

EXHIBIT U

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

AQUA PENNSYLVANIA WASTEWATER, INC.

DOCKET NO. A-2023-3041695

BOROUGH OF GREENVILLE STATEMENT NO. 1

**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
JASSON UREY**

**With Regard To:
A General Overview of the Transaction
Sale Process
Information Provided to Residents
Benefits of the Proposed Transaction**

November 2023

BOROUGH OF GREENVILLE
DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JASSON UREY

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BOROUGH OF GREENVILLE, MERCER COUNTY
DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JASSON UREY

1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

2 **Q. Please state your name and business address.**

3 A. My name is Jasson Urey. My business address is 125 Main Street, Greenville, PA 16125.

4

5 **Q. By whom are you employed and in what capacity?**

6 A. I am the Town Manager of the Borough of Greenville (“Borough” or “Greenville”). My
7 duties are managing day-to-day operations and overseeing all Borough departments’
8 administrative functions. I have been the Town Manager for 11 years. Through the
9 Greenville Sanitary Authority (“GSA”) Leaseback Agreement, the Borough provides the
10 day-to-day operations of the System, which also falls under my direct management.

11

12 **Q. Please provide a brief description of your education and work experience.**

13 A. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and have been the Manager of the
14 Borough since January 2012.

15

16 **Q. Have you testified before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission**
17 **(“Commission”) before?**

18 A. No.

19

20 **Q. On whose behalf are you testifying in this proceeding?**

21 A. I am testifying on behalf of the Borough and GSA and in cooperation and support of Aqua
22 Pennsylvania Wastewater, Inc.’s (“Aqua”) application to purchase the GSA wastewater
23 collection, conveyance, and treatment system (the “System”).

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1 **Q. Please describe the purpose of your Direct Testimony and summarize the key points**
2 **it will address.**

3 A. The purpose of my Direct Testimony is to provide a description of (1) the System; (2) the
4 reasons for, and anticipated benefits of, the sale of the System pursuant to the Asset
5 Purchase Agreement (“APA”) between the GSA and Aqua; and (3) how the GSA sets its
6 annual rates.

7 There are numerous benefits of the proposed transaction; however, a summary of
8 those that are most important to the GSA and the customers who use the System are as
9 follows:

- 10 • The GSA has not been able to maintain the System and the sale avoids the
11 GSA having to navigate possible non-compliance with stringent United
12 States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) and Pennsylvania
13 Department of Environmental Protection (“DEP”) regulations and rules,
14 which have grown increasingly more challenging to follow and implement;
- 15 • Secures future financial stability for the Borough and its residents, and
16 provides flexibility to make necessary future capital investments within the
17 Borough;
- 18 • Provides enhanced operational expertise through review of System
19 processes, the identification of deficiencies not previously known or
20 properly able to address.
- 21 • Preserves all jobs for the GSA employees;
- 22 • Provides service benefits through ownership by Aqua, a Commission-
23 regulated utility that provides high-quality professional wastewater services
24 to the public;
- 25 • With the anticipated sale proceeds, the Borough looks to invest in the
26 redevelopment efforts of the community to help bolster its tax base;
- 27 • Provides benefits from Aqua’s expertise, long-standing capital
28 improvement programs, and experience in improving and investing in aging
29 systems in need of capital investments;

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DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JASSON UREY

- 1 • Provides access to Aqua’s customer assistance programs to provide
2 payment assistance for qualifying customers;

- 3 • Improves security of information systems against cyber-attacks targeted at
4 municipal-owned utilities with less sophisticated technology infrastructure
5 and defenses, as well as of physical assets due to Aqua’s security programs
6 and procedures;

- 7 • Provides enhanced customer service and operational functions through
8 expanded customer service center hours, more streamlined payment options
9 (including by phone), enhanced customer information and education
10 programs, and support provided by Aqua’s team;

- 11 • Recognizes benefits related to Aqua’s proven record of environmental
12 stewardship for the operation of wastewater systems; and

- 13 • Added protections for customers due to Aqua’s regulation by the
14 Commission, which will ensure regulatory oversight, require approval for
15 all rate increases, and provide significant consumer protections.

