

**TOWN OF KIRKWOOD  
PUBLIC HEARING**

**November 28, 2017**

A public hearing to hear objections to the 2018 Assessment Rolls for Sewer and Water Districts was held on November 28, 2017 at 6:00 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: Oliver Blaise III, Attorney  
Gayle Diffendorf, Town Clerk  
John A. Finch, Jr., Commissioner of Public Works  
James Smith, Budget Officer

Mr. Smith explained there are few changes from the preliminary budget previously submitted, but about 90% of it is the same and this will not affect the rate, it will only lower the amount that will be put into some of the reserves. He provided a copy of the proposed changes for things that need to be done with tentative quotes for consideration. Originally the water rent was listed as \$290,000 but on the revision it is \$310,000, which will pay for some of the changes. The appropriated fund balance and the various tax levy amounts are unchanged.

In regard to replacing the 25 feet of steel spiral stairs at the wet well side of the main sewer station, Mr. Smith said they are not sure what the cost will be. John Finch said the condition of the stairs is a hazard and although they have not been cited for this, it is original to the structure and is falling apart and is beyond repair. He said it can be replaced with another spiral staircase or possibly a ladder with a cage around it, with a platform every 12 feet. John said we are looking at all options for what can be used to replace it, noting that the staircase will be quite expensive to replace. He added that it will have to be built in place. A concern was noted by Councilman Grubham that \$18,000 will not cover the cost. Mr. Smith said there is another \$6,000 available as a cushion if needed.

It was noted that if the budget is adopted with these items included, the Board is not obligated to approve without additional consideration. John said some of the things have to be done but others are things we would like to have done. Councilman Grubham said he doesn't want to vote on something until he has a chance to review it, he doesn't want to be locked in on anything.

Although Mr. Smith offered to reset the figures to the amounts submitted previously, Supervisor Kniffen said to leave it as is and the Board will review it during the next week.

As an additional item of discussion, John Finch explained that the NYS Health Department has recommended for years that a new water tank is needed for Highland Heights. If there is a problem with the tank and it is taken off line there is no water supply for Highland Heights. He said we could only pump water up there if all the hydrants are opened to relieve the pressure, since they would need to pump 600 to 700 gallons a minute. The elevation of this tank is the Town's highest. John said if we have another tank, one can be taken off line and fixed while the other one is on line. He added that if any other tank went down it wouldn't cause an immediate problem because we could still feed off the other two tanks.

Supervisor Kniffen said the total amount of the water and sewer budget for 2018 is about \$2.4 million and the amount to be raised by taxes is about \$328,000.

Mr. Smith explained that the largest amount to be appropriated is sent to the Binghamton – Johnson City Joint Sewage Board. He said it is just an estimate since we have not received the 2018 provisional yet. Supervisor Kniffen said we keep hearing from BJC

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that with all the capital improvements and updates at the sewage facility there will be a 60% to 70% increase, which is alarming, but the Binghamton Comptroller predicted it will be more like 17%. The Comptroller told Supervisor Kniffen they are looking to get flows and estimates from all users and come up with a 5-year plan. Supervisor Kniffen added that when we brought sewers to the Bell School Area and Colesville Road it was very cheap, but the increase is probably tenfold and it looks like it's going to continue to do that. He said there isn't that much we can do about it other than to check our lines to make sure they are working effectively and efficiently and hope all the other users do too.

Supervisor Kniffen opened the hearing to public comment. Hearing none, Supervisor Kniffen ordered the hearing closed at 6:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle M. Diffendorf  
Town Clerk