

TOWN OF NEW BALTIMORE
COUNTY OF GREENE
PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
TO THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT
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Draft 12/28/14
Approved 1/12/15

Supervisor Dellisanti opened the Public Hearing at 6:04 PM and read:

“Notice is hereby given that there will be a Public Hearing on Monday, December 8, 2014 at 6 PM Prior to the Town Board Regular Meeting to Update the Public on Proposed Improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Hear the Concerns of Residents who Utilize Those Services. By Order of the Town Board, Barbara M. Finke, Town Clerk.”

Also attending: Councilwomen Benway and VanEtten, Councilman Norris, Town Clerk Finke, Tax Collector Jordan, Highway Superintendent Jordan, and 2 members of the public who signed the attendance sheet.

Absent: Councilman Ruso

Supervisor Dellisanti introduced Mary Beth Bianconi from Delaware Engineering who is going to give us a quick summary.

Mary Beth Bianconi agreed we will make it very quick because I see many faces that I have seen many times before. As the Supervisor said, my name is Mary Beth Bianconi and I work at Delaware Engineering. We have been assisting the Town over the last couple of years in evaluating the wastewater system in the community and helping to figure out what direction to take with some aging infrastructure which is a common issue for many communities in the area and really all over the Northeast in particular. This is the Town's Wastewater Plant, sorry the picture is a little grainy, that's the way that it came out when we took it from the Internet. Essentially, you have a wastewater system that was constructed in 1983, so it is about 31 years old and just like your house or your car or anything else, infrastructure has a useful life. Your house you can't expect to keep your roof for 300 years, you have to replace it or repair it sometime and the same thing with the treatment plant. A number of years ago we assisted the Town in getting a grant to conduct a full scale engineering evaluation of the treatment system including not only the Wastewater Treatment Plant, but also a review of the collection system, in particular the Pump Station that is in the collection system that directs the majority of the wastewater to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Treatment Plant as I said was constructed about 30 years ago, it uses a technology that was very common about 30 years ago called an oxidation ditch to conduct biological treatment. While those technologies have changed over the years actually reviewing this plant, this plant is pretty efficient with that technology in place and so the recommendation to extend the useful life of the facility continues to include keeping that oxidation ditch in place. The plant has undergone a couple of improvements since it was constructed. One was to add some screening to the process and the other was to add a disinfection system. When this Plant was originally constructed, there were no requirements for disinfection for this particular plant in this location. Back in the mid 2000's there was a mandate to perform disinfection in this Plant and the Town was successful in securing a grant to do so. So a UV system, an ultraviolet light system, was installed at this Plant. One of the things that has to be addressed as we look at how do we need to create a reliable system, a system with redundancy and a system that is going to continue to function for another 30 years, that UV system is a single unit so if it needs to be taken out of service for any reason, cleaning or anything, that is a problem because we lose our ability to disinfect so one way or another we have to address that. Really quickly I mentioned before that there's a Pump Station that's part of this system that directs quite a lot of wastewater to this Plant. That Pump Station over the years has been subject to the accumulation of a lot of grit. When grit enters the wastewater system, it is very common. Basically it is like sand, and it comes from households and it also over time this kind of material accumulates in the piping system. That grit as you can imagine is very abrasive and it wears on the pumps in the pumping station. The pumps that were originally installed were not the regular normal garden variety pumps. They kept wearing over the years and had to be replaced, fairly costly replacements, on a fairly high frequency. So back last year we planned an upgrade of the Pump Station that would include new pumps that would be less subject to wear.