16

17 **Q. Are you sponsoring any Exhibits with your Direct Testimony?**

18 A. Yes. Appendix A to my Direct Testimony are a series of news articles concerning the
19 System and upgrades to the GSA wastewater treatment plant (“WWTP”).

20

21 **II. DESCRIPTION OF THE BOROUGH AND THE GSA SYSTEM**

22 **Q. Please provide a general overview of the Borough.**

23 A. Greenville is a Pennsylvania Borough located in Mercer County, approximately 80 miles
24 north of the City of Pittsburgh and 60 miles south of the City of Erie. The Borough is
25 governed by a Mayor and a Council of six members. In 2019, the residents of Greenville
26 voted to transition the Borough to a Home Rule municipality, and the Borough is currently
27 in the process of that transition. There are approximately 5,540 residents in the Borough,
28 with a median household income of \$51,719 (based on 2020 U.S. Census Data).

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1 On February 20, 2002, the Borough petitioned the Department of Community and
2 Economic Development (“DCED”) for a determination of financial distress (“Act 47
3 Status”). After an assessment and public hearing, on May 8, 2002, the DCED declared the
4 Borough financially distressed. The Borough has made progress over the last 21 years to
5 exit Act 47 status on November 9, 2023. Even though the Borough was able to exit the
6 Act 47 program, the economic issues that contributed to its distressed status still exist. The
7 sale of the System will help the Borough focus all of its resources on its day-to-day
8 operations and the anticipated sale proceeds will help the community with its
9 redevelopment efforts to stabilize the local economy.

10
11 **Q. Please provide a description of the GSA System.**

12 A. The GSA was incorporated by the Borough of Greenville in 1956. The GSA owns,
13 operates, and maintains the Acquired Assets (as defined in the APA, which is attached to
14 the Application as Exhibit B), consisting of a sanitary wastewater collection and
15 conveyance system and the GSA WWTP. Along with the residents of Greenville, residents
16 of Hempfield Township (“Hempfield”) and West Salem Township (“West Salem”)
17 (together, the “Contributing Municipalities”) also contribute flows into the GSA’s System
18 that are treated at the WWTP. The GSA does not own any of the collection and conveyance
19 sewers of the Contributing Municipalities. However, the GSA operates the West Salem
20 sewer system. The GSA System includes approximately 29 miles of pipe serving
21 approximately 2,281 GSA customers and the two Contributing Municipalities.

22 A majority of the collection system was installed in the 1960s, with smaller
23 additions and upgrades installed in the 1980s and 1990s. The GSA does not have a short

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1 term or long-term capital plan for the System. Since I have been with the Borough, there
2 has never been a capital plan for the wastewater system, and infrastructure replacement for
3 the System has been reactive. As we looked at the sale of the System in relation to the
4 capital planning, we did develop a preliminary capital plan should the GSA keep the
5 System. This gave us an idea of what capital needs we would be facing and the financial
6 resources needed to address them.

7
8 **Q. Do you believe the GSA's wastewater assets are distressed, underfunded and non-**
9 **viable?**

10 A. Yes, I do. The GSA has performed reactive maintenance when it is necessary for the
11 wastewater assets. However, as mentioned above, there is no long-term capital planning
12 for the System, except for what was compiled as we looked at the viability of selling the
13 asset. If something breaks, then it is fixed. In some cases, it does not get fixed if it is not
14 urgent or necessarily crucial. Most assets are past their life expectancy and in need of
15 replacement or major repair.

16
17 **Q. Please describe further how the GSA deals with the wastewater infrastructure.**

18 A. Let me be clear, there is no long-term wastewater capital plan to provide in this proceeding
19 because one does not exist. Neither is there a one-year out wastewater capital plan. The
20 WWTP is over 60 years old and is in severe need of repair and replacement. The GSA has
21 done the best job it can while dealing with the overarching desire to keep wastewater rates
22 as low as possible over the last several decades and a lack of desire to spend on
23 infrastructure improvements. The reality is that, again with good intentions, the Borough

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1 has focused on other issues including trying to exit out of Act 47 status. However, the
2 focus on Act 47 status and lack of a proactive maintenance and prudent replacement of
3 wastewater assets has resulted in wastewater infrastructure that is in desperate need of
4 replacement. As I referenced above, I believe the System is very troubled. The System
5 assets need consistent focus, attention and prudent investment going forward. With the
6 best of intentions, the Borough and the GSA has struggled to focus adequately on these
7 underground wastewater assets and the WWTP.

