

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

# Town of Trumbull

CONNECTICUT

TOWN HALL  
(203) 452-5048



5866 MAIN STREET  
TRUMBULL, CT 06611

## PUBLIC HEARING

May 12, 2009

Trumbull High School Auditorium

### In Attendance:

George Biagioni, Chairman; Jack Goncalves, Vice Chairman; Donald Aiello, Secretary; Janine Salvey; Karen Egri, Alternate

### Also in Attendance:

Raymond G. Baldwin, Jr., First Selectman; John A. Del Vecchio, Director of Public Works; Lynn Heim, Finance Director; Joseph Solemene, Sewer Coordinator; Town Attorneys Dan Schopick and Neil Lieberthal; John Stastrom and Michael Andrianna, bond counsel, Pullman & Comley; Matt Spoerndel, financial advisor to the Town of Trumbull

The public hearing was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

First Selectman Baldwin announced that assessments would not begin on July 1, 2009. They would begin approximately six months from that date, in January 2010. He then introduced those in attendance on stage. Mr. Baldwin referenced a hand-out that should have been received when entering the auditorium, which contained topics to go over this evening. Attached is a questionnaire to be filled out by the residents with any problems or issues they would like addressed. The W.P.C.A. will not vote on anything tonight and will not until the project is deemed complete. The project should be completed sometime in July. At that time, before the W.P.C.A. votes, there will be a full financial disclosure of the project made available to all residents. In addition, there will be an audit review of the project that will be conducted under the direction of the Director of Finance. Eight issues to be addressed tonight as identified as part of the feedback from the public hearing: timing of the assessment, senior tax relief, bond rate, paving/drainage issues, certain items included in assessment, estimate of assessment from 2002/2003, methodology of assessment, explanation of 25% of cost paid by the Town.

### Timing of Assessment

Mr. Baldwin: \$17,000,000 bond issued for the Jog Hill Project at an interest rate of 3.91%. There is remaining \$4.5M work to be done, and it is anticipated that in this financial climate the expected interest rate will not be more than 4%. The interest rate of 4.5% in the proposed assessment was misstated. The Town is not allowed to charge an interest rate that is higher than what we are charged for borrowing. The July 1<sup>st</sup> date for the assessment to begin is off the table. The Town, however, has bonds of \$17,000,000 and we will come back with details on how we will handle that particular issue once the job is complete. It is an unusual situation when the contractor completes the job so far ahead of schedule. We are pleased about that in some respects because the cost is kept down because he put extra crews on. In addition because most of the project took place in the Daniels Farm Road area where we have school it was important for us to get this done as quickly as possible so as not to disrupt traffic on Daniels Farm Road anymore than it had to be.

### Senior Tax Relief:

Mr. Baldwin: In our Town Code Section 19-55 is a provision for tax relief for senior citizens that mirrors what we have in our Senior Tax Relief Program for Real Estate, for seniors and people with disabilities. Our Tax Assessor

could not be with us this evening but he is working on coordinating a senior tax relief mechanism that is in the Code. I suspect that in this environment there will be a number of people who will want to apply for that and at some future date we will get out the information about the mechanism by which you can apply for Senior Tax Relief under this code provision.

Bond Rate:

Mr. Baldwin: We spoke already about the bond rate. The bond rate is 3.91% and we anticipate the remaining \$4.5 million will probably be less than that. Mr. Baldwin asked Matt Spoerndel, financial consultant for the Town, to speak on the matter.

Mr. Spoerndel: Bond rate of 3.91% in September was lowest bond rate the Town had ever seen and one of the lowest in the State of Connecticut. He anticipates the rate on the final piece of the project later this year to be at level or lower, maybe closer to 3.5%, depending on what happens in the overall economy.

Mr. Baldwin: A month ago the Town refinanced about \$12 million worth of bond anticipation notes and the Town received a very favorable rate of 0.6%.

Question from the audience: Will the actual rate be a combination of existing bonds at 3.91% and whatever the new issue is? Mr. Baldwin: Yes, that is correct.

Question from the audience: Did you just say you refinanced at what rate? Mr. Baldwin: We did a bond anticipation note. I will let Matt explain what that is. Mr. Spoerndel: The Town issued a short term financing vehicle and they came due about a month ago in March. When the Town refinanced they basically rolled it over to September at a rate of 0.6%.