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We also put in an emergency generator at the Pump Station so that the pumps work when the power goes out, a number of other improvements, budgeted that project at \$230,000. We completed it, brought it on line on May 9 of this past year, and the total project cost was \$226,022.49, so that's pretty good budgeting. The Town did take out a Bond Anticipation Note to fund that with the idea being when the larger project is done to address the Wastewater Treatment Plant, that the Bond Anticipation Note costs would be rolled into the larger project rolled into long term financing. Really quickly, we did as I said prepare an engineering report, and that engineering report was submitted to the DEC which is the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Environmental Facility Corporation which is one of the agencies that funds a lot of projects like this in New York State. We had a project listed for financing to conduct improvements at this Plant and that has led us to where we are. There is an opportunity to look at conducting an Income Survey to see if we can secure very low-cost financing to complete these improvements. Really quickly what would be constructed would be a new grit removal system here at the Plant. The Two options, one was to put a grit removed system in at the Pump Station so the grit would be removed before it got here. The other would be get wastewater and the grit through the Pump Station and get it here. One way or the other the idea is remove the grit right off the bat before it gets into the system and can damage or harm any of the equipment that you are going to spend a lot of money on. So we will construct a new grit removal system., There is a flow equalization process here whereby this is a biological system, this thing that looks kind of like racetrack. You want to send water to that at a continuous rate, same amount of water all the time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That's because it is a biological system which is a population of bacteria that live in there that like to be fed the same thing every day, morning, noon and night, all the time so like a dog or a cat or whatever and as we can all imagine wastewater doesn't come the same all the time. In the morning when people get up, you get a lot more, midday not so much, when everybody gets home from work we get a lot more. So there is an equalization system and we will be upgrading that, the pumps for that. We will also be doing some work to just make sure that system stays long-term, very simple stuff like painting it and putting new grating on it. This oxidation ditch does function like a racetrack, the water goes around in a circle, these two boxes represent systems that make that water move in that circle and also puts air into the system because it is an aerobic process and so those systems would be upgraded. We would also put some controls in this process, right now this is entirely manually operated. The Wastewater Treatment Operators hiding in the back room, has to go there and actually make all the adjustments himself or herself, but this would put some controls there as well to assist in operating the Plant. We would construct something called a new secondary clarifier that would be down here and what we said that there is process here at the wastewater treatment plant there are a couple of steps, one is mechanical to get out the grit, get out the large stuff that is back here at the very beginning we do that flow equalization process, strip the biological process which removes the nutrients and the consumables that is in the wastewater. This last step is really important, it settles the wastewater, put it all in a big tank under conditions that allow it to settle. That can actually increase the capacity of your Plant significantly and improves treatment effectiveness and so we would be putting in a new secondary clarifier. We would reconstruct some of the systems that are associated with recirculating materials. The biological process is constantly growing a new population of bacteria, you have to take some out and you have to recirculate some to make it work. We would also construct some kind of new disinfection system, there are a couple options for that. One would be to use chlorine another would be to continue the UV system, but we would need to build a redundant unit so that it can come back in saturation where you have something in place in case you had to take the first one out. I know there have been some concerns about whether UV or chlorine, or which ones are more environmentally friendly. There are a lot of different ways to look at that, everyone thinks that chemicals are bad and certainly a lot of the chemicals in the environment are bad. With chlorine systems, we do use dechlorination chemicals in many many plants so that while we are chlorinating the water to kill the bacteria, the harmful bacteria, we are also stripping that chlorine out before it is discharged to the stream or creek or wherever.

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So that is one option. UV systems and that is basically where powerful lights are shot through the water and deactivating basically the ability for the population of harmful bacteria to breed. That is also a good system, there are a couple of downsides of that is that it uses a lot of power which is not a good thing if you think of the big picture. Also most of these systems are made overseas so there is the cost of transport of all of that and the last thing is the ballasts and lights contain mercury which is also a hazardous material that has to be replaced and then disposed of. A couple of different things, because the Town has expressed a preference for UV, the costs which we will talk about in a second, does include the UV system and it has a higher cost system as well. And we are going to add an additional digester to this. These are the current secondary clarifiers, we will convert them and add an additional digester. At the end of this process, we end up with water and we also end up with materials that can't be consumed by the bacteria that has to be dealt with, lovingly called sludge. We have to do something with your sludge and in your case we looked at a couple of options. We looked at something called mechanical dewatering which is a fancy term for pressing the water out of that sludge to create this material that is kind of like compost or wet earth or simply using the system you have which is something called a drying bed. You take this liquid that's been concentrated and put it on the drying bed, the drying bed allows the water to drain through it, the water gets sent back through the process, the dried material every so often gets taken off-site usually to a landfill. That is a very low cost, simple, easy way to handle this and it is the recommended option here. The one thing being that there are times of the year when it is very difficult to get drying beds to work effectively. If you think about when it is super humid or when it is really cold it is not going to work all that well. You may have times of the year when you may be hauling this material that is in the yellow tanks as a liquid. It is a little more expensive, but for a Plant this size these are all very reasonable things. We would be looking to add some automation and controls to this system of which there are none now. And that is a significant improvement in terms of overall operations and also data operations. You have a way of knowing what is our Plant doing under certain conditions making sure we will always comply with regulatory requirements. And lastly we would look to do some architectural and electrical upgrades. Architectural upgrades sounds like so fancy, but if you have been here, it is not. It is just that you have a building that is 30 years old and after a certain time you are going to want to invest in that building to get at least another 30 years useful life. The total cost of that project would be about \$2.2 million and that includes everything as a budget figure so if we go back and we add in the roughly \$230,000 from the Mill Street Pump Station, we are talking about a \$2.43 or so million project which sounds like a lot of money and it is. That brings us really more to the purpose of tonight's meeting. In a minute Candace Balmer from RCAP Solutions is going to talk a little bit about conducting an Income Survey, but before we get there let's talk a little bit about what a project of that magnitude does to your sewer rates. Currently your sewer rates are certainly not on the low end and that's not because your Plant is not well run or the because the budget is too high and any of those kinds of things. It more have a function to do with the Plant. It has a cost whether it sits there and does nothing or if it does a lot, it simply has a cost to it. It is very well run, there just aren't a lot of folks to share in those costs. Right now your cost base is on the higher side. It is certainly not above what we often see, but your costs is being driven by few people reasonable cost. So one of the things that we did at the request of the Town Board was look and say what if we get more people, what if we build more sewer lines and go find more people to include, will that reduce our cost base? We did an analysis, we looked in the obvious places, we found some concentrations of population that are around the Sewer District and unfortunately the answer is no. The capital cost of adding more people actually increases the cost to everybody. There is no lowering in terms of going and finding more customers to help share in those costs So given that we have a cost base, what we did was we said if we are going to borrow our \$2.43 million over 20 years and we use 2.5 percent, which given interest rates might be a little bit conservative, but I'd rather be conservative than tell you a bigger number than to tell you something a little unrealistic, at your Median Household Income which is reported by the Census as \$56,000/year, the amount that the funding agencies have to have a way of saying what is overly burdensome,