8 I would also highlight that we struggle with finding candidates to participate on the
9 GSA Board. One seat has been open for six months and none of the GSA Board members
10 currently seated have utility experience. The GSA meets on a quarterly basis which can
11 also be a challenge when issues arise in the System. For example, when a customer has an
12 issue with their bill and an adjustment needs to be made, it must go before the GSA Board.
13 When the GSA Board only meets on a quarterly basis, this causes a delay in resolving these
14 issues. These quarterly meeting also cause delays in performing repairs or replacing
15 equipment.

16
17 **Q. Has the Borough and the GSA considered the continued use of outside contractors to**
18 **help run the system?**

19 A. Yes, and that is not what the Borough or the GSA wants to do. While someone could
20 suggest that the GSA can simply hire outside consultants to provide support on capital
21 planning, building, operations and execution, that still takes time, focus and review for the
22 GSA that is not available and frankly, not wanted. A consultant needs a phone call from
23 the GSA, a consultant needs direction from the GSA, and a consultant needs pre-approval

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1 for any work. In many instances, a bid is needed to do certain work creating delays and
2 further costs. The consultants we have utilized have been very good but going forward,
3 the GSA believes that a one stop shop where there are full time wastewater engineers
4 available who are consistently looking at and overseeing the System is in the best interest
5 of residents.

6

7 **Q. Can you provide examples of issues that have consistently come up related to the GSA**
8 **System?**

9 A. Yes, we experience significant inflow and infiltration (“I&I”) and overloading at the
10 WWTP. In the East and Second Avenues area, we have consistent sewer back ups in
11 customer homes. The wastewater mains have never been replaced and are insufficiently
12 sized to handle heavy flows. The vast majority of the collection system has not had any
13 maintenance or repairs made, which has added to the I&I problem and puts the System at
14 risk of catastrophic failures. The GSA board has continually talked about doing upgrades
15 at the WWTP in my 11-year tenure as manager; however, nothing has developed from
16 those discussions (see Appendix A). Due to the change over in board members and
17 looming significant rate increases, the board has not moved forward with any of the plant
18 and collection system upgrades.

19

20 **Q. Please describe how the GSA handles customer billing and customer service.**

21 A. The current system that the GSA uses for billing customers and customer service is a
22 contracted service with the Greenville Water Authority (“GWA”). Customers receive their
23 water and sewer bills on the same statement. There is an online payment option. The

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1 problem that arises is there are not extended payment options or programs offered to
2 residents to assist them with making payments. If the bill goes unpaid, the water service
3 is shut off until the GSA bill is paid in full. All customer questions about billing are
4 handled by the GWA unless it pertains to rates. Customers are then directed to the Borough
5 with any questions or concerns. This creates frustration with customers as they feel they
6 are getting the run-around.

7
8 **Q. Why are the GSA wastewater rates so low?**

9 A. There has been very little investment in the System. To make this point, below is the
10 capital spend on wastewater assets for the past three years:

11 - 2022: \$0

12 - 2021: \$299,800. For replacing manholes along Columbia Avenue in coordination with
13 PennDOT.