Question from the audience: Can you refinance the 3.91% to a lower rate? Mr. Spoerndel: Not at this point, no, because that is a 20 year bond, and we are talking about a one year note, so it is a completely different scenario.

Question from the audience: In ten years if refinanced will it lower the payment? Bond counsel: Has never seen such an adjustment, but it doesn't mean it can't be done. We will have to look at that question and get back to you with an answer. State law does say the adjustments can be no higher than the interest that is charged on the obligations.

Comment from the audience: In his opinion this should apply here, the payments should be adjustable.

Question from the audience: Since we are in a one acre zone, why are assessments not divided equally?

Mr. Baldwin: we will get to that question in the methodology of the assessment.

Question from the audience: In 1986 we got a letter from Washington stating how you want your money to be spent through the State or through the Federal Government. The Federal Government used to pay for the sewers. On Edison Road it cost \$2,000. Now the money goes to the State, the State puts it in the big cities. Where are our representatives? Why don't they give the money directly to the towns to pay for the sewers? Mr. Baldwin: there would have to be a grant with the State or Federal Government specifically for a sewer project for us to take advantage of that kind of financing and I am not aware of any. Dan Schopick, Town Attorney: Back in the 1970's and 1980's when the initial sewer construction took place, there was State and Federal money that we took advantage of that has been reflected in the cost. As far as I know there is no State or Federal program that would provide reimbursement in towns such as Trumbull. Mr. Baldwin: The focus of the State and Federal governments is to try to correct some of the problems the major cities have with their sewer systems. Obviously their sewers are the oldest ones in the State of Connecticut. Most of those systems don't separate their waste sewage from their water. Unlike the Town of Trumbull where we have separation of waste sewage from water, the cities do not. In the case of Hartford the cost to do that separation is \$1.6 billion. It will probably be the same cost for Bridgeport and New Haven. Before we get any State or Federal money, it would go to the cities first to correct those because in most cases we send our waste sewage down to their plants for treatment.

Suzanne Testani, Town Council District 1: Do we have a sign-up sheet and a microphone? Mr. Baldwin: I am repeating the questions as they come in.

Question from the audience: Thank you for hosting this event tonight, I think everyone in District 1 appreciates the fact that you are all here tonight to answer questions. I have a question with respect to the letter that was handed out at the door when people came in and with something you just said. I was hoping you could clarify it. With respect to the bond rate and the cost of the project. Mr. Baldwin: We have not concluded the project. The

project is still ongoing. We have not completed it and we don't have final numbers. I am trying to stay in order here and I'd like to know if you have a direct question with respect to the bond rate that we can address here.

Reply: Not with respect to the bond rate. Mr. Baldwin: When we get to a category that may apply, everybody will have an opportunity to speak.

Question from the audience: Will there be a vote by the Commission on the final interest rate so that members of the town can attend your meeting can see that the rate that is established is one that the entire Commission votes on and is done at a regular meeting instead of receiving a letter without any official Sewer Commission sanction?

Mr. Baldwin: Yes, there will be. As said in the beginning, there will be a full financial disclosure of this project, copies of which will be made available for the public for their review. At a public meeting the Commission will vote on what the assessment is actually going to be.

Mr. Spoerndel: To clarify with regards to the interest rate, it sounds like the Town is borrowing the money and charging the W.P.C.A an interest rate based on what they are borrowing. In reality, the Town issues bonds and at the point the Town is obligated to pay debt service for 20 years. The assessment will then be generated off of what those debt service rates are going to be.

Question from the audience: Is there any Federal stimulus money available so that the principle of this project can be reduced? Mr. Baldwin: No, not for our town. Most of the stimulus for a project like this would first go to major cities with older systems that don't have separated systems, because most of those cities are the ones that handle waste sewage sent down from surrounding towns.

Question from the audience: Did anybody ever try to submit requests for money? Mr. Baldwin: We have submitted approximately \$48 million worth of requests to the State and Federal governments for stimulus money. We have not heard back from either the State or Federal government as to how much we are actually going to receive.

#### Senior Tax Relief:

Mr. Baldwin asked if anyone had questions on Senior Tax Relief.