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what is too much money for somebody who makes a certain income to pay for their water service or their wastewater service. At \$56,000, you are at about \$990/year/customer. That is a little higher than what you are paying right now. That is the target service charge. That is just a way of saying when is it overly burdensome so if you are over that by more than 5%, then someone can say you can qualify for low cost or 0% interest financing. That \$2.43 million project, we had estimated about 242 equivalent dwelling units, so that would be about equivalent of a house, who would be paying for this. The cost would be about \$1,041/house, so you are a little over that \$990 by \$51, but likely not enough that someone could say that you would qualify for this 0% interest financing because there are others who are maybe even extremely considered to be more overly burdensome and these are competitive programs. We went back and said a number of years ago now getting on to being somewhere between five and ten, the Hamlet area where the sewer district is, we looked at doing a water project to bring water down from Ravena into the community and at the time an Income Survey was done. And that was a number of years ago, but that Income Survey number was \$45,000 Median Household Income. In just by comparison that results in a target service charge of around \$650/year, so you can see how that Median Household Income in terms of this threshold analysis makes a big difference. At \$650/year you could reduce that annual cost because you could get \$0 interest financing for 30 years because it would be considered overly burdensome at \$737/year and that is pretty close to where it is now. The other thing to say about this is you have some debt that is being retired in the next year or so.

Councilman Norris said two or three

Mary Beth Bianconi continued the idea would be to coincide this thing so you have old debts expiring and new debts coming on, so it wouldn't result in a bubble, that space in between. We figure out how to finance that so we wouldn't end up with that space in between, there would be a large payment. By comparison I wanted to show the Village of Valatie across the River, their Median Household Income, Candace assisted them as well in preparing an Income Survey because the Census had them as something crazy, their Median Household Income ended up being \$39,000 based on the Income Survey, it was at least double that.

Candace Balmer added not double that, but it was high in the \$50s or \$60s.

Mary Beth Bianconi explained they were able to secure 30 year financing at 0% interest that resulted in a cost to them of \$644/year/customer which was very close to what they were already paying. They actually were very fortuitous in being able to receive a \$2 million grant on top of that. Unfortunately it is not looking like those grants will be available anytime soon. In the summertime Congress passed a law that said that to the extent that grants would be available in this particular program, the Congressional allocation to this program nationally has to be \$1 billion or more. You might say some of our federal government budgets are many billions that we have to pay. The President's budget only put \$1 billion in this program and if you are familiar with how that process works typically the Executive Budget comes out with a very high number, Congress comes out with a seemingly low number and they work their way, usually more toward the Congress side, and end up somewhere in the middle. Given that the starting point to the \$1m it seems very unlikely that we will end up with a federal appropriation over \$1 billion so it is unlikely that at least in Federal Fiscal Year 2015, which is the one that just started, that there would be a grant program. However, being the smart people that they are the State of New York has kept all of the structure in place so they could administer grants should they show up on their doorstep. Candace can speak to this as well, the opportunities for grants, and we all hear things, Wednesday the Governor is going to stand in front of a lot of people and make a big announcement about lots of money and lots of grants and things, but the reality is that the amount of funding that's coming from federal sources and for state sources not only for this program but all programs across the board are getting smaller and smaller and smaller. The reality is it's your tax dollars, pay your taxes and they go out there someplace and they come

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back to you in one way or another hopefully. Just the tolerance for this kind of thing is getting less and Congress is not getting the message from people that these programs are important. So the appropriations are going down and we will all hear about 'I heard there was a grant program.' Yes, probably there is, they are extremely competitive, they are becoming much more focused and targeted. Folks at the Hill may be talking about a grant program called the Smart Growth Initiative for the Catskill Park, there is also one in the Adirondack Park. The Catskill Park by example covers four counties, has a maximum grant of \$75,000 and only has \$400,000 in the program. So you do a little math and say 'gee, thanks.' That's pretty much what I wanted to cover.