14 - 2020: \$0
15

16 **Q. Can you please generally describe how the GSA and the Borough ensures safety for
17 its employees?**

18 A. The Borough (through the GSA leasback agreement for day-to-day operations) employs
19 six full-time employees. The bare minimum training is provided for those employees who
20 need to renew their licenses. No additional training is provided for the employees. There
21 are two licensed operators at the WWTP and the other four employees do not have
22 certification or formal training in wastewater operations.
23

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1 **III. SALE PROCESS**

2 **Q. Please describe the GSA’s decision-making process in moving forward with a sale of**
3 **the System.**

4 A. As described above, the GSA has not kept up with the capital needs of the System. The
5 continuously changing EPA and DEP regulations have added to the growing capital needs
6 that the GSA has found challenging to maintain. In addition to the changing EPA and DEP
7 regulations, the GSA has struggled to simply maintain the System through periodic and
8 prudent infrastructure investment. The Borough struggles with development within the
9 community and does not have the technical expertise or the financial resources to assist
10 with any redevelopment efforts. Due to these reasons and the size and demographic of the
11 customer base, the GSA Board and Borough do not feel that the continued operation of the
12 System by the GSA is sustainable long-term.

13

14 **Q. Did the GSA or Borough request public input on the sale?**

15 A. Yes, multiple meetings were open to the public, and the local newspaper attended all. The
16 first meeting occurred on February 2, 2022, where the GSA Board heard from the
17 representatives of Aqua about their interest in the System. The second public meeting of
18 the GSA Board was held on July 28, 2022, where Aqua gave an update on their due
19 diligence research for the possible acquisition offer for the System. A third public meeting
20 of the GSA Board was held on October 27, 2022, where Aqua presented its acquisition
21 proposal to the GSA. No action on the proposal was taken at that meeting to give time for
22 the GSA to solicit additional public input. The last public meeting of the GSA Board was

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1 held on November 10, 2022, where the public was able to ask questions of the GSA and
2 Aqua representatives.

3
4 **Q. Did the GSA hold a vote on the sale at a regularly scheduled public meeting, following**
5 **input from Borough residents?**

6 A. Yes, the GSA Board members decided that the Proposed Transaction was in the best
7 interests of the Borough and its customers. After public meetings, as detailed above, the
8 GSA Board voted to authorize the sale of the System to Aqua on November 10, 2022. To
9 be very clear, the GSA does not want or desire to own and operate the System any longer
10 and believes Borough residents will be better served an operator that is focused on
11 wastewater operations, reliability and the long term viability of the wastewater assets.

12
13 **IV. BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED TRANSACTION**

14 **Q. Please describe the benefits of the Proposed Transaction for the Borough.**

15 A. As described earlier, by moving the operation and management of the System to a company
16 with the experience and resources to operate it more efficiently, the Borough can focus its
17 resources on redevelopment efforts. For several decades, the Borough has struggled with
18 very little development within the community. Not only will the sale to Aqua allow the
19 Borough to focus more time and attention on redevelopment, but it will also allow the
20 community to reinvest the sale proceeds from this transaction into these efforts. As the
21 Borough emerges from Act 47, the only item not accomplished in the Act 47 plan was
22 funding for community redevelopment.

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1 **Q. Have you reviewed Mr. Martin's Direct Testimony?**

2 A. Yes.

3

4 **Q. Do you agree with the recommendations and plans as described in Mr. Martin's**
5 **Direct Testimony?**

6 A. Yes.

7

8 **Q. Please expand on a long term benefit of the sale.**

9 A. Through the consummation of this transaction, I believe knowing that the same issues of
10 the past will not repeat themselves is a benefit to our Greenville customers. In selling to
11 Aqua, we will be assured that the problem of avoidance of infrastructure upgrades at the
12 risk of any increase in rates will not repeated. I believe a professional utility that is focused
13 on utility operations, like Aqua, will prudently invest in the infrastructure and over time
14 gradually increase rates commensurate with that prudent investment. I believe Aqua can
15 bring consistent, prudent investment and cost recovery in a gradual way going forward.

16

17 **Q. Do you believe that the Proposed Transaction is in the public interest?**

18 A. Yes. For the reasons I set forth above, I believe the Proposed Transaction provides
19 substantial affirmative public benefits and is in the public interest. I urge the Commission
20 to promptly approve the Proposed Transaction.