Question from the audience: Tax relief that is available for senior citizens is based on a certain level of income, instead of that what about a flat non-income related deduction? Mr. Baldwin: Currently there is nothing in the Town Code that allows us to do that. It would take action on the part of the Town Council to make that happen.

Attorney Schopick: It is not just a matter of Town Code, State statutes require that these assessments be received. Any action made with regard to the assessments will not reduce the amount of the assessment. The assessment may be deferred, but will not go away, because it is an assessment against your property not against a 65 year old person earning X number of dollars a year. The program that is in effect today has been in effect for many years and does allow property owners to make suggestions of ways in which they would want to ask the town to approve their particular assessment deferral for the future. As was said the Tax Assessor is working on that now. We couldn't just eliminate the assessment if that is what you are suggesting.

Question from the audience: Can seniors get a discounted rate for hooking up to the sewers? You have a list of contractors but there is nothing about a senior discount for any of them. Mr. Baldwin: There is a list of people who have done work and are approved to do work. If you have another contractor you'd like to get that contractor approved, you are absolutely welcome to have that contractor contact the W.P.C.A. to get approved. You are not limited to any particular list. You don't have a limited list. As far as the hook-up, it is not part of your assessment and not part of the Town's contract. These are private contractors. It is your property and you are doing the hook-up and you can use anybody you'd like to use. If you can negotiate a better deal than your neighbor, then that's fine. That's your responsibility. The Town does not take any responsibility for hooking up your sewers once we bring in the lateral from the road.

#### Paving & Drainage:

Mr. Baldwin: The next issue I'm sure is a big one. I'd like to keep it in general terms because there are work sheets that are part of the package and if you have individual problems with your property that need to be addressed, fill that out and get it in so we can address it.

Question from the audience: Many of the roads are settling and cracked. Was there a specification provided to the contractor to follow in preparing these roads? Doesn't have a problem with spending the money to better our community by putting in sewers, but we've now installed sewers and will have to replace our roads again in a very short period of time and will be hit with additional cost. What is being done about the quality of work so that we are assured that we get what we are paying for? Mr. Baldwin: We do keep a retainage on all projects, so that any complaints such as settling, bad paving, can be addressed. They don't get all of their money at the end of the project. Joseph Solemene, Sewer Coordinator: There are compaction requirements of all the trenches. We've had some compaction testing done, and all compaction testing got passing grade. We've had some failures along the way that were a problem, we've had a number of water main breaks. We've also paved over existing roads. Some settling and cracking is a product of a repave. John Del Vecchio, Director of Public Works: We go by a basic set of specifications that every town uses. After the sewer line is installed, compaction is done with a hydraulic machine. We check that it meets the standard of compaction. A temporary patch is installed over that line. State code requires we let the patches settle six months before final paving. It is different than when we do a town-wide resurfacing of roads. The spec for resurfacing over newly sewer roads is 2" laid to 1 1/2" compressed. Resurfacing spec is 2 1/2"-2". To keep cost affordable for the sewer installation we follow the guidelines that most towns have set. We have retainage on any work that is done. They have to guarantee the condition of the roads for one year. If we find settling we notify the contractor, we make them saw cut it, dig it out, pack it again to bring it up to the proper grade and do another permanent pave over it. Historically that will take care of the problem. Suggestion from audience member: Whoever is responsible for work, make sure proper sub-base material used before backfilling, would like to see the remainder of the work done appropriately. We are paying a lot, we should be getting what we are supposed to be getting. Mr. Del Vecchio: It is not always the responsibility of the Contractor to repair the entire road, that would fall on the Public Works Department budget but we don't have the money to dig up all the bad areas. If we want to make them 100% fool-proof so that there is no failure at all, we would have to spend some major dollars and it is just not in the budget.

Question from the audience: Settlement on entire project, no compaction. Wants to see compaction and inspection reports. Mr. Baldwin: Could have done better job on reconstruction of the roads at the same time as the sewer installation, we are looking at it internally. We need help to identify the exact locations that need attention and will take action. We have one inspector assigned to three to four crews. In the past there have been one or two crews. We have learned from this phase of the project.

Comment from the audience: Cost of drainage work should not be in assessment.

Comment from the audience: The project was finished early because work not done correctly.

