

**TOWN OF KIRKWOOD
PUBLIC HEARING**

November 24, 2009

A public hearing to hear objections to the 2010 assessment rolls for sewer and water districts was held on November 24, 2009 at 6:12 PM at the Joseph A. Griffin Town Hall with Supervisor Gordon Kniffen presiding.

Present: Supervisor Gordon Kniffen
 Councilman Robert Weingartner
 Councilman Lewis Grubham
 Councilwoman Linda Yonchuk
 Councilman William Diffendorf, Jr.

Also Present: Herbert Kline, Town Attorney
 Gayle Diffendorf, Town Clerk
 Richard Jones, DPW Commissioner
 James Smith, Budget Officer

Supervisor Kniffen verified that he had affidavits of posting and publication in the Press & Sun Bulletin and The Country Courier.

Jim Smith, Town of Kirkwood Budget Officer, reviewed the proposed water and sewer budgets. The total appropriations for the water budget for 2010 are just under \$378,000 and revenue projections, including real estate tax billings, are about \$302,000. The appropriated fund balance is \$75,809. One of the impacts on the water budget was that last year the Board changed the minimum charges for water rents which was in response to trying to buffer the increases in regard to sewer; taking away about \$35,000 of meter revenues. In regard to capital needs, the old water tank at Highland Heights needs to be torn down, possible software backup capabilities and about \$20,000 for new truck, the cost of which will be shared between water and sewer. Mr. Smith added that last year the thought was to install a new tank in Highland Heights but that it is now projected to be addressed in 2011. In regard to the sewer budget, the biggest item is the Binghamton Johnson-City Sewage charges, for which the provisional billing for 2010 is unknown at this time. At this point the rates will stay the same for 2010. Frito Lay is utilizing new technology that has decreased flow; they are recycling water internally. In the past they were responsible for half of the capacity of the Town but this is not the case any more. On the water side, their usage is down about 28%. Total appropriations for the sewer budget are \$1,469,000 and revenues, including real estate taxes, are \$1,403,000; projected appropriated fund balance is about \$66,000. Some of the capital items are network costs, hardware and software.

John Finch Jr. explained that the SCADA system is used to run the water and sewer facility. He said the last software update was 10 years ago and the original hardware was installed in 1990. He said if the Town were to keep the same hardware and problems developed, they would not be able to get parts so something should be done before that happens.

In regard to capital items, Jim Smith said that a universal pump station is being considered, which would be about a \$150,000 upgrade. He noted that Bond Anticipation Notes would be considered for 3-4 years. Also same capital needs will be addressed at the main sewer station as well.

Supervisor Kniffen added that Frito Lay is continually looking at ways to cut costs and they recycle water two and three times. They are the recipient of a couple of federal awards as well.

Hearing no addition comments, Supervisor Kniffen ordered the hearing closed at 6:20 PM.

Supervisor Kniffen reopened the hearing at 6:42.

Numerous residents from Fairview Drive were present in response to a letter they received notifying them of the public hearing regarding sewer and water district assessments. The residents were under the impression from the letter that their property assessments were going to increase. Mr. Kline explained that this is in regard to the fact that they are now part of a sewer district and will be billed next year based on the number of units listed on the use of sewer only.

Supervisor Kniffen stated that there will be no property tax increase, that this is strictly a sewer benefit unit assessment. He added that by law the Town has to send the letter to everyone who in

**TOWN OF KIRKWOOD
PUBLIC HEARING**

November 24, 2009

a water and/or sewer district in the Town of Kirkwood even though the Town of Windsor will do the billing.

A concern was noted about the roads; that currently they are just patched. Mr. Jones said it is up to the contractor to bring the roads back up to standards. When they are inspected if they are not up to standards they will have to repair them. It was noted that according to the contractor, they were patching it for now and when the project is done it will be completely repaved. With winter coming there is a concern with the ditches, that drainage is blocked on Fairview Drive. Mr. Jones said they will look at the situation tomorrow.

An additional concern was noted in regard to the fact that the sewage treatment plant is basically located in some of the backyards and this may cause property values to go down. Residents were advised to check with the Town of Kirkwood assessor about this.

Councilman Diffendorf added that all Kirkwood water and sewer district residents get this letter every year, which gives them an opportunity to come in and question the units that they are charged. He noted that since this is the first year the Fairview Drive residents will be included in a sewer district it is the first time they received the letter, but they should realize that they will receive the letter every year. Unless there is a unit increase (which there should not be) it should not be a concern.

The residents did note that it is very confusing to get letters from both Windsor and Kirkwood in regard to this project.

Hearing no additional comments, Supervisor Kniffen again ordered the hearing closed at 6:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle M. Diffendorf
Town Clerk