21

BOROUGH OF GREENVILLE
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1 V. **RATES**

2 Q. **How does the GSA set the rates it charges customers for wastewater treatment and**
3 **collection?**

4 A. Every year in October, the Borough evaluates the anticipated revenue and expenditures for
5 the current year. It then projects the income and expenses for the coming year. This
6 practice helps the Borough review current and anticipated customer rates to determine
7 whether a rate change is needed. Any rate changes become effective on January 1st of the
8 following year.

9 Through inter-municipal agreements with Hempfield and West Salem, both
10 townships bill their own customers and remit the total amount collected to the GSA, less a
11 15% reduced amount which is held for administrative billing purposes. On top of the 15%,
12 Hempfield withholds an additional 10% to maintain its collection system. The Borough
13 conducts the maintenance of the West Salem collection system, thus, no further
14 withholding is made from their remittance.

15

16 Q. **How frequently does the GSA adjust rates?**

17 A. Rates are typically adjusted annually. Recently, GSA adopted a new resolution on October
18 23, 2023, Resolution 2023-22 of the Borough Council, which was done to match the current
19 billing practice and to make clear the gallonage blocks for the per 1,000 gallon rates.

20

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Minimum Charge (up to the first 500 gallons)	\$10.50 Per Month Per Unit*
	Per 1,000 gallons
For next 2,000 gallons	\$3.84
For next 2,000 gallons	\$4.05
For next 3,500 gallons	\$4.13
For next 24,500 gallons	\$4.18
For next 117,500 gallons	\$4.26
For next 100,000 gallons	\$4.40
For next 75,000 gallons	\$4.47
Anything over 325,000 gallons	\$4.69
Well users flat charge	\$30.41 Per Month Per Unit*

1 **Per Unit – All structures with multiple units will be billed per each individual unit.

2 There is also a Sewer Debt Service Fee of \$6.96 per Equivalent Dwelling Unit
3 (“EDU”), but I understand that Aqua will not be adopting this charge. A copy of the sewer
4 rates resolution is attached to the Application as Exhibit H. For the average wastewater
5 customer, they pay approximately \$23 per month. The GSA has not changed its rates in
6 over 10 years.

7
8 **Q. Based on your experience, has the GSA been focused on replacing the aging
9 wastewater infrastructure?**

10 A. As stated above, the GSA has not been focused on the wastewater assets and there has not
11 been a desire to increase wastewater rates to fund any improvements for the System. I
12 believe the wastewater rates reflect the lack of investment in the System.

13
14 **Q. What is your understanding of the rate impacts on GSA customers in your
15 community if the Commission approves the sale?**

16 A. I understand that on a stand alon basis, rates could potentially increase to \$64.84 per month.

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1 VI. **CONCLUSION**

2 Q. **Does this conclude your Direct Testimony?**

3 A. Yes, it does. However, I reserve the right to file additional testimony at a later date as may
4 be necessary or appropriate.

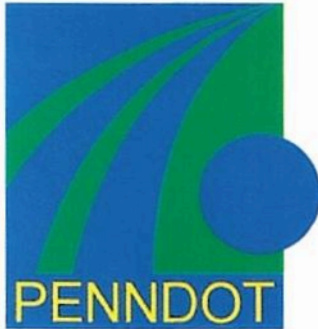
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Authority won't partner with PennDOT again after seeing the bill

October 29, 2021

By CALEB STRIGHT
cstright@recordargusnews.com



As PennDOT began planning its big 2020 paving project of the length of Columbia Avenue, Greenville Sanitary Authority thought it would partner with the state agency.

The authority could complete its Columbia manhole work before the road gets a new surface, and authority leaders anticipated saving a little money having the project bid with the larger paving project.

"We're probably not going to partner on a project like that with them again," Town Manager Jasson Urey said.

The authority's engineers estimated the work at \$140,000, but its bill from PennDOT was nearly \$300,000 — more than double.

Urey said contractors bid on the work — PennDOT's paving, the authority's manhole work and others — as a package, with the authority having no option to accept or reject the bid.

So, as the authority looks to take on work on Clarksville Street (Route 18) ahead of PennDOT paving work there, it doesn't plan to partner with the state agency. It instead will be looking to work with Greenville Water Authority, which also looks to replace lines there.

