

Somerset County Sanitary Commission
 Minutes of December 14, 2017

A Public Hearing of the Somerset County Sanitary Commission was held on Thursday December 14, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 111 of the Somerset County Office Complex. Members present were Adam Riffin, Chairman, Charles T. Northam, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer and Ellen Bush, Vice-Chairman. Maxine Landon, member and Janet McIntyre, member were absent. Also in attendance were Anthony Stockus, Manager, Jennie Marshall, Administrative Aide, Starr Mister, Office Manager, Richard Crumbacker, Somerset County Times, Randy Laird, Somerset County Commissioner, Reverend Charles Bagley, Advisory Committee Member and Elizabeth McCadams, Crisfield Resident.

The Public Hearing on the proposed debt service rates for the 2018 calendar year was opened at 2:00 by Mr. Riffin. Jennie Marshall read the proposed rates aloud as follows:

BOND YEAR	Calendar Year 2017		Calendar Year 2018			
	CURRENT RATE PER FOOT		PROPOSED RATE PER FOOT			
	Residential	Business	Residential	Business		
Pr. Anne Subdistrict - Shared Facilities						
1963 Princess Anne	\$1.00	\$1.20	\$1.00	\$1.20		
1973 Princess Anne	\$1.00	\$1.20	\$1.00	\$1.20		
1975 Princess Anne	\$1.00	\$1.20	\$1.00	\$1.20		
1983 Princess Anne	\$1.00	\$1.20	\$1.00	\$1.20		
2007 North Princess Anne	n/a	\$38.05	n/a	\$38.05		
1981 Fairmount	\$0.23	\$0.27	\$0.23	\$0.27		
1982 Jacksonville	\$0.32	\$0.38	\$0.32	\$0.38		
1988 Crisfield	\$1.46	\$1.75	\$1.46	\$1.75		
1996 Crisfield (Downneck Area)	\$0.40	\$0.48	\$0.40	\$0.48		
<i>Sewer Mains Only</i>						
2005 Johnson Creek Water	\$0.38	\$0.45	\$0.38	\$0.45		
<i>Water Mains and Water Tower</i>						
2007 Front St. Sewer Main upgrade	\$0.17	\$0.21	\$0.17	\$0.21		
<i>To include the following areas:</i>						
<i>All properties on Somerset Avenue north of Broad Street to UMES Blvd. and Mt. Vernon Road, Spruce Street, Pine Street, Walnut Street, Elm Street, and some properties south of Broad Street (generally west of Somerset Avenue) to Antioch Ave.</i>						
	2017		2018			
	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Sewer Mains</u>	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Sewer Mains</u>
2009 Westover Sewer- EDU	\$564.48	\$677.38	\$476.73	\$564.48	\$677.38	\$476.73

Mr. Riffin read aloud the following letter sent in by Susan Sterling, Crisfield Resident:

I had been waiting for the public hearing to discuss the water/sewer rates so that I could express my thoughts, however, due to a medical appointment I will be unable to attend tomorrow.

However, I want to be heard.

I live on Burton Ave in a house built in 1940. I am living on a fixed income, (being of retirement age yet still working part time for extra income) alone and on a budget. I have worked since I was 15 years old paying my own way, including my college expenses. I have never taken any assistance for anything. I've always felt it is each person's duty to take care of themselves, and only take on what you can afford.

But, all through my working life, like all of you, have paid and paid and paid for those who want to take, slide by, and feel entitled.

It has to stop! It is simply not fair for me to pay for other's debts any longer. Westover's water debts are not mine. I pay mine, and when I can't afford to pay mine, I won't ask anyone else to pay for them. Increasing my bill will move me, and others, towards that place where we can no longer afford to take care of ourselves.

Then what?

When you increase my bill, who will increase my income?

As a personal example, I am served by the pumping station at Rubberset, which was adequate for the needs of the area when it was established. Someone approved Cullen Parkway, someone approved Heron Way, someone approved all the building that exceeded the ability of this pumping station to keep up. Someone is apparently flushing diapers and industrial rags in there so the City is considering raising my bill to pay for someone else's decisions. Fair to me? I think not!

I strongly urge you to reconsider this 'county-wide' rate. It's simply not fair to anyone!

Elizabeth McCadams, also a resident of Crisfield, stated that she feels the same way as Ms. Sterling and she is disappointed that the County Commissioners voted to approve the Unified Debt Service Rate starting in 2019.

Reverend Charles Bagley of Westover expressed his gratitude to the Sanitary Commission Board for being chosen to sit on the Advisory Committee. He agrees with the rate recommendations adding that starting next year, 2019, by everyone evenly contributing to the debt it will provide more funding to front projects and upgrades such as new pipes and water towers.

Mr. Laird, Somerset County Commissioner, stated that he felt the same as his fellow Crisfield residents and that he did not vote for the Unified Debt Service Rate that will begin in 2019. He doesn't feel it is fair that the surplus funds from the 1988 Crisfield Project will go toward the shared debt next year. He feels that the residents who paid their debt and generated the surplus should be receiving a refund. Mr. Stockus believes he and Ms. Mister have come up with a solution that may help dissolve the surplus.

Ms. Mister stated that the surplus was developed by Mr. Street, General Manager and Ms. Outten, Administrative Aide at the time, with good intentions. Due to the bell curve in our loan payments, a higher rate was paid by the residents in the 1988 project in the beginning with the intent to not raise rates when the payment increased about half way through the loan. However, during the 2015 Audit it was brought to our attention that this practice was not acceptable by our funding agency. Ms. Mister expressed her gratitude for Mr. Laird's concern for his continuants, being a Crisfield resident herself, but also made known that the 1988 project will be needing upgrades in the near future as well.

After consideration, Mr. Stockus and Ms. Mister purposed postponing the rate approval for the 1988 Crisfield Project and the 1981 Fairmount Project due to the surplus in both projects until January 11th 2018. They are recommending not charging these projects for the 2018 Calendar year to help dissolve the surplus. Mr. Laird appreciated the consideration but questioned what will happen with the balance left. He thinks it's only fair that the property owners who paid on this project be awarded or refund for their contributions to the surplus. Ms. Mister explained that we do not keep record of who pays the payments and it would be very difficult to distribute refunds. Ms. Mister stated that they will revisit the balance of the surplus next year when setting the rates for the 2019 year.

Ms. Mister and Mr. Stockus assured Mr. Laird that they will make every attempt to be as fair and accurate as possible in regards to the surplus.

Mr. Laird congratulated Mr. Northam on his retirement from the Sanitary District Board but is sorry to see him leave.

On a motion by Ms. Bush and seconded by Mr. Northam it was unanimously agreed to approve all Debt Service rates for Calendar year 2018 with the exception of the 1988 Crisfield project and 1981 Fairmount project.

On a motion by Ms. Bush and seconded by Mr. Northam it was unanimously agreed to adjourn at 2:28 p.m.

Approved by: 

Adam Riggini
Chairman
Somerset County Sanitary Commission

Respectfully Submitted:



Jennie Marshall
Administrative Aide
Somerset County Sanitary District