

**WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY** - The Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) is a statutorily independent entity having complete jurisdiction over all elements of the sanitary sewer system within the Town. It is responsible for the proper functioning and continuous operation of South Windsor's sanitary sewage system which is essential for public health and safety, economic development, environmental protection, and the quality of life for those living and working in our Town. The Authority consists of seven (7) members and two (2) alternates appointed by the Town Council for staggered terms of four (4) years. Its members are citizens of the Town who volunteer their time to oversee and implement policies created by the Authority to protect the operation of the sewerage system, the environment, and ultimately, public health. By contract, it is administered through the municipal staff of the Town as the most cost-efficient means of executing legal mandates and daily operations. The Authority authorizes the annual budget, levies benefit assessments, establishes fair and reasonable sewer user charges, approves connections and expansions to the system, and applies for state and federal funds as authorized by Chapter 103 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Town of South Windsor Ordinances.

The thirteen staff, including eleven licensed operators, are responsible for the treatment plant, eleven pump stations, and one hundred sixty miles of sewer pipe, including twenty miles of cross-country lines. Together the Authority and Operations staff work as stewards of the treatment system and seek to provide the best value for the ratepayers. Planning for future needs of this complex and widespread system entails an unavoidable degree of uncertainty. On site or on call 24/7, the staff must contend with unforeseen natural events, accidents, unplanned maintenance, facility repair, and even revenue fluctuations. The staff also executes capital improvement plans to address upgrades and aging infrastructure. As sewer user fees almost entirely fund the operation and maintenance of the wastewater treatment plant and collection system, the Authority establishes fair and prudent fiscal policies to support proper maintenance, upgrade, repair and replacement of the system's components.

The Authority has been able to prioritize capital expenditures to prevent significant interruptions in service through a ten-year capital improvement program. With the distribution of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, the Authority quickly allocated \$2,500,000 towards capital improvements that were completed in Fiscal Year 2022-2023. A key achievement of utilizing ARPA funding was the completion of the fourth phase of sewer improvements recommended from a 2015 sewer evaluation included the relining of 40 pipe segments and the rehabilitation of 28 manholes. ARPA funding also supported the installation of an inground 16" valve and bypass connection on the Clark Street Pump Station force main. Completion of this project was necessary in preparation for the rehabilitation of the pump station. The design of an ultraviolet disinfection system at the wastewater treatment facility was completed as well. The new system will replace the aging system which is over 20 years old and will use significantly less electric energy.

Part of the WPCA's 10 year capital improvement plan is the upgrade of the Town's three largest pump stations, Clark Street Pump Station, Benedict Drive Pump Station, and Pleasant Valley Pump Station. The Authority is working with the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to apply for a Clean Water Fund loan to fund the project.

In addition, the Authority and Operations Staff are in the design phase for improvements in odor control, beginning in Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

The Water Pollution Control Authority set the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget of \$5,607,502 of which \$4,897,001 is the operating budget. The remaining funds are allocated to debt service and capital projects. In recent years, the Authority has taken proactive measures to rehabilitate the collection system infrastructure and meet reserve funding goals to ensure the stabilization of sewer user fees. To ensure that the revenue needs of the facilities are met, the Authority approved a \$10 increase in the 2022 sewer user fees and revised the fee structure for apartment buildings to reflect a more equitable share of their sewer use.

The WPCA approved 0 residential connections and 5 commercial/industrial connections resulting in a total revenue of \$149,469. This included Connection Charges of \$80,160, Capacity Charges of \$46,169, and Benefit Assessments of \$23,140.

During the Fiscal Year 2022-2023, there were 18 new residential connections and 4 Commercial/Industrial connections made to the public sewer system, bringing the total connections to 8,672 residential and 370 commercial/industrial.

In 2015 the WPCA approved the implementation of the sewer user charge discount program for qualified residents. A qualified resident is a residential sewer user who is eligible for property tax relief under the State of Connecticut Qualifying Income for the Elderly and Totally Disabled Tax Relief Program. The application period is from February 1<sup>st</sup> through May 15<sup>th</sup>, the same period as the Town's Property Tax Relief Program. Application is made through the Human Services Department. During fiscal year 2022-2023, 201 residents participated in the program resulting in \$21,186 in discounted residential fees.

Stephen Wagner, WPCA Chair