



PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Bethel Municipal Center, 1 School Street
Bethel, Connecticut 06801 Telephone: (203) 794-8501

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, April 4, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Bethel Middle School – Auditorium

RECEIVED
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TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

Present: First Selectman Matthew Knickerbocker, Selectman Paul Szatkowski, Selectman Richard Straiton and Commissioner Michael Gribbin. Also in attendance were Town Comptroller Robert Kozlowski, Town Engineer Andrew Morosky, Utility Consultant Leonard Assard and Town Attorney Martin Lawlor.

First Selectman Knickerbocker opened the Public Hearing at 7:01 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Andrew Morosky, Town Engineer, made a presentation explaining the work that took place in Contract 2 and the process for determining the Sewer Assessment formula. Mr. Morosky described how the formula consists of two components: A Base Charge of \$8,500 per parcel and a Grand List Charge that varies with the parcel's assessed value. These two components combine for the total assessment. The sum of all base charges and assessed values charge equals \$9,053,139.66, the cost of the work completed, with each component covering approximately half the cost of the project. Mr. Morosky indicated that the average sewer assessment for phase 2 is approximately \$20,000 per parcel served. The average sewer assessment for phase 1 (billed in 2008) was approximately \$17,500.

First Selectman Knickerbocker referred back to Mr. Tim Bott of Meckauer Circle, who spoke at the end of the prior Public Hearing.

Tim Bott, 29 Meckauer Circle, spoke regarding his disagreement with the placement of sewers in Meckauer Circle but understands why they were included in the sewer project. Mr. Bott would like a better understanding and clarity of the assessments also about costs related to the sewers and costs related to hooking up to the system.

First Selectman Knickerbocker indicated to Mr. Bott that his sewer assessment will be \$19,214, according to the schedule approved by the Commission. Mr. Bott would like to know how much it will cost to connect to the system and also the quarterly sewer use bill. Mr. Morosky indicated that the permit would cost \$700 for a well water system. If the applicant has United Water as a supplier then the sewer permit is \$550. Mr. Morosky indicated that a plumber can provide total construction costs to complete the connection from the house to the sewer lateral at the property line.

First Selectman Knickerbocker and Attorney Lawlor indicated that the Commission is not requiring the homeowners to hook up to the sewer system at this time. Mr. Bott questioned when the roads would get paved and indicated that when this project was first started the residents were told the paving of the roads

would be included. First Selectman Knickerbocker referred to Mr. Morosky. Mr. Morosky indicated that Meckauer Circle is scheduled for paving in the next year.

First Selectman Knickerbocker inquired to Mr. Bott whether he was aware of the Road Project that was approved last fall. Mr. Bott indicated he was aware but he was told that when the sewers would be installed that after a year of settlement his road would be repaved. First Selectman Knickerbocker indicated that the project only covers patching the trench that was dug up for the sewers, not to repave the entire road. Mr. Knickerbocker added that the Town, years ago, should have been placing money into the Road Account to cover the repaving but this was not done. First Selectman indicated that the \$8.5 Million Road Project put forward to the Board of Finance last year was reduced to \$2 million and he would like to put the balance of the project to a vote this year. Mr. Morosky indicated Meckauer Circle is scheduled for repaving next year.

Bill Hillman, Walnut Hill Road, feels the assessment amounts should have been included in the mailing to the residents. Mr. Hillman distributed a hand-out to each of the commissioners (see attached). Mr. Hillman discussed interest rates over the 25 year assessment as well as his assessment numbers and total costs related to the hook up to the sewer system. He asked what will happen to the assessment if the home is sold. Comptroller Kozlowski indicated that the assessment is transferable. Mr. Hillman feels the patch work completed in this phase was not performed well. Mr. Hillman would like to know the sticker price and feels the residents would like to know. Mr. Hillman indicated his assessment will be up to \$1650 a year with the interest rate varying according to the schedule provided by Webster Bank. Mr. Hillman would like to see a summary of the ongoing quarterly/yearly costs related to this project.

Andrew Sharp, 28 Birch Drive, expressed his dissatisfaction with the work completed by the contractor. Representative installing lateral never met with residents on the road to verify where they would like their sewer lateral installed. Mr. Sharp feels he needs better communications from the Town regarding the sewer project. Mr. Sharp would like to know which Phase he would be paying for. Mr. Kozlowski indicated that he would be paying for the phase that he is in.

Stephanie Parzuchowski, 41 Hearthstone Drive, commented on her dissatisfaction with the paving of the roads in her area. Hearthstone Drive is still not yet completed while Chimney Drive and Benedict Road are completed. Ms. Parzuchowski would like to know when Hearthstone Road will be completed. Ms. Parzuchowski would like the job completed as soon as possible. First Selectman Knickerbocker again indicated that the final paving of the roads was not included in the sewer project and reiterated the importance of the Road Renewal Project.

Mike Veilleux, Birch Road, commented on his dissatisfaction with the paving of the roads in his area and wanted to know when the roads will be paved. He is very dissatisfied with patch work completed. Mr. Veilleux was told the paving would be done in 2011. Mr. Morosky spoke regarding the paving in this area. First Selectman spoke again about the Road Project; there is 7.5 miles of road to be paved. Dissatisfied with communications with representatives for the sewer project as well as dissatisfied with work performed and how the area was left after completion. Mr. Veilleux indicated that equipment and pipes were placed on his property with no advance notice.

Kitty Grant, 23 Quaker Ridge Road, feels the Town needed to provide better communications with the residents regarding this project and indicated she never received a single letter from Public Works. Mrs. Grant had several concerns: when will this bill be sent out, also would like to know about the billing information and also would like to have an informational package sent to her. Mr. Kozlowski indicated the assessment would be a yearly billing for 25 years.

