

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF A PUBLIC HEARING  
MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2019**

A Public Hearing was called to order by Chairman Ludwick in the Council Chambers of the Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Monday, June 3, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Present were Councilors Bosco, Cressotti, Deni, Kiner, Ludwick, Muller, Sferrazza, Szewczak and Unghire. Councilors Cekala and Davis were absent. Also present were Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Assistant Town Manager, Kasia Purciello; Director of Public Works, Donald Nunes and Director of Finance, John Wilcox

Chairman Ludwick read the notice of Public Hearing, which was published in the Hartford Courant on Friday, May 24, 2019.

**TOWN OF ENFIELD  
LEGAL NOTICE  
PUBLIC HEARING**

The Enfield Town Council will hold a Public Hearing in the Enfield Town Hall, Council Chambers, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Monday, June 3, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. to allow interested citizens an opportunity to express their opinions regarding the PROPOSED SEWER SERVICE FEES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019/2020.

Chairman Ludwick announced the ground rules for the Public Hearing.

Mr. Bromson explained why the Town of Enfield has this rate structure. He stated the Town had several significant violations under DEEP, which could have resulted in fines of up to \$50,000 per day if the Town did not address those violations. He noted that is why the Town went to a referendum to have the new plant built, and it's now under construction and should be completed in October of 2020. He stated the Town adopted a rate program, which is comprised of two parts with one being a monthly base charge and the other a volumetric charge.

He stated the operating cost last year was \$4.3 million; the capital for this year is \$1.1 million, which is a drop from \$1.8 million last year. He noted the reason for this is that there's really \$500,000 additional that will be for road construction when new sewer lines are done, however, that can be deferred until the next budget.

Mr. Bromson stated the total cost of the upgrade is \$36 million dollars. The Clean Water Fund provided a very favorable loan at 2%, and that is \$23,169,235. The Town received an outright grant from the federal Clean Water Fund for doing this upgrade, which amounts to around \$6.5

million dollars. The State's contribution is \$2.5 million dollars, and that will be received shortly. The bond balance is about \$4.6 million dollars.

Mr. Bromson stated the repayment for the 20-year loan from the Clean Water Fund will start in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget. He noted with principle and interest, the payment will be \$1.6 million dollars per year. He noted also in Fiscal Year 2021, the Town will begin repaying the bonded amount of \$4,672,206. The beginning principle and interest for the first year will be approximately \$327,000.

He stated in the past when they had co-mingled funds, the Town borrowed \$3.5 million dollars from the General Fund, and the Town has been paying that back and they still owe \$850,000.

Mr. Bromson stated the proposed rate will generate \$6.9 million dollars per year, and the future need by 2023 with those repayments in place will require \$8 million dollars per year to meet all their obligations. He pointed out this does not include the \$500,000 from the Novak Report for additional personnel. He noted they're in the process of hiring a new Superintendent for Water Pollution Control, and that Superintendent will review the Novak recommendations to learn exactly what personnel is needed to run and maintain the plant.

He stated the 2019 base rate recommended by Woodard & Curran was \$30 per quarter, and the volumetric was \$3.49 for lower gallonage and higher gallonage would go to \$5.24. He noted last year \$21.00 per quarter was adopted, which was \$9.00 less than the recommendation, and the volumetric adopted was \$3.43 and \$5.13. He noted the 2020 rate recommendation by Woodard & Curran was to go to \$36.00 per quarter for the base rate and the volumetric was \$3.60 and \$5.39 respectively. He stated the recommendation now is not to go that high, but rather go with the 2019 initial recommendation, which is \$30 per quarter for the base rate and \$3.49 and \$5.24 for the volumetric rate. He stated for the average household this results in an increase of \$41 per year, or \$10.28 per quarter.

Mr. Bromson referred to a chart that shows the rates in other towns and noted Enfield's current rate shows Enfield is just below the lowest rates of Manchester, New Britain and Somers. He noted with the proposed rate, the increase for 2020 puts Enfield in the top quarter.

He stated going forward, they can't change the funding needs. He noted if they go with the current system, they can continue to follow the recommendation of Woodard & Curran, add to the base rate and volumetric rate over time, or they could go with a flat rate, which would amount to approximately \$360 per year, however, that is no consideration for usage, and there were real equitable concerns about a flat rate.

Chairman Ludwick then invited comments from the public.

Johanne Dion, 23 Walnut Street

Stated she has owned a duplex at 23 Walnut Street for 15 years. She noted she's against paying this usage for other people. She stated this is a big problem because if an apartment is rented for three people and six people move in and they're already on the State, the landlord must pay for more usage. She feels this is wrong, and she feels this is socialism in the town of Enfield. She noted a lot of property owners feel this way. She stated property owners aren't even aware of these meetings. She noted people are leaving Enfield due to taxes.