With some residents questioning how the \$75 annual storm water utility fee is used, Paul Hamill — who is a board member of the authority and president of town council — said revenue from that fund will go toward storm water work on Clarksville.

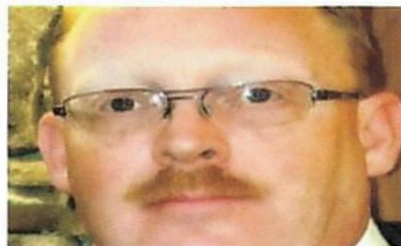
The sanitary authority's next scheduled meeting is 6 p.m. Jan. 27.

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Greenville sewer bills likely to rise with plant overhaul

July 31, 2021

By MARIA ELLIOTT

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Urey

Sewer bills will likely be going up in Greenville, and West Salem and Hempfield townships, as Greenville Sanitary Authority moves forward with a \$20 million overhaul of the Greenville Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The authority unanimously voted Wednesday to recommend the town council raise monthly rates as early as January 2022, under the suggestion of Town Manager Jasson Urey.

The monthly rates would raise by \$2.71 beginning in January 2022 and \$6.69 in January 2023 per equivalent dwelling unit, or EDU, should council approve the hike. The \$6.69 increase would stay in place for five years, which is the lifetime of the loan.

An EDU refers to the amount of sanitary sewer service used by one household. Multi-family homes or commercial buildings can have more than one EDU, because they have a higher usage of the services.

The borough charges a flat rate to the townships and to some Greenville residents, but more depending on water usage if the residence has a water meter.

The authority first approved a motion to take out the loan in April but will only be making payments on the interest of the loan until the full amount has been disbursed.

The loan is being "drawn down," or more money is being borrowed in portions, to avoid overborrowing for the project.

There will only be five drawdowns of the loan this year, adding up to about \$38,000 in interest, which is why rates are only expected to rise by a couple dollars next year.

Urey estimated the full amount of the loan will be taken out near the end of 2022, once design plans for the project have been finalized when rates are expected to raise the full \$6.69 a month.

"I don't think anyone's excited about raising the rates," said Sanitary Authority Chairman Jonathan Bailey. "It's a logical process, I think, and it explains what we're doing."

Sewer rates were last raised in 2011 to fund a project for the authority but were lowered again after the project had been completed.

John Mowry, an engineer with K LH Engineers, said material costs have risen significantly over the last year, but hopes those will be down by the time the project breaks ground in 2024.

Mowry said there will likely be a cost re-assessment on the project to determine if more funds will need to be secured.

"Next year, we're going to have to re-do our cost estimate and look at where we are," he said. "If it's going to come in over the \$20 million, then we've got to come up with it."

The authority was placed under a consent order several months ago by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, according to Mowry. The wastewater treatment plant was not able to meet new DEP standards of chlorine residuals for disinfectant purposes.

Urey said the consent order shows why the upgrade of the plant is necessary, because the plant cannot continue to keep up with rising standards with outdated equipment.

"Our plant is over 50 years old. It's well beyond the life expectancy of a lot of the equipment," Urey said. "We knew we had to try to get ahead of this and this is why we need to try to do these upgrades to this plant."

The consent order was put in place to allow upgrades to be made to the sewage treatment facility to meet those higher standards put in place by the DEP.

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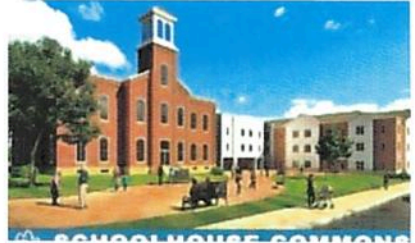
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With plant project, sewer bills could double

April 15, 2016

By CALEB STRIGHT

cstright@recordargusnews.com



Shaw

As the Greenville Sanitary Authority continues toward its \$27 million plant overhaul, most recent projections show bills for authority customers roughly doubling because of the work. Those estimates would put Greenville sewer rates at around \$40 to \$45 per month by the end of the project.

"That's a substantial increase," authority Chair Don Shaw said.