Candace Bulmer introduced herself and said I work for a private not-for-profit that is federally funded to assist rural communities like yours with water and sewer projects. Most of our services are offered at no cost to you and this is one of those services. Folks who live in the area may have already received a Survey so I am just going to start out a little bit, as Mary Beth pointed out, that you have a system that needs to be upgraded, It is not something that you can really not do, so you are going to incur some expenses and our goal is to get that as low as possible. It is so important this idea of Median Household Income to have a funding agency view how much money they are going to give you. When we talk about the Median Household Income that Mary Beth is talking about, that's just if you take everybody in the district, and you take their income and you put them in order. You just rank them from low to high, and you pick the one in the middle, so it is not the average. You put them in order and pick the one in the middle and that's the median. So it can really vary depending on how many people participate and for a program like this, we are required to have a minimum of a 65% return which can be a pretty ambitious number, I'll tell you right now. We have done a mailout, typically when you do a mailout survey, it is typical that you get a return of between 25-50%, that's what survey people say. We see that all the time, we see around 25-50% and 50% when the community is extremely committed and involved and maybe 25%, I've actually probably never seen one that low, so that's just on the mailout. So then we do a second mailing, or maybe we do both to capture a few more and then we start going door-to-door to try to get that 65%. The folks that are participating in the Survey, I encourage you to send in your Survey so I don't have to go door-to-door to you. I know some people have sent it in, we have received almost 25% already in the past 10 days. We would be a little higher if we hadn't received several that left the income blank because we can't use those, they don't have an income. It is really important to tell us how many people are in the house, even though for this grant we don't even need that. We really just need your income and ideally your address. In the back there is place where you can fill in your address and sign the form. Some people included their income and didn't sign it and I think we can find a way to use them, but if there is no income, we can't use them at all. So I encourage folks and I think what really worries people is that this data might be compromised, somehow somebody else is going to find out what you make and that is a legitimate concern. We strive very hard to maintain that confidentiality and one way we have done that in the past was to keep the data at our RCAP offices so if the agency wants to view it, they come to us. They are getting a little more strict about wanting to make sure, suppose somebody leaves a job, to make sure that that data really is available to the Town on occasions. Depending on the program, this particular program is a little bit less strict than some of them, so we might be able to retain them at the offices. But even if we don't, the data that they get is a summary of the list of incomes and it doesn't say whose income is which. It is a list that shows the one in the middle, that's the Median Household Income. And as you can imagine when you say an affordable figure for Median Household Income of let's call it \$50,000 is around \$900, what about all those people that are under \$50,000. They are in trouble, there's no doubt about it. This is not an easy decision, and it is the way these agencies do the funding but almost by definition you have created a problem for your lower income people. It is extremely important that we hear from the lower income people and that is the other reason that we go door-to-door is to capture the renters because the

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Census often doesn't capture renters as well which is why we see, in a situation like this, the Census is for the whole Town and you are talking about a pretty small subset of that, but even when we are having a pretty contiguous boundaries we find that if we go out door-to-door a) we do a lot higher and we are required to get a much higher percent and we make sure we capture those numbers so that is a big piece of what we do. I would just like to encourage everyone, whether you have a high income or lower income, just get them in there because 65% is tough and we have a deadline to make of April 1 and that seems like far away, but it's not. It's not far away at all especially you can go out evening after evening and people are not home and people aren't responding and some people don't want to fill it out and just to capture that 65% is an effort, and we want to encourage people to send that in. We will probably do a second mailing just to get as many as we can without going door-to-door. Then like I said we will also be going door-to-door. Let me just look and see if I missed anything.

Mary Beth Bianconi continued while Candace is looking, she mentioned something that is really important and we often get this question. The income that is important is the person who lives there, not the person that owns the house and lives in Manhattan or wherever they live, New Jersey or whatever.

Candace Balmer clarified it depends if you own a house and you come up there on weekends you get to use your income. If you rent it out to somebody, we are looking for the rental income and that is a real important distinction. Thank you for bringing that up because they want to capture incomes of people that live in the area, so if you use the house seasonally, they are still looking for your income. If you are renting it out seasonally, they are looking for your income but if you own it and you rent it full time to somebody else, we are looking for the renter income. We don't talk to commercial, we don't talk to businesses, it is only residences and only the people who live in the residences, so it is people in each household that fill out the Survey. Thanks, Mary Beth, that's a really good point. And again a lot of people say why are you asking me these questions and I have to say that we used a Survey form that we used for a lot of our communities in case you qualify for other programs too. We can use that, so we took all the questions all of the three program ask and put them on one Survey form. These are questions they ask us to ask so if they sound intrusive we apologize. There is just no other way to qualify for this money than to participate in the program so please encourage your neighbors. I know it is intrusive, but we do take confidentiality very seriously. We take your economic need very seriously helping you address... Does anyone have any questions?

