

Q & A

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF BRIGHTON
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CELEBRATION CENTER (ALTERNATE LOCATION)
CORNERSTONE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9455 HILTON ROAD
BRIGHTON, MI 48114**

**MARCH 3, 2016
SPECIAL MEETING
7:00 P.M.
(810) 229.0560**

Q & A

The following Q & A are not verbatim from the meeting. If you would like a copy of the audio from that meeting so you can listen to the questions or answers, in the context of the meeting, you can contact Township Hall for a copy of the audio.

Was the Sewer Ordinance modified so the 200 foot rule could be ignored?

The entire Ordinance was reviewed. The Ordinance was originally adopted over ten years ago.

Attorney Harris met with the Utilities Committee and was a member of a committee with other sewer expert that suggested a change the 200 foot rule. Was this change made so that the 200 foot rule could be ignored?

Thorough review of the Ordinance indicated some parts were no longer relevant. There was a 200 foot rule in the original Ordinance. The revised Ordinance includes language that if your property is contiguous to a sewer line then you have to hook up when your septic system fails – previously the language referred to structure within 200 feet.

If the original owner of my home paid \$12,400 how can I still owe \$26,000 in 2016?

This is a specific assessing question; contact the assessing department with specific property details.

When I get a land use permit and build do I have to pay \$9,343 for sewer connection? Where is grinder pump currently located?

Yes, a land use permit is required to build on vacant property. The grinder pump location will be determined during the application process. You will pay the associated costs for an REU (currently \$10,260), connection and grinder pump as applicable. Also explained charges on quarterly bills for O & M v. debt service charge; vacant lands do not get charged for O & M.

Interested in quality of lakes.

We do not have any additional, more current information on water quality of the lakes than was mentioned in the presentation slide.

Why aren't people living on the north side of Woodland Lake hooked up to sewers?

The area was not included; There is no explanation in the Township Files or Township Minutes as to why this neighborhood or other neighborhoods were excluded.

Wasn't the Woodland Lake area that currently does not have sewer have the worst water quality?

That area of Woodland Lake is one of many places that had environmental concerns. There is a map that was part of the presentation that shows areas identified by the LCHD.

What is the percentage of treatment plan usage? Have you looked at this?

We are not using the plant at full capacity. Efforts are made to operate in the most efficient manner. We have put a bid out for every aspect of the plant. The competitive bid process is through MITN to get the best pricing.

There are eight filter beds needing repair – do we need to repair all eight? Is there a larger cost for this? The only place you will save money is in the O & M.

The Township routinely reviews where we can save money. The Township relies on the Operator (currently Infrastructure Alternatives Inc.) and Engineer (OHM) for this information.

Does the Township plan on spot zoning or over-developing on certain properties to take out more REU's? Let's not over-develop the community.

Each application for development is unique and reviewed on its own merit. We balance the goal of getting as many REU's as possible while working within the Zoning Ordinance.

If the environmental area health agency deemed septic systems are a major pollutant to lakes and drinking water why isn't the Township making every effort to hook up residents and businesses in the area?

The Township Board has heard the public's comments and appreciates the input.

Why must we pay for the Township not hooking up all original properties?

This was addressed earlier in the presentation. See slides 11-12 and 48-73.

Sewer system was an enterprise? Was this explained prior to the approval?

The sanitary sewer fund was an enterprise fund from inception – it goes on in perpetuity – not a finite period.

Where was the projected growth plan that did not happen? Why not set up for added growth?

Phase I or Phase II did look at where projected growth was anticipated – original projections were an additional 165 REU's per year. These REU projections did not materialize.

Action Plan of 2003 preceded the 2008 economic crisis. Doesn't this indicate the Township knew in advance that it over-built the sewer system? Why are current users paying for the costly miscalculations?

System was designed with additional capacity to accommodate future growth. The Action Plan of 2003 was in response to the lack of connections not the 2008 economic crises. As mentioned during the presentation, the reason "why" certain decisions were made in 1999-2002 are not clear from the documents available.

Why do I have to pay for something I do not use?

Assuming this is regarding a vacant lot – vacant lots are charged the debt service charge but not O & M.

What should my quarterly charge be if my SAD was paid up front?

It would be the same.

Where can I find out if the previous homeowner paid the SAD up front?

This information can be provided by the assessor – no name or address was provided for us to respond.

If Woodland Lake scored a D and E in water quality testing why isn't all of Woodland Lake on the system.

Unable to answer the question but later documents indicate they were afforded the opportunity to opt out at a later date.

Where is a current REU list? We are looking for a current assessment roll that shows the amount paid by each parcel.

The annually required assessment roll is available and will be posted to the website. Discussion included what the time line was for posting this on line. Commitment was made that all presentation materials and referenced documents will be posted asap and if there was a technical inability to post certain large documents then a fly sheet would be added noting it.