"And the borough's not exactly prosperous," board member Henry Mueller added.

The board voted Thursday to advertise the plan, but engineer Sam Gibson, of KLH Engineers, said any hikes are still years off, and may be smaller as the board pursues funding options.

Once the authority advertises the plan — called an Act 537 plan — the public will have 30 days to comment on it, after which Gibson plans to send it on to the Department of Environmental Protection to review, likely in June. From there, the authority has estimated that the project won't break ground for at least two years.

Current plans for the \$27 million project would convert the plant's current trickle filtration system to a membrane bioreactor.

To put the need for the project in perspective, Greenville Director of Public Services Lyle Huffman has pointed out that the plant's sludge pumps are 61 years old.

"We've got to look at it from both sides," Shaw said. "If this thing drops tomorrow, we're really in trouble."

To help finance the project, the authority will be looking into the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority, which could offer grants or low-interest loans, options that could trim away from the projected rate increase.

"I want to thank KLH for the long fought battle for the Act 537 plan," Huffman said, of work on the plan, which began in 2013.

When factoring in the borough's other projects — including the Storm Water Utility, which will ultimately repair much of the storm water system — "the borough will be in a good place soon," Huffman said.

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Greenville Sanitary Authority engineers research potential monthly bills after plant upgrade

February 12, 2016

By CALEB STRIGHT

cstright@recordargusnews.com

As the Greenville Sanitary Authority inches closer to a multi-million-dollar plant upgrade, its engineers have begun work on what monthly bills for authority customers might look like.

KLH Engineers are suggesting a \$27 million project that the firm believes — in very early estimates — could leave sewer bills at \$40 to \$50 per month for the average customer.

With the project still years off, John Mowry of KLH said that number could change in either direction.

"The cost of construction goes up," he said. "Things change."

A rate change caused by the project could be at least four years off.

KLH is recommending a project that would install a membrane bioreactor, which although isn't the least expensive option on the table, the engineers argue, it's the most cost-effective.

The least expensive would be installing headworks, which wouldn't provide a denitrification process that Mowry said the state may soon require out of the plant. To add denitrification afterward would require another costly project.

While it's not the cheapest, engineer Sam Gibson said other options would cost millions more.

While a project will cost the authority and its customers, both the board and its engineers agreed the plant needs work.

"Sooner or later, you're going to have to bite the bullet," Mowry said. "And it's not going to get any cheaper."

To put the need for the project in perspective, Greenville Director of Public Services Lyle Huffman pointed out that the plant's sludge pumps are 61 years old.

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Sanitary board: Contentious renegotiations inevitable

June 12, 2015

By CALEB STRIGHT

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Shaw

As the Greenville Sanitary Authority continues work toward big upgrades at its plant, it's finding it will likely have to tackle what could be contentious renegotiations with Hempfield and West Salem townships. "It's going to be ugly, but (the question is) when are you going to talk about it?" HRG engineer Chad Hanley said.

Hanley encouraged the board to renegotiate its intermunicipal agreements with the townships because the documents are "awkward."

They're awkward, he explained, because the West Salem agreement includes multiple amendments which make interpreting the agreement difficult; both townships bill based on units that the townships — not the authority — established; and both townships pay in what the board called a tail-wagging the-dog arrangement.

"They're telling us what they owe us," authority board President Don Shaw said.

The sanitary board argues that because it owns the plant that treats the townships' waste water, the sanitary authority should be dictating the bill.

"I say it's going to be inevitable," Shaw said of renegotiating.

"I encourage the neighboring municipalities to be open to the process," Public Service Director Lyle Huffman said. "We don't expect everyone to like it."

Hanley's suggestion comes as the sanitary authority continues work on an Act 537 plan, a process it's embarked on to organize major upgrades to its plant.

The sanitary authority is pouring big money into repairing the 60-year-old plant each year, Huffman said, and if it continues on the same trajectory, the plant will inevitably, at some point, shut down.

"If that plant goes down, it's not just Greenville," he said. "West Salem and Hempfield go down, too."