Supervisor Dellisanti pointed out before you get up to ask the questions, would you please come up to the podium so we get you on the tape machine as well.

Richard Guthrie said just a couple of questions. The initial project when it went in, do we have the cost of that compared to what the cost of this upgrade, replacement, or improvement part just to compare so we know what happened then, what's happening now. I might as well get all my questions I have thought of at this point. The footprint of the Plant, will that change any and also has there been any results of the flood plain survey that was done for this in the lead up to the proposal here. In other words the flood elevation and has that changed any of the requirements for the improvements that will be coming down and is there any associated cost with that? Then with regard to the Survey, I have a question. If what you say the income is really what you are looking for to get this thing through the gates and you say that there are and I did look at it as you described some intrusive questions on that questionnaire, but you really want to get 65% of the people to respond, would those intrusive questions that are not necessary for the outcome or be important for the purpose of the Survey, why would they be included that might impede the achievement of the result that we are looking for to get 65% of the Survey in to see if the results from those 65% would put us into the eligible category for more beneficial funding or grant applications that might come down as a result. I think that's the questions I had, I didn't want to put them all together there I was hoping to space them out.

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Mary Beth Bianconi observed I think there were three for me and one for you if I got this right. Thank you, Mr. Guthrie. The original cost of this Plant I do not know. I don't know if the Town has records. I can tell you that back when this was constructed in 1983, the federal construction grants program was still in play. I am guessing, almost positive especially considering how the Plant was named. They had a requirement for name your plant, but this was probably paid for by federal construction grants program money or something like that.

Richard Guthrie asked what is the percentage?

Mary Beth Bianconi responded in 1983 it was toward the end, initially it was 90%/10% -- 90% paid for by the feds and 10% locally. Given the borrowing for this, I'm guessing you guys paid a lot more than that, because this was toward the later portion of the program. So I don't know, I don't know if the Town has records of that, but we may be able to find that out. I also know that certainly costs have changed a lot over the years. If we were starting all over again with a new Plant for you, it would be different than this, but that's just the function of... If you are going to build the same house 100 years ago today, today it would probably be different. You are looking at the footprint. This is the existing Plant, this is existing, this new orange box would be new, these exist, this exists, this exists, this would be new. The new footprint is this orange box here which would be the new grit system and this is the Pump Station, these would be new secondary clarifiers, this would be a new chlorine contact tank should you choose to use chlorine, so a fairly small change in the overall footprint.

Richard Guthrie inquired there is no expansion beyond the fence line?

Mary Beth Bianconi answered no, this is a fairly small parcel, although the white line is the parcel boundaries, you can see it comes across. It does extend to the east of it, this is one of those maps that is oriented in the north, but no we are in a grassed area, it is currently mowed and maintained and fairly low impact land disturbance. The last question was about flood elevations and those kinds of things. We are fortunate that this Plant unlike some of other ones along the Hudson River, while it is close to the River, it is not right on the River. So this is not in a food plain, it is not going to be affected by those changes. One thing we did look at very quickly because we work in a lot of Plants up and down the Hudson River and we have seen a lot of out faulting inundated under high high tide conditions. If you take, not Irene situation which while we had a lot of water, didn't really do a whole lot to the Hudson River elevation, but it would be Superstorm Sandy situation where we had a high high tide. What would happen here would be we have a fairly long outfall pipe, it is well sized to accommodate this Plant and this flow, under high high conditions like a Superstorm Sandy type of condition, there may be some inundation of that pipe but not to the extent that it is going to reach this Plant or have the impact on this Plant. We did evaluate that.

Councilman Norris requested can I answer part of his question. The one loan that is expiring in 2017, was originally taken out in 1987, was for \$540,000.

Mary Beth Bianconi stated that was the first upgrade that added the....

Councilman Norris said so it was not part of the original Plant.

Mary Beth Bianconi observed it was not part of the original Plant, that was the first upgrade. Brock was able to find out what was built, we didn't have the price. The Plant was originally, incoming wastewater was manually screened through a coarse screen, followed by a grit pump, then a commonator. A commonator is just a thing that goes like this and mashes up the wastewater, that one was probably fine screen and flow equalization. It is probably that one and the next one was the seasonal disinfection, that was a grant. But that \$500,000 for that one increase.

Councilman Norris questioned so any bonds we had from the original Plant have been paid off.

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Mary Beth Bianconi answered yes, 30 years.

Member of audience asked why have our sewer bills never gone down?

Councilwoman VanEtten and Supervisor Dellisanti asked the audience member to go to the podium.

Councilman Norris noted can I answer one more question from Mr. Guthrie and we will get back to you.