Mr. Solemene: Invoices are available for anyone who wants to see how much drainage work was performed. The Town pays 25% of the project, over \$5 million. There is not \$5 million worth of drainage, sidewalk or curbing work. The Town can justify the small amount of drainage repair and sidewalk work that was done. The sidewalks totaled \$145,000. We provided laterals across the sidewalk, if the sidewalks were not replaced we would have patched sidewalks running the length of the schools. The reason the assessments are so expensive is the cost of the pipe went up dramatically.

Comment from the audience: This is not about looking at invoices, it is about management of the whole project. Quality was wanting from beginning to end, right down to the grass seed. It might be appropriate at this time to conduct an independent engineering audit. Mr. Baldwin: That is something that will be considered probably at the next meeting of the W.P.C.A. Additional comment: Lives on Fairway Lane, first house in development. Town supposed to pave roads every 15 years. In 42 years road was never paved. Now I am being asked to pay for the paving in assessment.

Comment from the audience: Lives at bottom of Firehouse Road where there is access from Oldfield. Have called several times because of motorcycles and cars going through the access road. Have also called police. Have asked for boulders to be put up like on Towerview. Have not gotten that. Clair Garard told them trees would be planted along the cul-de-sac area in the Fall so that they would grow in in the Spring. Come Spring there were no trees planted. She called Clair. He had no recollection of ever saying that. Mr. Baldwin: Get that to me directly, I will have it addressed for you.

Comment from the audience: Has 20' easement on his property, 45' of front yard disturbed. It is two years later and does not have grass on it. Didn't put any topsoil. Who is in charge? Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Solemene's office will be coordinating with Mark IV to make sure it gets done. Mr. Del Vecchio: On behalf of the Sewer Department and the Public Works Department I will look into this matter personally and make sure that corrections are made.

Question from the audience: Why the cost increase? Cost of materials up, labor cost down. Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Solemene explained the cost of materials, which have gone up. Labor costs have gone down. When this job was bid it was in a different environment. Mark IV's bid was approximately \$2 million lower than the next closest bidder.

Question from the audience: Referring to the greenbelt area, on one side of Jog Hill Road they planted grass. On the other side they made it a road. Why? Mr. Solemene: There are certain areas where we have to have access in the event of a mainline clog. The project is not finished. We have always intended to put in an access gate to prohibit motor vehicle traffic. Motorcycles are tougher to control. If we give this project two to three years, you will see those areas fill in, and will not look so intrusive as it does the first year. Comment from the audience: If you plant grass you won't have this problem. Mr. Baldwin: Joe's point is certain routes have to be accessible for crews to service those areas.

Question from the audience: Regarding town requirement for paving thickness, are we setting ourselves up for failure by not requiring the same paving thickness? Mr. Del Vecchio: This is my standard, not the standard of the industry of 2" to 1.5" finish. We have approximately 225 miles of road. Life expectancy of a road is 20 years. We should be paving about 10 miles of road per year to maintain roads in the proper condition. Over the past three years oil prices have soared. We only have one supplier of bituminous concrete. Money we were getting three years ago is now doing 50% of the work. Maybe we should increase the standard, but that would increase the assessment.

Question from the audience: Do they plan on paving Daniels Farm Road? Mr. Baldwin: Yes, they will be milling it and paving within the next couple of weeks.

Question from the audience: Did you say you only have one supplier for road paving material? Mr. Del Vecchio: Yes, our supplier is O&G for that volume of material.

Comment from the audience: I am a contractor and if I give a price I have to honor that price. Mr. Baldwin: This project was bid and there is no question they are staying within their bid price. They haven't been given anything extra for this job. What we are saying is projects that were done four, five, six years ago were cheaper because materials were cheaper. When this phase was bid, Mark IV was the lowest bidder by \$2 million. Question: Why is my assessment higher? Mr. Baldwin: The cost of this project is more than those other projects. Remember, the cost of a project in a half acre zone is going to be cheaper because they don't have to travel so far to do the construction of the sewer line. In one acre zones, the stand is a lot greater. Every single sewer phase is a unique project unto itself. That is why it is bid separately. The cost of petroleum products, oil and gas, asphalt all went up substantially from the time that this particular phase went to a public hearing in 2002. All bids are open for public review. Question: What is the sense of assessment if you are always going to exceed? Mr. Baldwin: What was given to you that number of years ago was an estimate of what it would cost for the sewer project. It was not a firm price. Certainly the price of material and everything else is factored in. I assume it is going to be less than what was sent out a month or so ago by virtue of the fact that the interest rate alone is about one-half percent less than indicated in the preliminary assessment. Neil Lieberthal, Town Attorney: You should be aware that while this project was going on Mark IV came back to the W.P.C.A. because of the huge increase in the cost of asphalt and paving, asking for a change order to increase the amount based on unforeseen circumstance. The W.P.C.A. refused and held them to their bid.

