

Authority Times

News and Information for Customers
of the Borough of Conshohocken Authority

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Conshohocken Borough to Keep Sewer System Locally Owned

After a nearly two-year evaluation process that began with an inquiry as to the value of the Borough of Conshohocken Authority sewer system and culminated with three bids to purchase the system, the Conshohocken Borough Council voted unanimously to conclude the process and keep its wastewater services in-house.

In doing so, the Council, during its March 17 virtual meeting, agreed to work with the Authority Board to devise revenue-generating alternatives to selling the sewer system. The governing body also voted unanimously to introduce a new ordinance repealing one adopted in February to convey the sewer system, property and assets to the borough.

Borough of Conshohocken Authority Chairwoman Janene Reilly said she and the Authority Board were delighted with the decision to keep sewer service locally owned and operated. The Authority looks forward to continued collaborative and cooperative conversations with the Council and its staff, she added.

“Both parties have been open to novel ideas and suggestions,” Reilly said. “The Authority is excited to explore these opportunities together and devise a plan that will benefit both entities and the community at large.”

Authority Vice Chairwoman Carol Smith had worked alongside residents in finding other alternatives to selling the sewer system and was active in a petition effort.

Felix Raimondo, Conshohocken Borough Authority board member since 2009, spoke during public comment, thanking the Council for its hard work in deciding not to sell the system.

The Authority is “financially sound,” Raimondo said. “We have outstanding rates for (inflow and infiltration). We’re doing all this while having an equitable rate structure and one of the lowest rates in Montgomery County.”

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**Authority Chairwoman
Janene Reilly**

During the Council’s meeting, Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority rates were compared to the Authority’s. The Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority, which offered the highest bid for the Authority’s assets, proposed a three-year rate freeze and projected rates thereafter to increase to \$47.20 per month or \$566.40 per year. Over a 10-year period, ownership by the Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority would have meant an additional \$1,596 over comparable Authority rates, for the same level of service, according to data presented at the meeting.

“We came to an ultimate solution,” Councilwoman Jane Flanagan said. “I think it will benefit our town for a long time.”

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BOARD MEMBERS

JANENE REILLY
Chair

CAROL SMITH
Vice Chair

FELIX RAIMONDO
Secretary

KYLE ELLIOTT
Treasurer

JANE FLANAGAN
Board Member

MEETINGS

April 27

May 25

June 22

July 27

August 24

September 28

**Meetings are held in
the Authority office:
601 East Elm St.
Conshohocken**

Meeting time 6:30 pm



Sewer System Remains Locally Owned

(Continued From Front Page)

Following the more than hour-long discussion, five residents provided written comments opposing the sale of the sewer system and pointing to the strong possibility of drastically higher rates under private ownership. One of the written comments included a petition opposing the sale of the sewer system. The petition had been put online on March 8. Barely a week later, it had been signed by 250 residents.

Borough Manager Stephanie Cecco said many more emails were received from residents who opposed the sale. Those were entered into the record as well.

At the outset, the Council had considered selling its sewer system to help fund

the cost of improving its roads and infrastructure. Beyond paving roads, the effort would rectify issues underneath roads, including pipes and utilities, Cecco said during the meeting. If funded by tax revenue alone, the effort is projected to increase the current 4.5-mill tax rate by 42 mills over 10 years and would amount to a \$4,000 tax increase – over the next decade – for homeowners with property assessed at \$100,000.

With the sewer sale off the table and the Council looking at other revenue-generating options to finance infrastructure improvements. Residents suggested borrowing money or seeking out grants for the road and infrastructure repairs.

At the conclusion of the sale conversa-

tion, the Council tasked the administration to continue discussions with the Authority with the goal of establishing a memorandum of understanding between the parties. The Authority had proposed to annually pay rent to the Borough and to assume responsibility for the borough’s stormwater management system.

“The Authority is committed to finding the best possible solutions,” Chairwoman Reilly said. “Our Board realizes that this effort may take time - and creative brainstorming - to reach the desired outcome. Our Authority’s commitment remains the same: To provide the best possible service at the lowest possible rate to our customers throughout the community.”

Montgomery County Estimated Quarterly Residential Sewer Bills
Using 12,000 Gallons Per Quarter
(September 2019)

