

Minutes of the Public Hearing Meeting of the
Suffield Water Pollution Control Authority & Treatment Facility
May 16, 2023

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Janet Davis, Chairman
Frank Bauchiero
Jeff Davis
Roger Ives
Chris Rago

MEMBERS

ABSENT:

Dan Holmes
John Murphy

ALSO PRESENT:

Jamie Kreller, Superintendent
Julie Nigro, Business Administrator

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Janet Davis called the Public Hearing Meeting for May 16, 2023 to order at 7:01 p.m.
2. **CITIZEN INPUT:** None
3. **2023/2024 BUDGET:**
 - Janet Davis reviewed the proposed increases across the board. There is a concern that due to the 14% increase in the cost to dump sludge to MDC, the proposed rate increases will not adequately cover the increase. In addition, she expressed a concern with the proposed 2.7 % residential rate increase versus the proposed 2.3% increase commercial rate. She also inquired whether Hood was affected by the commercial rate or other determinants. Julie Nigro explained that the Hood contract does not take the commercial rate into consideration. Hood quarterly billing is based on their volume of flow to the Plant, strength of the flow (BOD & TSS), and the WPCA's expenditures for the quarter to treat at the Plant. Jamie Kreller stated he's reviewing the Hood contract with Attorney Andrew Lord, as Hood's additional BOD (60% of the Plant's BOD) has had a larger impact on the Plant and costs, versus the current charges. Hood is also reviewing the contract, and they will discuss it with Jamie in the next couple of weeks. Jeff Davis asked if there are other commercial customers billed at a similar rate schedule; Julie Nigro explained that Hood is the only one in town where the commercial rate is not figured into their bill. Janet Davis expressed her concern with the volume and type of waste from the prison and schools flowing into the system; and asked if the commercial rate should be increased to at least 5%. Julie Nigro reported there is already an additional 10% surcharge on the commercial rate due to the nature of the flow; and added that the commercial rate is determined by the total revenue it generates. Therefore, the percent increase will not necessarily be equal to the percent increase in the residential rate.
 - Janet Davis questioned if the proposed 2.7% rate increase for Kent Farms would support the cost to replace the aging tanks. Jamie Kreller stated there is approximately \$120k in the capital fund balance for Kent Farms and the money charged for sewer fees essentially covers just the operations & maintenance, and does not cover the costs for capital projects, such as replacing the tanks. Jamie determined the cost to replace each tank is approximately \$6k each. By replacing 3 tanks per year, the Kent Farms sewer rate would need to be increased \$100 annually, for the next 15 years.

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Frank Bauchiero asked if our operators would be able to replace the tanks. Jamie Kreller explained special licensing is required for this type of work, and the WPCA Operators don't currently have that license. Discussion ensued regarding the ease of obtaining the license and with the WPCA operators performing the work for about half the cost (\$3k). The WPCA has all of the necessary equipment to perform the work. An assessment of the leach field will be necessary to determine its durability & preservation over time. Frank Bauchiero confirmed that new tanks would potentially preserve the leach field, and suggested a thorough evaluation of the leach field. Jeff Davis asked if there is a current plan to connect Kent Farms to the public sewer. Jamie Kreller stated the system was put in around 1988 or 1989. Currently, there are three tanks that need replacing now, and the Commission had previously agreed to replace those this year. Jamie Kreller suggested replacing a minimum of three per year over the next 15 years. Based on the approximate cost to replace the tanks, if the work is performed by WPCA Operators, Janet Davis calculated a \$70 increase would equate to replacing one tank. In order to mitigate the proposed increase, she suggested using the funds from the Kent Farms' Capital reserve fund to cover the costs for other two replacement tanks. The Commission agreed to propose a \$70 sewer use fee increase to \$440 for Kent Farms. The increase will account for a portion of the capital costs to replace three tanks. This includes using about \$6,000 of the Kent Farms capital fund, which includes the cost for the leach field evaluation/study. Therefore, a reposting of the Kent Farms proposed rate will be required, with an additional public hearing to be May 30, 2023. The 2023/2024 budget will also be proposed on May 30, 2023.

4. 2023/2024 SEWER USE LEVY: Janet Davis read the legal notice from May 5, 2023 stating the proposed:

- Proposed increase in Residential fee (\$370 to \$380)
- Value of an Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) 46,000 gal/yr.
- Kent Farms Community Sewerage System – proposed increase (\$370 to \$380)
- Commercial Sewer Use Rate Per 1,000 gallons in excess of 46,000 gallons (1 EDU) proposed increase (\$8.89 to \$9.01).

ADJOURNMENT:

- Frank Bauchiero motioned to adjourn the Public Hearing Meeting of May 16, 2023 at 7:53 pm
- Roger Ives seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,



Julie M. Nigro
Business Administrator