

PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2012

In Attendance: Committee Chairman, Ed Harvey; Committee Members, Joe Krumenacker, Genevieve Querin, Dave Williams, Joe VanHouten, Gary Munkelt and Joseph Delikat.

Also in attendance: Rick Colello, Board of Supervisors Liaison; Thomas Scarborough, Board of Supervisors Member; Barbara Lyons, Board of Supervisors Chairman; Stephanie Mason, Township Manager; Richard John, Director of Operations and Sandra Zadell, Assistant Township Manager. Visitor: John Swenson, Carroll Engineering.

On a motion made by Mr. Krumenacker, seconded by Ms. Querin the minutes from the February 16, 2012 were approved.

The committee began by discussing the results of the feasibility study that they received from Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority. Mr. Krumenacker stated he had a question about the percentages of people that need to hook up. Mr. Colello stated that it is his understanding that as long as there is a gravity line you don't have to connect, you can opt out of connecting but you will need to connect when you sell your home or if your system fails. In that case connection is optional but in the grinder pump situation it is not optional.

Mr. John stated that even with a gravity line you still do need people to hook up and that the main will be sized for over 200 houses.

Mr. Krumenacker stated that we need to know how many people need to connect in order to make each type of system work.

Mr. Krumenacker also asked that in the response from the questions that Mr. Harvey received from Bucks County Water & Sewer they mentioned that there is a maintenance program that residents could utilize with the grinder pump system and the maintenance program quote is listed. He was wondering if you don't buy the maintenance program the first year that you connect can you buy it in subsequent years.

Ms. Mason answered that yes, you can buy it since the maintenance program is new.

Mr. VanHouten asked a question about the requirements for residents installing the grinder units. He asked if the residents need to get individual permits through the Township to hook up or will that be handled by Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority?

Mrs. Lyons stated that even though Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority handles the system in the street; residents will still need to get plumbing permits to hook up in their home.

Mr. VanHouten also asked where the sewage goes after it goes to the grinding pump station. Ms. Mason answered that she thinks it goes into interceptors but that would be a good question for when John Swenson arrives from Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority.

Ms. Lyons raised a question about the road restoration section of the project and asked if anyone had any estimate of the cost that the Township would be responsible for.

Mr. John answered that the road restoration could possibly cost \$135,000 per mile and we are looking at 5 of 6 miles of road.

Mrs. Lyons stated that some of the road restoration cost needs to be incorporated into the project cost.

Mr. John stated that the roads that are in that neighborhood are on the schedule to be repaired whether or not a project moves forward so it doesn't necessarily mean that the cost of the restoration is part of the project. He has been holding off on any road resurfacing in this neighborhood knowing that this decision was looming.

Mr. Swenson arrived at the meeting presented an overview of the two different types of systems:

The first is the Gravity System; they would need to install a pump station for 150 of the 250 homes in the project and the other section would be sent by gravity to the Castle Valley Interceptor. The cost per EDU for the gravity system including the tap in fee, the street and the line would be around \$27,000.

Mrs. Lyons asked the question about the excavation fee that was used to calculate those numbers. Mr. Swenson answered that they utilize the soils maps to help calculate what the excavation fee would be but you can never really can tell until you get out to the actual site and do borings to see what type of rock you are going to be drilling into.

Mr. VanHouten asked if the private connection cost of \$1,500 that was outlined in the gravity presentation was based on a certain setback.

Mr. Swenson answered that it is about \$25 - \$30 per foot and that they assumed about 50' to 75' of lateral.

Ms. Mason questioned how deep they think they will have to dig to install the gravity sewer lines. Mr. Swenson answered that his estimate is about 6' to 7', but again it this is just an estimate. That could change once they start digging.

Mr. Swenson then went over the second option; the Low Pressure System. He said that we have done two of these low pressure systems in the Township. In the Tedwell area which was a 41 home system and in the Pebble Hill area which is 109 home system. He said that this program would be a little different than the gravity option because it picks

up some homes along Lower State Road. For the Low Pressure System each property gets its own grinder pump system.

Mr. Williams asked if the grinder pump system devices are reliable. Mr. Swenson answered that they are very reliable and he stated that when he spoke with John Butler at Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority, most of the problems that they have had with the grinder pump situation have to do with incorrect usage and usually just occur just at the beginning, after that residents tend to learn to correctly utilize the pumps.

The grinder pump low pressure systems do utilize a much smaller pipe at a lower depth so the installation can be cheaper.

