

In Bayside

Sewer rate hike under review

By Toni Mailloux

The Northport Village Corporation, commonly referred to as Bayside, continues to wrestle with utility problems.

Last month the overseers agreed to begin the paperwork for an increase in its water rates. Sunday, utility committee chairman and overseer David Crofoot told the overseers Bayside may also need to increase sewer rates.

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Currently, the 234 sewer users pay \$405 a year for the sewer. For those who only use their cottages for two months a year, Crofoot said that seems like a lot.

But he said in order to qualify for some grant funds, the sewer rate needs to be at least 2 percent of the mean income of users or for Bayside, \$526 annually.

"It may be necessary to consider a sewer rate increase," Crofoot said.

Bayside is operating under a consent agreement with the state that requires they look at alternatives to their present primary sewer treatment plant.

Crofoot said a stage 2 study was filed Feb. 1 with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) looking at six different alternatives. The alternatives range from upgrading the present plant to connecting to the Belfast sewer system.

But, he said, whichever project is selected, it will be necessary to replace the old clay pipe in the village that is causing major inflow and infiltration problems.

Crofoot said none of the alternatives in the stage 2 facility plan are affordable but the closest is to upgrade the present facility. That would mean staying with primary treatment only. He said even if construction of a secondary treatment plant were affordable, the 234 users of the system couldn't afford to maintain it.

The plan the stage 2 study proposes is to:

- replace the old and leaky sewer pipes;
- make revisions at the treatment plant, including adding an emergency generator and a control room that would also serve as a lab; and
- replace or extend the outfall pipe to approximately 2,000 feet.

The estimated cost for that alternative is \$3 million but Crofoot said it depends on the DEP being willing to accept primary treatment for the next 30 years.

A response from the DEP is expected by the end of the month and then they want Bayside to start design work.

Crofoot said the cost of design work for a \$3 million project is

\$300,000 and Bayside can't even afford to do that without grant money.

Overseer Mike Robbins said Bayside may have to make a stand and say it can't proceed with anything until there is grant money available.

Overseer Judy Metcalf said the DEP has been cooperative in working with the village and Bayside needs to see their response to this study first. "The bottom line is we've got to see what they say," she concluded.

Metcalf added that the 2,000-foot extension of the outfall pipe is extreme and hopefully it can be much shorter, which will save money.

Crofoot also told the board Bayside had an excess volume violation in December. The village's overboard discharge permit allows for 63,000 gallons to be discharged per day and in December, the average was 84,000 gallons a day. He said there appears to be some new source of inflow of stormwater into the sewer system.

The overseers praised the work of Crofoot and the trustees of the utility district, the office clerk and the new superintendent in getting the stage 2 study revised and submitted to the DEP.

In other action, the overseers:

- learned Sid Block will not be able to continue as chairman of the nominating committee this year;
- learned of the resignation of overseer Mary Hanrahan due to a change in her work schedule; and
- set its next meeting for March 13 at 10 a.m.

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