Candace Balmer continued so the question to me was why are these questions being asked if they are not essential? And they are essential. The point was you could look at three programs at once instead of looking at one and coming back and looking at the others. While the agencies use collective data, the one people find most intrusive is race. They collect that information because it is part of a larger network of projects and one of their, I forget the phrase they use for it, but one of the purposes of this program is to eliminate blight and to assist certain communities. While that is not particularly relevant to this community or this project, it is a question that they ask us to ask. If you don't fill out your race, that does not render your Survey unusable. The other question people find really intrusive is their income. Unfortunately that is the key question so if we don't use that we really can't do much with the rest. We can use it to support the application by also telling them that data if it has particular significance, but at the end of the day we need 65% with incomes on there. So we are asked to ask those questions and I understand what you are saying and all I can say if you don't want to fill out race, don't fill it out. But if you don't fill out income, we won't be able to use your survey and if we don't have your address it is a little harder for us to figure out where we've been and we may be knocking on your door because we don't know you sent your income in if you haven't told us where you live. So it's the nature of the program is how its defined or constructed.

John Luckacovic remarked I own a house on 11 New Street and I have tenants there. I bought my house in 1988 and when I bought the house I was told that the debt would be retired within 20 years. I know that I have been paying biannually or semiannually my sewer bill which has never gone down, so if any debt has been retired, as far as I know, it has never been reflected. I would also like to know how many households were originally in the district, how many households are in the district now, how many have been added, how many have been subtracted? I understand what the Board was saying about wanting to add more people to it, but I am just curious if we had 1,200 and now we have 1,100 or 900 paying or 1,600 paying or something like that. I am very curious about that.

Mary Beth Bianconi noted actually recently we did quite a bit of research on the district as a function of this project for exactly that reason, we wanted to know who was in and who was out. And the way this district is formed is based on real property boundaries generally. There are some districts that include strip areas along highways and things like that. That is not the case here. As far as I know, the district is the district and unless people have subdivided parcels within it, like say you have a 20 acre parcel and somebody is going to make it five parcels, the external boundary of the district has not changed since the day it started. Now if there have been subdivisions within, then the number of parcels may have changed, but we used a combination of real property tax data. We used the original description of the boundary, put it on a map using something called GIS which is Geographic Information Systems. We correlated that back to real property taxes. We worked with the Town to come up with a list of everybody that they charge in the sewer district, put it all together and said this is who is in the sewer district.

Tax Collector Jordan stated I send out 421 bills to the sewer district.

Candace Balmer said I'm not sure where the 421, are vacant land people getting a bill?

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Tax Collector Jordan responded yes.

Mary Beth Bianconi suggested that's the difference, it is vacant land. Getting back to what we are talking about is about 242, how many do you have?

Candace Balmer added well we had commercial and institutional in there. I don't know how many are in that apartment building, I called it 6, so I have 225 or so.

Mary Beth Bianconi observed 225 or so. Do you remember what Candace said for the Income Survey portion of this, we are only worried about residential we don't count commercials, so we wouldn't count whatever it's called now, what's the Marina called now, whatever the Marina is called these days and a few commercials. When we do this calculation, the reason we don't call this number of houses, we call it equivalent dwelling units, is because we have to look and say overall who is here to share in the cost so we do include in this number, we do include the commercials and those guys. I have to go back and look, it has been awhile since we came up with this number, how we count vacants. I'm guessing you may have a policy where you count them as half or something along that line, so that's where the vacants are going to come into play at .5 so you are going to see some different numbers but there are reasons for those different numbers. The number of bills is going to be different from the number we use, will be different than the number of Income Surveys because they are looking at different things, but the boundaries of the district are the same to answer your question.

Supervisor Dellisanti asked Candace do we need 65% of the 225?

Mary Beth Bianconi answered that's her number, yes.

Supervisor Dellisanti asked any other questions?

Richard Guthrie questioned what was that number, 225 did you say?

Candace Balmer replied it is estimated right now, but it hasn't been verified, It is around 225 individual households, whereas an apartment would be considered one household, so six households in one building if it was an apartment building.

Richard Guthrie asked how many bills went out?

Tax Collector Jordan replied 241, I'm sorry.

Many speaking at once.

Mary Beth Bianconi stated 241, we had 242, and you had 224. We are there.

Robert Denny said I have two questions. One is about the logistics of confidentiality of the piece of paper. How long until it gets shredded or otherwise disposed of? And the other is about the sludge. a community that is primarily agricultural, why isn't the sludge being used more efficiently for farming?

Mary Beth Bianconi responded that's a great question, do you want to start with yours?

Candace Balmer began in my office since I've been here, I maintain them indefinitely. Basically, I don't need to but it goes to our agency and it goes into a vault in Massachusetts so if we every need to go back or look up something I am a pack rat.

Mary Beth Bianconi asked how many times have I called you and said do you remember eight years ago you did a Community Survey?

Candace Balmer answered now that we have computers it is a lot easier to maintain those records. But in terms of how long we have to retain them? I don't know, I would be guessing.

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Member of the Audience asked are they kept under lock and key? I went and built in cabinets for a hospital program where they were keeping records of patients and they were very strict about who had access to them, keys, and things like that.

