quo including increased operation cost as the infrastructure breaks down over time. He noted that there are historic lows on interest rates now. The full study and report are available at the Plant, Town Hall and on the Town website for everyone's review.

Adjournment:

Chair Rick Stern explained the public hearing would remain open for another half hour in the event people had further questions. Rick Stern officially adjourned the public hearing at 10:40am.