Comment from the audience: Lives on Towerview Drive, generally problems with the paving. Has lived in his house 15 years. This is his actual re-pave and sewer project combined. It's important that we get it right. Boulder placed at end of Towerview which kept most of the traffic out of the greenway. It is a public safety issue. Sees motorcycles coming out of the greenway. He asked that signs be posted clearly stating what is allowed and not allowed in the greenway. On Oldfield there is only a sawhorse and chain to prevent people from coming in, not effective. Mr. Baldwin: This is a town-wide problem. Let us know who it is so we can talk to parents.

Question from the audience: \$21,500,000 is \$6,000,000 more than what was bid. Mr. Baldwin: There was an initial phase and then an expansion that the W.P.C.A. granted for other homes in your area. There was another public hearing and other homes were added. Question: Settling of pavement which would be over the trench, but when the cracks are going perpendicular to trench... Mr. Baldwin: We will investigate the entire quality of the pavement product to address the issue of whether it was Mark IV's fault or the Town's fault.

Question from the audience: Regarding the cost of pipe and asphalt going up. Having a hard time understanding, isn't the contractor saving on labor and fuel charges? Mr. Baldwin: The Town is still obligated to pay the contract price. Question: Did Contractor get extra money because the asphalt went up? Mr. Del Vecchio: He got exactly what he bid on the project. Mr. Baldwin: You may not have heard before, Mark IV did come back when the price of asphalt went up and asked for an adjustment in their pricing and the W.P.C.A. held him to the contract price. He was not paid any additional money for the cost of asphalt going up. He bore that expense on his own.

Question from the audience: What is the warrantee on the work? Mr. Baldwin: One year from the time the Town signs off on the project, total completion. We have not signed off on this project yet.

Question from the audience: Confused by low bid of \$15,000,000 but \$21,500,000 in bonds. What is the difference and why? Mr. Del Vecchio: The original project did not include the expansion of a second phase of that project.

Question: So this number in the handout is incorrect. Mr. Baldwin: The number is correct for the original phase.

If you read further on it addresses the addition to this phase that brought the price up to \$21,500,000. Mr. Solemene: Again, the original bid was \$15.38 million. We had a \$3.5 million contract extension to the existing contract which was not included in the hand-out. A public hearing was held January 29, 2008 for the residents who requested the extension. The contract was extended at the original bid price. That increased the cost of this project by \$3.5 million. Question: As a follow-up, \$3.5 million on top of \$15 million is still less than \$21.5 million bonding that we have. Mr. Baldwin: First of all, we have not bonded anything but \$17 million. When we complete the project and we have all the numbers in, that is the number that will be bonded. Nothing more. Mr. Solemene: Every contract has change orders. The difference between the bid price of \$3.5 million and the completed job is supplemental additions and some change orders.

Question from the audience: Regarding the thousands of linear feet of pipe going through the easements where there are no houses served, can the General Fund pick up the cost of that pipe? Mr. Baldwin: If there is so many linear feet that doesn't service anybody, that is part of the cost of the project.

Question from the audience: When low bid is awarded and then there is an extension to a contract, is that extension ever put out to bid? If not, why not? Mr. Baldwin: It depends on the amount that is being requested, how extensive the expansion is going to be. Some expansions are so large that they are their own phase. Since Mark IV Construction agreed to hold the low bid price for this add-on phase and they were right in the area, they were given the contract. The expansion price was approved by the Town Council and the Board of Finance.

Question from the audience: Regarding the money being held from the Contractor (retainage). If you decide you are not happy with the work and you don't pay him the full amount, do we get a rebate too? Mr. Baldwin: No, we could either do the work ourselves or hire another contractor to do that work to bring it up to code. That is the reason for the retainage.