There are some negatives to this system; if residents lose power they lose the ability to pump and also the low pressure system does not allow for the incorporation of any additional customers. In the gravity line there is plenty of capacity for more customers.

Mr. Williams asked, if there is a clog in the line with the grinder pump system does it tend to back up. Mr. Swenson said that there is a check valve and they tend to be able to handle most of the clogs.

Mr. VanHouten asked if Bucks County Water and Sewer has a 24/7 service line, Mr. Swenson answered yes they do.

Mrs. Lyons asked Mr. Swenson why you would choose the gravity system over the grinder pump system or vice a versa.

Mr. Swenson answered that the gravity system requires no mechanical piece of equipment to operate; the grinder pump system does use a mechanically operated piece of equipment, so you deal with more inconvenience with the grinder pump system than you would with a gravity pump system.

Mrs. Querin asked what the estimated electricity cost was to run the pump was and Mr. Swenson answered that it \$1 per month per John Butler of Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority.

Mr. VanHouten asked Mr. Swenson what he would recommend. Mr. Swenson stated that it is his personal opinion that with the gravity sewer you never have to worry; you just flush and go, when you add mechanics into the situation there can be more problems.

Mr. VanHouten then asked if he was a new developer what type of system would he put in. Mr. Swenson answered that usually new developers are required to put in the gravity system due to the fact that there is less maintenance for the future residents.

Mr. Krumenacker asked if they need a certain number of homes to connect right away to tap into gravity and Mr. Swenson said that there is no minimum connection for the

gravity line and that there would be a 2/3 minimum connection for the grinder pump situation. Which means 2/3 of the properties would have to connect.

Mr. VanHouten stated that you would probably have to mandate everyone on to connect to the grinder pump situation because you can't just ask for 2/3 to connect.

Ms. Querin asked if the Public Water & Sewer Advisory Committee or the Board of Supervisors could ask Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority to float a bond for the project. What type of financing is available?

Mr. Scarborough stated again that Sen. McIlhinney had stated that there is grant funding available.

Ms. Mason stated that we can look to see if there is something available, but that we probably shouldn't rely on it and not give any false hope to anyone that grants are possibly available until we know for sure that there would be one available.

The committee has a couple of questions regarding the maintenance for the grinder pump and Mr. Swenson answered that the Department of Environmental Protection does have maintenance requirements for grinder pumps systems and that would cost \$10 per month with Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority.

Mr. VanHouten asked what the estimated bill for sewer through Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority is.

Ms. Mason answered that she thinks it is about \$115 per quarter.

Mr. VanHouten stated that he had two concerns with the grinder pump situation from a resale standpoint. He is concerned that gravity sewer systems are the more familiar type of sewer system and a potential buyer may view the increase maintenance as more problematic.

Mr. VanHouten has concerns regarding the gravity pump system because you have to require people to connect and we told people originally from the start of this project that they wouldn't be required to connect unless they were selling their home or had a maintenance issue with their septic system.

The committee weighed the pros and cons of both types of systems; they then held a poll to see which type of system the members of the committee were leaning towards.

Ed Harvey – Gravity
Genevieve Querin – Gravity
Joe Krumenacker – Low Pressure
System

Joe VanHouten – Gravity
Gary Munkelt – Gravity
Dave Williams – Gravity
Joe Delikat - Gravity

Ms. Lyons stated that we needed a couple of action items for the next meeting. The first would be to check with Sen. McIlhinney's office on the potential availability of grants and the second would be to have the staff prepare a white paper on the scientific facts regarding public sewer in this area, a two page document at the most that includes the recommendation from the Public Water & Sewer Advisory Committee to the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Mason stated that she had a concern that the residents will be upset if the gravity sewer system is chosen over the low pressure system due to the fact that the gravity system is \$2,000 more expensive. She is also stated that she is concerned with the gravity system that the cost of excavation could inflate once they get down to actually digging in the neighborhood.

Mrs. Zadell and Ms. Mason will create the white paper to send to the committee as well as Mrs. Lyons and Mr. Colello.

The next step would be that the Public Water & Sewer Advisory Committee would present to the Board of Supervisors and then host a special meeting for the residents in the neighborhood.

On a motion made by Mr. VanHouten, seconded by Mr. Delikat the Public Water & Sewer Advisory Committee voted to recommend Gravity Sewer for the Pebble Ridge area in accordance with the feasibility study.

The motion passed unanimously.

The committee adjourned at 6:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Sandra B. Zadell
Assistant Township Manager