APPENDIX R-I-5b

Report on Rettew Engineering's Draft 537 Plan
by
West Penn/Walker Township Sewage Committee
August 1, 2011

The West Penn/Walker Township Sewer Committee recommends the following comments to the Rettew Engineers report. At this time, it is the lowest cost estimate and should move forward for public review and comments. Below are the, thoroughly discussed, recommendations of the West Penn/Walker Sewage Committee to move forward with the plan in preparation for the final draft to Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). We felt it necessary to safeguard the financial health of the West Penn/Walker Township and its' residents.

The Rettew Engineers' report satisfies the objective of developing an estimate for the least costly community system. Rettew Engineers started with the basic Ludgate Plan and updated it to meet current needs (estimated), and (estimated) current costs within DEP parameters outlined in Act 537 Plans. Rettew Engineering has accomplished the legally stated goals of the DEP 537 Plan requirements.

On July 23, 2011, the West Penn / Walker Township Sewage Committee met and reviewed the Rettew Engineers report in detail. The following are the recommendations to the West Penn/Walker Township Supervisors:

1. If approximately 90% of funding grants can be found, in the future, that plan should move forward modified to a total system piped to Tamaqua. This will require increased cost of 10%-15%, and not require any land to be acquired. As well as, being the correct long-term solution environmentally, esthetically sound, with the least maintenance, and yearly overhead.

2. The lesser, (vs. 90%) of approximately 45% of grant funding will cast an undue financial burden on residents in both monthly fees and hookup fees. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, on July 18, 2011, made it known of reduced future funding in all areas. This level of grants is not acceptable to all, if even possible to obtain.

3. The Committee unanimously suggest that the Township Engineer be directed to receive turn-key proposals from private contractors to correct only wildcat line (raw sewage discharge) situations, and move forward with this investigation to keep costs at 300 thousand to 1.2 million dollars. USDA Rural Development will preferably give support to small projects and individuals. The funding for very small projects will likely remain available. A fair share of resident's payments of small septic cost will likely be not more than Tamaqua's hookup and monthly fees, for 2 years. It is our objective to remove the direct raw sewage problem and avoid the Township from being directed by DEP to implement the 537 Plan in its current form. The Township would have to adsorb costs through Penn Vest to supplement grants causing an undue burden to the whole Township. (Note: Tamaqua has recently decided each of over 40+ raw sewage violators, (wildcat line), must hook up at their own cost, per the DEP mandate. DEP could mandate the same for non-functioning / non-working West Penn/Walker rural residents also.) The Township could also face additional fines for non-compliance.

4. Tank inspections and pump-out at 2-3 years scheduled intervals should be deleted from the plan. It will cause every tank to be excavated and visually checked, repaired to current standards, and possibly drain fields reworked according to current standards. This could add a $1,000 - $2,000 cost plus repair to each septic in township and will be a burden to every homeowner. This is a rural township, and each homeowner must maintain their-own system to function properly. Ordinances are now in place to handle malfunctions and corrections.

5. West Penn/Walker Township should investigate the maximum grant support for each resident, in raw sewage situation and plan to keep costs at absolute minimums, reduce long-term overhead to residents personally, and Township as a whole.

SEWERAGE COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 23/2011

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August 1, 2011

Rettew Engineering completed the study of Snyders, Andreas, Clamtown, Reynolds, and South Tamaqua, and created a plan to correct the sewage problem to satisfy DEP standards. The study was very thorough and the plan will cost over $10 million. While it does meet DEP requirements it does not meet our needs. By increasing the Rettew Engineering plan costs 10% and piping everything to Tamaqua with a 90% grant will solve our raw sewage problem, current and future. Currently grants of 45% are not available and a loan of this magnitude would bankrupt our community. Approving this solution without funding does not solve the sewage failures. Requesting solutions from DEP approved contractor systems may provide an affordable fix. Grants are available for small individual systems.

Maintenance and inspection of individual septic systems should be the homeowner's responsibility and not directed by the Township how or when it should be done. There are too many variables such as size of family and seasonal occupancy.