"To the credit of the authority," Huffman added, "they're not willing to let that happen."

The board said the plant will likely need a \$7 million to \$35 million overhaul, which is at a minimum five years away.

Hanley's recommendation came while presenting his audit on the townships' payments to the authority.

"You're most likely receiving pretty close to the revenue you're supposed to be receiving," he said.

The board plans to look further at the issue including at one of Shaw's concerns — he expects that some West Salem residents living at the end of a street of mostly Greenville homes are tapped into the Greenville system but aren't being billed.

Hanley encouraged Huffman to provide specific examples of suspect houses so that he could look into it.

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Big projects could lead to bigger sewer bills

August 15, 2014

By CALEB STRIGHT
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With large portions of Greenville's waste water treatment plant nearing or exceeding their life expectancies, the Greenville Sanitary Authority is looking at projects that could cost between \$10 million and \$28 million, and in a worst-case scenario, raise customer bills at least \$7.25 per month to replace or improve a portion of them.

Because potential price tags are so large, the authority plans to present their three options to the two other municipalities that use the system — Hempfield and West Salem townships — but Chad Hanley, the authority's engineer, is concerned it may not be an easy sell. Whereas projects these size usually come out of Department of Environmental Protection demands, the Greenville authority is working proactively.

Those DEP demands exist, Hanley said, because "places let plants fall apart. They run them three, four, five years in violation. On the engineering side, that's what we see a lot more of."

Greenville's plant workers, on the other hand, have kept their facility in shape, but with portions of the equipment at 22 years of a 25-year lifespan, Hanley said he couldn't guarantee how much longer they'll run.

Hanley and borough representatives have whittled down the list of options to three, the smallest project of which would build a headworks. It's something the plant doesn't currently have, would remove inorganic matter at the beginning of treatment and "cleans up a lot of the causes we face downstream of the process," borough Public Services Director Lyle Huffman said.

The headworks alone would cost just shy of \$11 million, Hanley said, and in a worst-case scenario, cost customers \$7.25 more per month on their sewer bills.

That option is the least expensive, but if the authority doesn't take on work beyond that, Hanley said he couldn't guarantee the authority wouldn't have to take on another big project in a matter of years.

The second option would build the headworks as well as build and replace portions of the plant that include a clarifier distribution box and drying beds, as well as converting the plant's process to ultraviolet disinfection.

The option would run \$26.1 million and raise bills \$26 per month in Hanley's worst-case estimates.

The third option would also build the headworks and a membrane bioreactor, which Hanley said would prepare the system for stricter nutrient limits that are currently in place in other portions of the region and could eventually make their way here.

That option would run \$28 million and could raise bills \$28 per month.

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New project could hike rates

October 12, 2012

By CALEB STRIGHT
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A project on the horizon for the Greenville Sanitary Authority could be large enough to nudge up sewer bills.

At the authority's meeting Thursday, authority engineer Chad Hanley recommended the roughly \$5 million headworks replacement project because inflow pumps at the authority's wastewater treatment plant are "shot."

The project would build a new headworks, which removes larger material from incoming wastewater, and would also construct a new structure on the plant's property for the new inflow pumps.

The current inflow pumps are in the plant's basement, and for all intents and purposes, would be abandoned.

The authority board gave Hanley the nod Thursday night to begin initial investigations into the project, including establishing a firmer cost estimate and timeline.

If the authority goes ahead with the \$4 million to \$5 million project, its bill for the loan would be about a quarter-million dollars each year, or about \$22,000 each month.

With that in mind, the authority's board said it may need to slightly increase its rates to cover the costs, but Borough Manager Jasson Urey was confident that bump wouldn't be a large one.

Hanley said the pumps are in good condition for their age, but they are approximately 50 years old.

And in recent months, he said, the age of the pumps has caused numerous breakdowns, which have "become a real hardship on everyone."

He estimated that the project would take two and a-half years.

In addition to the pumps and headworks, the authority board gave the go-head to bid out a project to smoke test the lines in the West Salem Township portion of the system.

To test the 120,000 feet of pipe will cost approximately \$40,000.