Question from the audience: We've heard about resurfacing and a gentleman said he's lived on his street for 15 years and it's never been resurfaced. I've lived on Stoneleigh Road for 20 years and it's never been resurfaced. It sounds like the paving should not be paid by individual assessments. The Town owes it to us. Mr. Baldwin: It is easy to say that. As Mr. Del Vecchio pointed out, there are 225 miles of road in Trumbull. Ideally we should be paving 10-15 miles every year. We don't have the money to do that. We purposely don't pave some roads knowing that the sewer phase is coming in and the paving is part of that. As a gentleman pointed out before, everyone is complaining about their taxes. If we were to hold to that schedule of doing that much road taxes would be a lot more than what they are right now. We are trying to manage what we have with the money we have. Comment: You are taxing us twice. Mr. Baldwin: That is not true. The road is being dug up and is being replaced as part of the assessment, and you are getting a better road than what you had before.

Question: Most of my neighbors are paying between \$25,000 and \$27,000. My neighbor has the same frontage as I do and yet there is only one pipe going in front. We are paying \$50,000 for one pipe? Mr. Baldwin: That will be covered in the methodology of assessment. Right now we are talking about the quality of work.

Question: Is blasting included in the price? Mr. Baldwin: Yes.

Comment: Going forward and looking back at this particular phase of the project, what will be done by this group to assure we have oversight? You told us we have one inspector. If that is not enough, why don't you have an independent company overseeing this and making sure what we are paying for we are getting? The quality of work is not up to snuff. Mr. Baldwin: As a result of this public hearing, the W.P.C.A. will be considering either adding staff to monitor this or possibly hiring somebody independent to go out and do a review of the roads.

Question: Where does the dirt go that was removed? Is it sold by the Contractor? Mr. Baldwin: In most cases the material that is put back in the roads is better than what is taken out of the roads. That material belongs to the Contractor and he can do with it what he wants to.

Question: Have we had problems with contractors in the past? Mr. Del Vecchio: There have been some areas around town with unexplained settlement problems.

Russell Batchelor, 20 Lynnbrook Road: Was at the meeting at Town Hall two weeks ago. Has a unique situation. Could have either pumped or gotten gravity. Met with Clair Garard. To get gravity, put him 165' to a lateral and down 14' through ledge. Was supposed to get a call back to have his situation reviewed. Has not received a call back. Called Mr. Solemene twice, has not returned his call. Mr. Baldwin: Fill out form and give to me.

Comment: Called Mr. Solemene, left four messages and never got a call back. Lives on Daniels Farm Road and there is an indentation where the grass never grew and settled. It has been two years. Mr. Baldwin: If you don't get a call back from a department in town within 24 hours, call my office and I will call you back myself.

Comment: Also lives on Daniels Farm Road, truck drove over grass and left an 8" deep rut. Mr. Baldwin: Please fill out work order form.

#### Estimates of Assessments:

Mr. Baldwin explained that estimates given a number of years ago were much lower than the proposed assessments because each phase requires more easements to be purchased by the town than other phases, the cost of fuel, asphalt, pipe, pump stations, the cost of cross country easements. He asked if there were any questions about estimates versus actual prices.

Question: You are saying the Contractor has not exceeded the bid yet the assessment that I originally heard was about \$6,000 less than the letter received. Mr. Baldwin: You were given an estimate six years ago. A lot has changed since that time. Comment: The price of sewers may exceed the cost of replacing a septic system.

Question: Did the estimate include the cost of sidewalks and curbing? Mr. Baldwin: Whatever area is disrupted due to sewer installation has to be repaired or replaced. We don't install sidewalks or curbing where they did not exist.

Question: Regarding the June 2007 estimate, the final assessment is 15-20% higher. How did you get from that number to what we are looking at now? Mr. Baldwin: Before anything is approved the full financials will be available for your examination. The W.P.C.A. will make that available before they do a final vote on this project. Mr. Solemene: Took responsibility for the quote in the hand-out. At the public hearing for the extension Mr. Solemene was asked what this would cost. He estimated from looking at the last two contracts and the increase, without going into it in-depth. He thought the assessments would be between \$18,000 and \$20,000. Average assessment is \$22,000. It was not scientific. Confident the prices were good. There was overwhelming support for the sewer extension. Regarding the quality of work, there are too many complaints about the paving. He wants to assure everyone that we test every length of pipe going manhole to manhole, we pressure test and video inspect. We look at the sewer angle of this project and the quality of that aspect of the job is top-notch. We will see what we can do about patching and crack sealing.