When we purchased our home in 2008 we split the remaining sewer assessment with the seller as part of the purchase agreement. What did we pay for and what do we owe now?

Contact the assessor with specific property information.

If the Treatment Plant is operating at less than full capacity why are current users paying 100% of the operational costs.

Currently, sanitary sewer users are paying 100% of the cost of system operation. This relates to the Enterprise Fund conversation.

Why can't we get the assessment roll?

Anybody can look at the assessment roll. It is in a binder at the Township Hall and will be posted to the website.

When will the assessment roll and other information be available on the website? And what is the website?

As soon as the website provider can post it. Staff has to work with website provider to make sure there are no hosting problems due to the size of some of the documents.

Why can't the Board and the Township do more to get people to hookup?

Question seemed rhetorical and no answer was given at the time.

How can you justify charging us for bond payments including interest and also charging interest on the loans?

The General Fund has loaned monies to the Sanitary Sewer Fund and interest is charged. General Fund dollars could be used for other purposes or earning interest.

Eight lots on the map show they are not on the sewer system but we know they are on the system. When they have a problem they have to call a plumber because the Township won't cover it. Are they paying?

Township is unaware of these properties being on sewer – we will be investigating first thing tomorrow.

(Follow-up: Infrastructure Alternatives has investigated this claim and has been unable to locate any illegal connection. Also, the person that raised this question contacted Township Staff and indicated they received information from the properties in question and no longer believe there is an illegal hook-up.)

Property was split into four lots and only the smallest lot is paying.

If someone were to build on the vacant lots they would have to purchase an REU and start paying. Property owners at the time had the choice to combine their lots or maintain separate lots.

Did the total \$12,400 include all fees associated with hooking up to the sewer?

This was referenced in the FAQ's in the presentation including slide highlighting the March 1999 informational session.

Concern has been raised with the Drain Commissioner regarding a broken drain but we don't get any response.

Manager asked for contact information so that the Township can help follow up.

Is anyone on the Board aware of the Dan Boss situation involving a confidential agreement? What is the other fee that people with vacant lots and no grinder are obligated to pay within the sewer district?

The other fee is the Debt Service Charge.

The Debt Service Charge is a separate tax or fee, correct?

It's a quarterly charge that is used to pay off bond debt service, which is allowed under the Drain Code.

Are the Township attorneys saying that the quarterly capital charges apply to the debt or the service of maintenance under the Drain Code?

Jim Keifer: The Township has the authority to levy quarterly capital charges under the Drain Code.

Why aren't the properties on the North side of Woodland Lake connected?

There is no paper trail for this decision. This was a decision by a previous Board very early on.

Why aren't we adding the \$80 quarterly charge on to the new users REU charge? Why should I keep paying \$80 per quarter on a vacant lot?

Rates are reviewed annually and the Board recently requested staff to gather information on the REU rate charged by neighboring communities. See earlier questions and responses regarding Debt Service Fund.

Who owns the Enterprise Fund?

The Sewer System is "managed" financially as an Enterprise Fund. (See slide 78)

Can the properties on the North side of Woodland Lake be forced to hook up now?
Additional information is needed on the specific parcels.

What is the size of the sewer line on Old US 23?
Additional information is needed in order to respond.

Are there any minutes that show or was there any public hearings that were held that shows the petitions were going to the Drain Commission?
There is no paper trail that shows that citizen petitions went to Drain Commission.

Was there a public hearing to use the Drain Code whether than Public Act 188?
There were public hearings under the Drain Code, but the Township did not use Public Act 188 to build the WWTP.

Woodland Lake No. 4 was forced on the system. I have never borrowed money without signing something.
These properties were included in the project and in the financial model.

Has the Board looked at selling the extra capacity?
Yes.

There is a huge deficit – what are you going to do now?
We have had a lot of good information gathered and presented including the maps. This will be a good starting point to evaluate how to get additional users.

Are we going to get a refund for our overpayment?
Question was part of a speech; it was treated as rhetorical. (See Slide 103)

Are all future quarterly capital charges going to be suspended?
Question was part of a speech; it was treated as rhetorical.

Would the Board consider modifying the sewer ordinance to reinforce the 200 foot rule?
No reply was given. (see previous response regarding 200 ft. and ordinance change).

When is the next meeting for the sewer committee?
The Utilities Committee will have a special meeting in April.

Why did the Township build a Township-wide sewer system when only the lakes needed to be clean? We only wanted a small system. And what happened to the 400 missing REUs?
The wastewater treatment plant was designed at the size it is in order to keep costs down. (Post meeting follow-up: On the quarterly sewer report prepared by PHP the speaker is referencing the figures from page #6 where the 6/1/2000 REU total is listed at 1,756 and the 3/31/03 Debt Service Charge is listed at 1,371. Vacant lots were not charged the debt service charge in 2003.