Karen LaPlante, 166 North Maple Street

Stated in the minutes of the January 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, Mr. Bromson stated they're going to address the budget of Water Pollution Control now that it's been separated out and they have separate charges, and during the budget session, there will be a separate budget report for the Water Pollution Control with actual budget deliberations before they do the Town budget so that things are transparent, and they can really look at all the numbers. She stated she was a little disappointed that no meetings discussed budget items.

Ms. LaPlante stated she heard the collection rate improved, therefore, the Town should have gotten more money than what was expected in this fiscal year.

She noted it's being said that the projected revenues are \$7.2 million dollars, which is shown on Page 74 of the annual budget, but it was just mentioned that \$5,490,000 is going to be spent. She questioned what happens to the collected excess revenue of \$1.75 million dollars.

Ms. LaPlante stated it's harder to tell how much extra was brought in for this fiscal year. She referred to Hazardville Water's revenue for the calendar year and noted they sold 7 million gallons more than the previous year, therefore, Enfield should get revenue in the sewer collections of an additional 7 million gallons times the cheapest rate, and this results in an additional \$24,000 in revenue.

She referred to the \$250,000 per year payback of the \$3.4 million borrowed from the Town and noted this is not shown anywhere in the budget. She questioned where this is shown as a payback. She added she can't find where that's included in the \$5.49 million.

Ms. LaPlante stated if the budget decreased by 10.7%, she questions why the rates are being raised because that means they'll have an extra 10.7% plus the increase in extra revenue than they really need, therefore, that means they'll have an even higher surplus than they've actually budgeted for.

She stated the revised budget of 2019 showed revenues of \$6.34 million, which shows at the current rates is still \$944,000 over what they're looking for this year. She feels they need to be more inquisitive as to where this money is going.

George Young, 8 Holly Lane

Referred to the \$2.5 million-dollar loan that the WPC struggles to pay back to the Town and questioned whether there's any way the balance can be considered as seed money to eliminate the debt and burden from the WPC and sewer bill. He noted he raised this question before.

Mr. Young stated when the Town decides to raise revenue of \$7.2 million dollars, what is the breakout between the ready-to-serve charge and the usage charge to get the total revenue. He noted he can't figure out how many customers are being billed.

He agreed with Karen LaPlante about the effort to raise \$7.2 million dollars and they only have \$5.1 million in expenditures. He questioned if this is because they're not putting down the capital expenditures in one of the sections.

Mr. Young stated before they changed to this new way of collecting revenue in 2014, they use to pay about one mill in the regular tax rate, which amounts to about \$170 per year on a \$200,000 valued home. He noted it will now be about \$360 per year, and that bumps it up to \$2 million dollars. He stated his belief the taxpayers already paid off the loan that was advanced to Water Pollution Control, therefore, couldn't they get rid of that loan and reduce the burden to the taxpayers.

John Porcello, 30 Monroe Road

Stated he was shocked when he received his sewer use bill. He noted all the estimates are based on a 5/8" meter. He pointed out all the birdland homes and Starr homes built in the 1960's have 3/4" meters. He noted they need to take that \$30 usage bill and make it \$45, which amounts to \$180 for him. He stated he went from a \$16.00 bill to a \$48.00 bill, which is a 65% increase. He noted he does not use a lot of water. He noted the study had nothing to do with the base rate and definitely not the meter sizes.

Christine Criscitelli, 57 First Avenue

Questioned how the Town arrived at what they are charging her. She questioned if it's fair that she, as a single person living two weeks per month in her home, is charged the same rate. She noted the Town does not monitor her water usage. She questioned how the Town can charge someone when they're not monitoring their water usage. She feels this is not fair, and this should be looked at. She went on to note that there should be a better way to come up with a figure for people who have wells. She noted she can't afford to live in Enfield anymore, and she's looking at selling her home.

Ms. Criscitelli stated she understands things must be fixed. She questioned why the Town isn't maintaining things, i.e., JFK and Fermi are examples of this. She went on to note St. James Avenue is being torn up, and she questioned why the Town doesn't coordinate with utility companies when road projects are being done.

James Morris, 69 Elm Street

Stated his belief the Town Council does a great job.

Mr. Morris referred to comments from the previous speaker and stated it appears things aren't planned out to its completion. He noted newly paved roads are falling apart the following year due to the water company doing its work.

He referred to the sewer use fee, which started low, but now it's become a bill. He noted a landlord is responsible for anyone who lives on their property, whether that tenant pays their bills or not. He stated the Town will go after the landlord, instead of the person that actually generated the bill.

Mr. Morris stated the Town needs to start looking out for the taxpayers.

As no others wished to speak, Chairman Ludwick closed the hearing at 7:05 p.m.