Candace Balmer explained there is a couple of different programs, and this one other program I was hoping that you might qualify for, they require that the information gets maintained here. And if that is the case quite honestly from what I have seen so far, you are not going to qualify or even apply for them. Were you to do that, the Town would have their own confidentiality procedure that they would follow and we don't determine what that is. When it is maintained in our offices, it is basically unavailable to anyone but the Agency or the Town who requests that information, but certainly not the individual Surveys. If the agency wants to see it, we maintain it in our vault so those Surveys are maintained at the RCAP vault in Massachusetts, one of our two buildings that access is practically impossible to get to, unless it is me knowing what to look for or where to go because there really isn't anyone else covering New York. So I ship them in a box with a whole bunch of other things. I go back and go to vault and look and nobody can ever find it anywhere.

Mary Beth Bianconi observed as we mentioned there was an Income Survey done in that district a number of year ago for water. The reason we knew what that number was because I called Candace and said do you remember a number of years ago you guys did an Income Survey and actually it was Diane who works with Candace who looked it up for us but she is the one who did it. So there was a reason to keep those numbers around for awhile. Basically we got a grant to write this engineering report which is this thing. The criteria to be part of this grant program was that you had a Median Household Income of \$55,000 or under. Your Median Household Income by the 2010 Census was \$56,000. You did not qualify. We had a Board meeting here and we talked about the fact that you did not qualify. I said wait a minute, this is the entire district, this is the entire Town, the district is a small subset, let me give this a shot. I went back to Candace and said what was the income, I know it was less than \$55,000. We went to the agency and said it was less than \$55,000, can we for \$1,000, and by the way the Census is still just some tiny little portion of people extrapolated, can you allow them to qualify and the answer was yes. The reason was because we had documentation. If we just made that up out of the blue, no one would have believed us, but because we were able to say wait a minute five years ago it was \$45,000, it is reasonable to say that \$56,000 could have been \$55,000 and so they should qualify and you got a \$24,000 grant because of that. So there are good reasons to keep track of this information and your stand and concerns about confidentiality, but from the perspective of long term view, it is very helpful you got a grant that you would otherwise not have qualified for.

Candace Balmer added but there is a lifespan, so periodically incomes go up along with costs hopefully.

Mary Beth Bianconi continued so your second question was about the material that is left over after this and we are a farming community and why can't it be used. It can be used, but the product that comes from this we call sludge but it is also called a biosolid. And essentially what's in it is there are cellulosic materials that can't be consumed, it certainly is not an inert material it is biologically active, it definitely has fecal coliform in it, it definitely has a lot of things in it that you wouldn't just want to take out and put on the ground. That could be bad for a lot of reasons. So in the United States, but particularly in New York State, there is a biosolids program that manages the use and disposal of these materials. Materials like this that come directly off of a treatment plant and have not been further processed, we are not doing anything to this process, we put it in these yellow tanks, these digesters, what we are really doing is concentrating it. The bacteria is still alive and after awhile when they start to starve to death, they eat each other, they become cannibals, they consume each other and that actually reduces their mass. And that is one of the reasons to do this is because you are reducing the amount of

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that material that you eventually have to pay somebody to come in a truck and take it away for \$80-\$90 a ton which is pretty expensive. So the idea of having a digester can be great, the idea of using a drying bed is wonderful, but remember we still haven't done anything to inactivate the bacteria, to neutralize any of the harmful biologicals that are in there anything like that. Your Plant, you asked about metals which is often an issue, no metals concerns you. It is simply that in order to turn this into either a Class A biosolid which is something that you buy at Home Depot, which by the way when you are buying those big white sacks that say it is nice compost, I will guarantee you that a good portion of that comes from Canada and lot of that has human waste in it that has been inactivated and is perfectly safe. It doesn't even have to be labeled Class A biosolid. Class B biosolid is one that can be used on a farm, applied directly but not for any crops that have human consumption. So those are often used for animal feed crops, switch grasses, and things of that nature. Class B biosolids, however, still requires further treatment than what we are going to do here. Lowest class of biosolids is more or less what we are going to end up with here, that is suitable, you can't get something called a beneficial use determination for it until you have done further processing. Generally what happens is when we look at doing those kind of processing of these plants, the cost far exceeds the return on the investment and right now there aren't programs available out there that are putting grant dollars into these types of programs to reduce the capital cost to make it so that your return on investment is not 199 years. There are regional biosolid processing facilities out there, not a lot of them are what we call merchant facilities, meaning that they take in other peoples' biosolids, process them and make a product that they sell, there are a few of those. The reason there aren't a ton of them is that is very hard to control feed stocks, so are you getting metals, what are you getting in this stuff, but it is a problem. The other thing is having marketplace, someplace for the stuff to go. While you would think all these farms are using all of this fertilizer, nitrogen and phosphorus and all these different things. That is all true, but the industry that provides that type of nutrient material is so capable of being so inexpensive these days that this stuff generally is far more expensive. So there are a few, there is a massive facility just over the Canadian border by Plattsburgh, about a 20 minute drive from Plattsburgh, they merchant, they take this material all the way from New York City, drive it how many numbers of hours it takes, six or seven hours up there, and it has an agronomic value and they mix it with sand and they use it for soybeans grown in Canada. But there just aren't a tremendous amount of soybeans that are doing it, it is very, very costly on this scale. It is probably more than you want to know. I wrote a nice research paper on it if you want to know more. That question comes up all the time.

