

Rocky River Wastewater Treatment (WWTP) Management Committee Meeting, November 18, 2014

by LWV observers Conda Boyd and Carole Zeiders (Bay Village)

This report is not an official LWV statement. WWTP staff prepares official minutes.

Present: Mayor Bobst (Rocky River), Mayor Sutherland (Bay Village), Paul Quinn and Robert Kelly (Westlake), Rob Berner (Fairview Park)

Also in attendance: Jeff Harrington (WWTP Superintendent), Keith Bovard (WWTP); Michael Thomas (Rocky River Director of Finance); Renee Mahoney (Bay Village Director of Finance)

Duration: 10:03-10:40

Thermal Sludge Conditioning: Sludge removal cost \$185,000 in 2014. The local farm that has taken sludge during the warm months at \$17 per wet ton will stop doing so in 2015. Alternative estimate is \$22. Microwave drying is meant for smaller plants, and the resulting product retains an odor. Thermal drying will result in \$200,000 increased operating costs for utilities and personnel.

No Feasible Alternative (NFA): Diversion during peak wet weather requires EPA review. The Eighth Circuit Court has ruled that US-EPA overstepped by putting limits on blending. Ohio-EPA is studying the implications. The WWTP previously requested a 3-year permit extension (to July 2019) because planned capital improvements would skew the required NFA study.

2015 Budget: The new \$4,978,232 budget is increased by \$253,201 (5.4%) over the original 2014 budget. Of this, \$100,000 is the last of three planned capital fund increases. The WWTP employs 18 people, and Mayor Bobst noted the employee contract has not been finalized. [The Committee adjourned to executive session for ten minutes to discuss compensation.] The budget was accepted as presented. A limited amount is included to cover the cost of employee contract adjustments.

WWTP costs are allocated based on the 2013 flow and strength study: Bay Village 24.80%, Fairview Park 15.85%, Rocky River 25.31%, and Westlake 34.03%. Mayor Sutherland noted that Bay Village plans to continue its current \$90 sewer rates for all four quarters of 2015 (vs. three quarters in 2014). About \$120,000 of the projected \$150,000 increased revenue will now go toward its WWTP share rather than toward sewer projects within the city.

Ohio EPA Sludge Rule Decision: Ohio EPA has approved an alternative method of biosolids screening, at a \$650,000 cost savings. New bar screens installed in 2009 have resulted in an average removal rate increase of 160%. December will see completion of a \$595,000 project to clean the secondary digester, which had not been cleaned for 30 years, vs. industry average 15-20 years. Mr. Harrington noted that the ongoing expenditures for maintenance and improvements that keep the plant EPA-

compliant help him make the case for alternative approaches, saving significant taxpayer dollars in the long run.

Energy Consultant RFPs: Four or five proposals are being evaluated. One possible financing arrangement is for the consultant to pay for improvements, then share in the cost savings.

Miscellaneous: David Matty will continue as legal counsel for 2015 at the same rate and services. For 2015-2016, Scott Thomas, Bay Village's Director of Public Services & Properties, will replace Paul Quinn as the fifth member of the Management Committee.

The WWTP is a joint venture among the Cities of Bay Village, Fairview Park, Rocky River and Westlake. The Management Committee includes the four mayors, with a rotating fifth seat. It meets as needed.