Question: If you have a smaller lot, it's cheaper. We are all having the same pipe, why can't we divide equally?

Mr. Baldwin: We will get to that in the methodology of the assessments.

Question: Were repairs to sidewalks and storm drains ancillary to sewers or because they needed to be done?

Mr. Solemene: Going up Daniels Farm Road, in order to put the lateral connections onto the properties we have to dig through the sidewalk. It made more sense to replace rather than repair.

Question: Why were sidewalks repaved and why is that part of the assessment? Mr. Del Vecchio: Since 1970 when sewers were first installed in the Town of Trumbull, one of the reasons for the town contributing 25% was for

anything outside the scope of the installation of sewers to be done at the time sewers were being installed. It is a money saver because it is at a discounted cost to the taxpayers. Since then everyone has contributed to improvements outside the scope of the installation of the sewers.

Comment: Assessment is \$23,000, usage fee is \$220 per quarter. Usage fee is more than what he pays for water.

Mr. Baldwin: Sewer usage fees in surrounding communities in most cases is half or two-thirds of our cost. The reason is each one of those towns has their own waste treatment plant. That is something the W.P.C.A. is considering. Our sewage is treated in Bridgeport, one of the top five most expensive communities in which to get treatment from.

Comment: Doesn't need sewer, lives at top of Jog Hill. We are sacrificing for our neighbors who need sewers. Why not divide equally?

Comment: Lives on Daniels Farm Road, this will cost \$26,500 for assessment, \$1,400 usage fee, \$5-10,000 to hook up. That is an exorbitant price. How can two retired people afford this? Mr. Baldwin: Suggested looking into senior tax relief. Comment: There is a six month waiting period for tax relief. Mr. Baldwin: That's not true. There is a period of time in which you have to apply, the application of that senior tax relief takes place immediately on July 1. The assessments will take place earliest January of 2010.

Question: \$19.9 million bid price, why is \$21 million bonded? What are additional costs? Mr. Solemene: There are other costs associated with the project. The sewer system had to be designed, there were easements that had to be purchased, individual grinder pumps, appraisals. These are in addition to the cost of construction.

Question: Are those additional costs part of the 25% that the Town is picking up? Mr. Solemene: Yes.

Mr. Baldwin: It is all part of the sewer project and 25% of the entire project is covered by the Town. The entire amount will be bonded.

Comment: Everyone on his block is paying between \$19,000 and \$22,000, but he is paying \$25,000 because he is over one acre. Doesn't understand. Mr. Solemene: The policy is an acre lot has minimum and maximum footage. You are paying for your entire frontage of 167 feet. The majority of the residents served have acre lots.

Question to Mr. Solemene: You apologized and took responsibility for the mistake in the estimate. Will you go back to the original estimate? Mr. Solemene: I estimated the assessment to be \$18-20,000, the average assessment is \$21,900. The maximum assessments are higher than I thought. Mr. Baldwin: It was an estimate.

Question: Can we not wait until the end of the complete project. Can you send out a letter that gives a basic accounting of what we are paying for? Mr. Baldwin: It won't be before the end of the project but it will be before any new assessments are issued.

Tom Bianco, 27 Towerview Drive: Read notes taken at the meeting of November 2002. Projected assessment would be \$15,000-\$18,000, my assessment is \$25,000; linear rate at the time \$100 per linear foot, actual \$146; user fee projected to be \$175 per year, currently \$400; at that time it was projected payments would begin July 2010, now projected to begin January 2010. Mr. Baldwin: first payment will not be due this July, most likely after January 2010. Comment: Wants payment delayed to July 2010. Mr. Baldwin: One of the problems with that is the Town has borrowed \$17 million and is paying bonds for that. Delaying the assessment will cost more in the end, because the assessment for this project will be borne by the people who are served by this contract. Comment: The Town should consider applying a greater percentage to make up for the poor estimate projection. Mr. Baldwin: That would not be fair to ask the entire town to pay more for installation of sewer in one section. Comment: When Mark IV came back for an increase, they were denied. Using increase in costs as reason for higher assessment, but the contract was landed several years ago. At that time they bid and projected the cost in these years money. Mr. Baldwin: The cost of doing a sewer installation in 2002/2003 was a lot cheaper than it is today. All major phases go out to competitive bid. The date of this bid was April 10, 2007. Mark IV was the lowest bidder by \$2 million. When the extension was added they agreed to honor that price. There were no changes to the pricing. Comment: We have a situation where our assessments are simply very high, higher than we were convinced would be the cost. If anything can be done we would appreciate it.