Frank Hislop indicated his concern regarding the poor quality of the work and the rising costs in the project and indicated his understanding that all phases would be paying the same amount. Mr. Morosky spoke regarding the costs in the different phases.

Mrs. Williams, 22 Far Horizon, expressed her dissatisfaction with the communications from the Town Hall. Not content with cost of the assessment. Would like to know who will pay for a sewer back up if the sewer backs up into my home? Mr. Morosky indicated that homeowner is responsible from the sewer main to the home. Discussion regarding the assessments took place between Mrs. Williams and Mr. Morosky.

Discussion from the crowd took place about the scope of the referendum in 2003 for the sewer project.

Maria Woods, 8 Hawleyville Road; Questioned when will the residents need to tie into the sewer system? First Selectman indicated that the Public Utility Commission has not set a date indicating to the residents a cutoff date to hook up. Attorney Lawlor spoke as well and will check for any statutes regarding this concern. Mrs. Woods never voted for the sewer project. 8 Hawleyville Road assessment will be \$19,383.27.

John Kelly, Walnut Hill Road, questioned Mr. Kozlowski regarding the total amount bonded for the project. Mr. Kozlowski indicated that the Town borrowed \$19,000,000. Mr. Kelly asked how much was left for the remainder of the project. Mr. Kozlowski indicated that approximately \$1,000,000 is left over. Mr. Kelly asked how much money Bethel made off the bond money. Mr. Kozlowski did not have that number available. Mr. Kelly wanted to know where the assessed values used in the calculation come from as he had previously appealed and had his assessment reduced. Mr. Kozlowski indicated the numbers came from the Assessor's Office. Attorney Lawlor indicated that these numbers are based on the last revaluation in 2007. Mr. Kelly asked if a quarterly bill could be issued instead of a yearly bill. Mr. Kozlowski indicated that the bills will go out in August and be due in September.

Discussion between the Commission and Mr. Kozlowski regarding revaluation took place. Attorney Lawlor spoke regarding the costs of the easements for the entire project and indicated that a dollar amount should have been identified for easements at the start of the project. Attorney Lawlor does not have the total cost for the easements at this time. The question was asked when the easements on phase 3 will be completed. Mr. Morosky spoke in response regarding the various areas requiring easements.

Bill Hillman, Walnut Hill, commented regarding interest rates. Bond concerns and going back to the residents for more money on completion of phase 4. Mr. Hillman indicated he will not vote yes for any additional sewer project costs. First Selectman Knickerbocker indicated that if needed to complete the project the Public Utility Commission will have to go back to the public and have a vote whether to complete Phase 4. Mr. Morosky spoke regarding the various phases and supplemental costs on top of the assessments. Mr. Morosky indicated that there should be a normalization of the costs at the end of the project to ensure that all phases are sharing equally in the overall cost of the project.

Kitty Grant, Quaker Ridge, questioned if the assessments reflect the final cost or could there be additional costs? Mr. Morosky indicated that if the remainder of the work is significantly more money then, yes, it is a possibility for a supplemental assessment on top of the original assessment, as indicated in the notice of Public Hearing. Mrs. Grant is dissatisfied with the answers she is receiving from the commissioners.

Gary Lewis, 30 Hawleyville Road, commented on the sewer project and the limits of the various phases.

Robert Legnard, 11 Evergreen Drive, Former Selectman, provided background regarding the reasons behind the sewer project. People in this area were faced with the possibility of not being able to sell their

homes because of failing septic systems. The people benefit from a sewer system and the cost of installing a new *engineered* septic system would likely be twice as much compared to the sewer assessment. Mr. Legnard also spoke of the health and environmental benefits provided by the sewer project.

Richard Hansen, 27 Meckauer Circle, indicated his displeasure with the sewer project. He indicated that the Engineer indicated that he would have a gravity feed system and he will not have a pump up system. Mr. Hansen was assured that his particular situation would be examined to ensure the status of his lateral.

Rick, 30 Benedict Road, question on permit costs.

Carol Ann Frascione, 5 Quaker Ridge Road, wondered how she could afford to pay for the assessment as she works for the State and is taking a financial hit with furlough days, no raises, and money taken out of her paycheck. She asked what will happen if she can't pay? Mr. Kozlowski indicated that, unless an assessment is paid in full, a lien will be placed on all properties, although a lien for a sewer assessment is not viewed the same as a lien for a default. If an annual assessment bill is not paid, it is treated as an unpaid tax bill. Discussion took place regarding liens.

Jim Legnard, Benedict Road, thanked the staff and Commission for the work they are doing.

Mr. Abrams, 6 Appletree, questioned the interest rates. Mr. Kozlowksi responded that the effective rate is 3.78%.

Ben Mierzejewski, 27 Appletree Road, would like to have all data included in the assessment letters. Mr. Kozlowski indicated the Town can place all data into the assessment letters when they go out to the public.

First Selectman Knickerbocker closed the Public Hearing at 8:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tracy Rogalski". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Tracy Rogalski, Recording Secretary

Date	Interest Rate
11/15/2011	2.25%
11/15/2012	3.00%
11/15/2013	4.00%
11/15/2014	2.50%
11/15/2015	3.00%
11/15/2016	3.00%
11/15/2017	3.00%
11/15/2018	3.00%
11/15/2019	3.13%
11/15/2020	3.25%
11/15/2021	4.00%
11/15/2022	4.00%
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11/15/2032	4.25%
11/15/2033	4.25%
11/15/2034	4.25%

