

*Minutes are considered "Draft" until approved at the next meeting. Please contact the Town Clerk's Office for a copy of final minutes.*

Minutes  
Sewer Sub-Committee  
July 8, 2009

**In attendance:**

William Wadsworth, Chair  
Mark Fey  
James Rose  
Joan Conlon

Kathleen Eagen, Town Manager  
Russ Arnold, Dir. of Public Works  
Bill Kaminski, WPCP Superintendent

**Absent:**

James Thompson

A. Call to Order.

The Chair opened the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

B. Reading of Minutes.

A motion was made to approve the April 14, 2009 Sewer Sub-Committee minutes. Unanimous.

C. Public Comments.

There were no public comments.

D. Old Business. None

E. New Business.

- 1) **May 12, 2009 Town Council Public Hearing.** The Town Manager and the Sewer Committee Chair updated the Committee on the Town Council's Public Hearing that was held on May 12, 2009. The Manager also reviewed Mr. Blore's letter to the Town Council dated May 29, 2009.

- 1) **Assessment Method**

**The concern:** was related to the recommended sewer assessment methods.

In general, the question arose that based on the current state of the economy, including the decline in residential real estate, is it fair to impose a \$10,000 zone charge. In particular, the question is if the \$10,000 zone charge is a reasonable assessment if the sewers do not result in an increased value to the property. The Manager reviewed with the Committee the Town Attorney's letter dated July 1, 2009 that addressed this concern. Attorney Mr. Bradley recommended that the Ordinance state that the \$10,000 zone charge would be the **maximum**

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zone charge. He also recommended that the Water Pollution Control Authority establish a policy in which an appraiser would be involved in the process and consequently, if the value of the property does not increase as a result of the construction of sewers, then there would not be an assessment. Also, if the increase in value were determined to be less than \$10,000 then the zone charge would be less than \$10,000.

Russ Arnold also spoke with Town Assessor Linda Arnold who stated that the installation of sewers would increase the value of the property; therefore she would assess the property to reflect the installation of sewers. The Committee would like the Town Assessor to be available at the Town Council meeting when this topic is discussed to answer questions and to discuss assessment values related to sewer installation.

## **2) Payment Options**

**The concern:** is related to the financing of the zone charge.

Joe Swetcky, Finance Director explained to the Committee that the Town is not placing a "lien" on the property but a "certificate of benefit". He explained that the only negative affect on their credit would occur if the property owner defaults on the loan or the loan payments.

Members of the Committee asked if the Town could finance the laterals for the property owner. The Manager said she thought that was possible but it would be a policy decision for the Water Pollution Control Authority.

## **3) New Septic System**

**The concern:** is that it is "not fair" for a resident who recently replaced their septic system be assessed a \$10,000 zone charge.

The staff suggested that a policy be established by the WPCA stating that if a resident could establish that their septic system was recently replaced, the zone charge for that individual property owner would remain at the original charge and not the updated charge, until the time of connection. The Committee agreed that they would recommend to the WPCA to establish a policy with this concept in mind.

## **4) Philosophy of Property Owners Being Assessed for Sewers**

**The opinion:** is that the Town should bare the burden of the entire cost of the sewer installation and residents should not be charged a zone charge or assessment.

The Committee felt that based on the research and the history of the Town, that a sewer installation zone charge to property owners is appropriate.

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#### **4) Philosophy of Property Owners Being Assessed for Sewers (cont.)**

The Committee would like the Town Manager to forward to the Water Pollution Control Authority the attached amended Ordinance for their comments and approval. They would also like the Manager to write a letter to the WPCA asking them to consider creating or amending policies related to the following:

- 1) To use an appraiser in their policy for sewer installation projects.
  - 2) To consider allowing the Town to finance the laterals plus the zone charge.
  - 3) To consider freezing the zone charge for property owners who can establish that they recently replaced their septic system.
- 2) A Motion to Approve the Attached Town of Farmington Ordinance, Chapter 156 "Sewers" and to Forward it to the Water Pollution Control Authority. (Colin, Rose) Unanimous.

F. Adjournment.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathleen A. Eagen  
Town Manager

Attachment

cc: Sewer Sub-Committee  
Paula Ray, Town Clerk  
Deb Bull, by e-mail  
Kathleen A. Eagen, Town Manager  
Russell Arnold, Director of Public Works and Dev. Svcs.  
Mike Demicco, Town Council Member  
William Kaminski, WPCF Superintendent  
Jim Foote, WPCA Chair  
Jo-Ann Walker, resident  
Chris Sprague, Farmington Polo Club