Question: Asked for clarification of 25% of contract paid by Trumbull taxpayers for anything outside the sewers.

Mr. Del Vecchio: The Town of Trumbull and its taxpayers contribute 25% of the total cost of installation of sewers throughout all areas. The reason is to help offset cost of installation and to cover anything that is not directly related. There are areas in town in the watershed area that will never have the opportunity to have sewers

no matter how bad their septic systems are. But yet they are contributing to the installation of your sewers and will never benefit from the money they are paying to help defray the cost of the installation of your sewer system. Costs unrelated to the sewers will not exceed \$5 million contributed by Town. Mr. Baldwin: Regarding the 25% paid by the Town, from time to time over the years since the 1970's the Board of Finance and the Town Council have tried to cut off the 25% reimbursement. I expect the W.P.C.A. will fight vigorously to keep that 25% coming from the Town.

Question: Paid \$100 not to connect to the sewers. Why is he paying a user fee? Mr. Solemene: The \$100 was to make sure your septic system was not a nuisance to your neighbors. The Health Department does a septic system inspection. You pay a maintenance charge of \$23.83 per quarter to insure when you connect to the sewers, that the sewer system is operating correctly. It is a small expense that everyone shares.

Question: Is the interest tax deductible? Mr. Baldwin: Consult whoever prepares your taxes. Mr. Del Vecchio: The tax collector's office will provide the amount you can deduct from your taxes after you have made your payments. Attorney Schopick: Recommends consulting your tax advisor. This is a benefit assessment. You have the option of paying over 18 years or paying in full in one payment.

#### Methodology of Assessment:

Attorney Schopick: In the 1970's the Sewer Commission, now the W.P.C.A., came up with this formula. It is not a formula that is in stone but it's an accepted formula that has been tested in court. People have had the same questions that you have who have challenged this type of assessment and it has been upheld. For instance there is a maximum of an acre and 175 feet. Some people complain saying it should be based on whatever frontage they have. If you have 100 feet with an acre lot they get a benefit, if they have 300 feet they do not. It is as fair as possible.

Comment from the audience: Challenge the concept of the benefit analysis. The only benefit to each home is one lateral that comes off the sewer line. It has nothing to do with the size of the lots, the corner lots, the back lots. There are so many issues the W.P.C.A. has had to deal with over the years. Maybe it's time for a concept change. Things have changed since 1970. In this situation take 735 users, divide into the total cost of the project, and Joe's estimate of four years ago is correct. Maybe it's time to change how to do the assessments.

Question: What is the method of assessment? Attorney Schopick: The amount you pay is based on linear footage. If you have between one-half and one acre, the minimum you will be charged is 125 feet, the maximum would be charged for is 150 feet. If you have a  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre lot with 100 feet frontage, you would still get charged for 125 feet. If you have 230 feet frontage you would only get charged for 150 feet. On a corner lot you are assessed for the shorter side. Mr. Solemene: The calculation is simple: the total cost of the project divided by the assessable linear feet, then deduct 25% for total cost per linear foot.

Comment: The logic of dividing the total by the total number of houses will do away with all the arguments of lot size and linear feet. Mr. Baldwin: That is something for the W.P.C.A. to consider.

There being no further questions or comments from the audience, Mr. Baldwin stated we will get all the accurate information we can prior to the actual assessments. If there are any further questions, please contact Mr. Solemene. If you don't receive a response within 24 hours call Mr. Baldwin's office and he will contact you personally. Mr. Baldwin thanked everyone for their courtesy.

- Motion (Goncalves) seconded (Salvey) to close the public hearing. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

The public hearing was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully,

Jenny Francese  
Clerk of the Commission