Candace Balmer pointed out just because you have a neighboring community that did that and it finally abandoned it because they just couldn't get rid of materials. It is much more popular in the western part of the state, much more of a demand for it, the transportation costs, the economics are not very good and they abandoned theirs, their composting.

Mary Beth Bianconi explained even the huge one in Syracuse is closed down. There was a massive one in Syracuse that ran, if you work at the Carousel Center, you were right next door to it. It ran for 20 something odd years and the mathematics started working not in their favor and with the downturn, the housing market really hit this market really hard because a lot of these materials and the soil is used in building houses. And in 2008 everything stops being built, now all of a sudden you have all these facilities generating material with nowhere to go. The other thing about composting is, you might leave here with 10 tons, when you compost it you make 15. It is not a net positive gain because you are mixing it with other materials. So it is that coming in and going out, having a reliable feedstock, and then having a place for it to go consistently.

Constance Bulmer added and the cost of materials.

Mary Beth Bianconi commented and the cost of materials that you are mixing it with, things in the past that historically has been considered waste products -- kiln dust, sawdust, wood chips --

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now there is a huge market for those things, they all have commercial useful functions. So it's not like you are taking something that is free and turning it into something that has a value. You are taking something that is fairly high cost to start with, adding more cost to it, and trying to sell it at an even greater cost

Candace Balmer mentioned I just wanted to make one more comment about confidentiality that I forgot. Because I mentioned this other grant program that in theory could require that data to be held here, which I don't think you are going to qualify for, but if you were the way this form is structured is your income is on one page and your signature and address are on the back and if we were required to submit it to the Town for their files, we would copy them and separate them so you would get a stack of the income and a stack of signatures and they are not related to each other.

Richard Guthrie began regarding your organization, it is a not-for-profit, funded by some federal agency and you are situated I think you said in Massachusetts. So my questions go to again and I apologize I missed it at the outset, who are you again and then what agency is providing the funding and are there other sources of income that keep you guys afloat. It's a very curious concept is what I am thinking of and who else where else other than Massachusetts and projects in New York are you engaged? How we can find this information on our own, maybe a pathway that is better than you answering all those questions.

Candace Balmer noted ordinarily that's how I start my introduction and I said, in the interest of time, nobody cares, so let me do that part. It is called RCAP Solutions, we are part of a national network of not-for-profits called Rural Community Assistance Partnership. There are six regional offices throughout the country. We are in the Northeast Region which is housed in Massachusetts. The other regional offices are in different areas. Some of them are configured a little differently from us, but they are managed kind of independent agencies that are under the umbrella of this Rural Community Assistance Partnership which is federally funded and also some states receive some funding to assist rural communities. And we exist because people that provide the funding for this kind of program, like the old Farmers' Home Program which was the infrastructure funder for 100 years, which is now called the USDA Rural Development, the newer program, the State Revolving Loan Fund, which is a bit of an outgrowth of the older Construction Grants program that Mary Beth mentioned from the 80's, there was an earlier one in the 70's. These programs are out there to get money to communities. Small rural communities have difficulty getting to that money because there is an awful lot of things that you have to do and paperwork you have to fill out and Requests for Proposals to find engineers and there is a lot of technical assistance that goes into this for a rural community that many small, poor, rural communities don't have the capacity. So they recognize that, they funded people like us to go out in the field to work with communities directly to help them get to that money. So we exist in every state, and the funders are the Department of Health and Human Services, that is the bulk of our funding; USDA Rural Development, we help you get to their money.

Richard Guthrie questioned that is the old Farmers' Home?

Candace Bulmer answered yes and finally the EPA water and wastewater and that is a competitive program. They used to be automatic, but now we compete for them.

Supervisor Dellisanti remarked I want to thank Mary Beth and Candace for the expertise and all their time tonight. It was a well put together program and I appreciate it. I want to thank the residents for coming and asking their questions, because this is what it is all about to find out what we are trying to do here in the Town and getting the expertise from Delaware Engineering and also Candace's corporation. Thank you all very much.

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Motion by Supervisor Dellisanti seconded by Councilwoman Benway to close the Public Hearing at 7:02 PM.

AYES: Dellisanti, Benway, Norris, VanEtten

NAYS:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Ruso