

Minutes of the July 22, 2013 Meeting  
Warwick City Council Sewer Review Commission

Meeting was called to order by Councilman Ed Ladouceur, Chairman at 8:05 am.

Councilman Ladouceur welcomed the Commission members, thanked them for their service, and at his direction, roll call was taken in the form of the Commission members introducing themselves.

Commission members present:

Councilman Ed Ladouceur, Chairman

Councilman Joe Gallucci, Vice Chairman

Representative Frank Ferri, District 22

Senator William Walaska, District 30

Ernie Zmyslinski, City of Warwick Finance Director

Mark Carruolo, City of Warwick Mayor's Chief of Staff

Aaron Guckian, Warwick Sewer Authority Board, Chairman

James Boyd, RI Coastal Resources Management Council Appointment

Angelo Liberti, RI Dept. of Environmental Management Appointment

Jane Austin, Save The Bay Appointment

Michelle Komar, Chairman's Citizen Appointment

Members not present: David Picozzi, City of Warwick Dept. of Public Works Director and

Doug Harris, Narragansett Indian Tribe

Also present: Janine Burke, Executive Director of the Warwick Sewer Authority (WSA) and Joanne Cournoyer, Warwick City Council Liaison

During the introductions, Angelo Liberti said it was not appropriate for RIDEM to be formally on the Commission and that RIDEM's role could be providing technical information to assist the Commission; not RIDEM's place to get involved in local decisions regarding sewer assessment and usage rates. James Boyd said that CRMC has no authority regarding local sewer fees and assessments; would provide expertise in environmental issues for the Commission.

Commission members and public attending the meeting signed an attendance sheet, which was then given to Ms. Cournoyer.

At the beginning of the 10-minute open microphone session, Councilman Ladouceur asked if any of the public attendees would like to speak—no speakers.

Councilman Ladouceur stated the charge of the Sewer Review Commission. He thought about member selection to meet goals. He wants to get sewers to people in Warwick who do not have sewers; challenge is funding. He stated that sewers must be affordable and sustainable. He mentioned the Cesspool Phaseout Act (state law) and failed cesspools. Future sewer construction projects need to be prioritized. The Commission is to identify funding sources for future sewer projects. Raising the levee at the WSA treatment plant is first priority before plant upgrades and any future sewer construction. Commission also to look at proposed changes to the WSA enabling legislation.

Councilman Ladouceur nominated Councilman Gallucci as vice chairman of the Commission. Members voted unanimously in favor of his appointment.

Councilman Gallucci mentioned the \$23 million revenue bond resolution for sewer construction on which the City Council will vote. Councilman Gallucci wants WSA to have flexible funding. As Ward 8 Councilman, he wants Ward 8 sewer projects to be constructed; no recent sewer construction projects in Ward 8.

Janine Burke said that funding may be possible for the levee improvements to protect plant from the 500-year flood. RIEMA is involved in appeal process to FEMA for levee funding; maybe \$5 million; hopeful to hear decision within the month.

Two handouts were provided by Councilman Gallucci and distributed to the Commission members: 1) Two page handout (assumed to have been prepared by WSA) containing a list of 10 future WSA sewer construction projects (Governor Francis III, Northwest Gorton Pond, O'Donnell Hill, Bayside I, II and III, Warwick Neck South, Strawberry Field Road, Greenwood East, and Pilgrim Estates) with information for each project regarding service area, city council ward, number of properties to be serviced, design engineer, estimated engineering costs to complete design, estimated costs of construction, estimated construction administration/inspection and other costs, total estimated project costs, recommended timeframe and project issues/discussion. Total estimated project costs for all 10 sewer projects is \$62,126,500 (highlighted on page 2; estimate as of 7/22/13 submittal date). Note included that there is no funding or remaining bond authorization to move ahead with these projects. 2) Ten page handout containing an email from Janine Burke to Councilman Gallucci, dated 6/17/2013, which contained list of constructed sewer projects and plant upgrades, etc. for \$130 million general obligation bond (1993) and \$50 million revenue bond (2004) and also comparison of revenue bonds to general obligation bonds.

Ms. Burke stated that the goal is for sewer construction projects to be self funding. Ms. Komar asked if meant that existing rate payers would not be paying for these future sewer construction projects. Ms. Burke answered that was the goal and that the latest rate study has rate increases for the plant upgrades and does not include the cost of subsidizing new sewer construction by existing rate payers.

Ms. Komar asked if the construction cost estimates included in the handout were engineering estimates. Ms. Burke replied that construction cost estimates were based on unit prices, for instance, price per linear foot of sewer pipe. Those projects having engineering design have more accurate estimates. Engineering design costs are the standard/typical percentage of construction costs. Ms. Burke said she could have an engineer prepare construction cost estimates, but would cost money to have prepared.

Angelo Liberti discussed the Consent Agreement and associated deadlines regarding the RIDEM mandated upgrades to the WSA wastewater treatment plant---upgrades must be substantially complete in 2016. Mr. Liberti led discussion regarding the various deadlines in the State Cesspool Phaseout Act. Mr. Liberti said that local bond authorization for sewer construction has December 31, 2014 deadline and if not met, property owners within 200' of a coastal feature would be required to install permitted onsite wastewater treatment systems within six months. Next deadline is sewer construction to be completed by year 2020 or these coastal property owners with cesspools would be required to install permitted onsite wastewater treatment systems. Ms. Komar asked if WSA could add information to the list of sewer projects handout

to indicate the number of included parcels which received letters from RIDEM re: cesspool within 200' of a coastal feature and are subject to these deadlines.

Jim Boyd suggested that the WSA Mandatory Sewer Connection Program and the Lucht study be posted on the Commission's website. Mr. Boyd discussed impacts of climate change, sea level rise, high tides are higher, increases in storm surge in low lying areas—factors not favorable for septic systems; these areas need sewers.

Councilman Ladouceur instructed that a Sewer Review Commission website be created and post documents relative to Commission work. Representative Frank Ferri suggested that the website be set up so that visitors could submit questions.

Councilman Ladouceur said he intended to keep entire Warwick delegation briefed throughout the Commission work, which by legislation is 6 months duration.

Ms. Burke said she would arrange to have Dave Bebyn of B&E, WSA's rate consultant, attend a future Commission meeting to provide overview of WSA usage rate history and structure, and latest usage rate study results and usage fee schedule.

Ms. Burke will prepare and provide information to be posted on the Commission's website.

It was agreed that next Commission meeting date is scheduled for August 5, 2013 at 8:00 am, Lower Conference Room at Warwick City Hall.

Councilman Ladouceur adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:30 am.