

# TANEYTOWN WATER AND SEWER COMMITTEE

MINUTES – Tuesday, September 22, 2015

**Committee In Attendance:**

Diane Foster, Mayor Pro Tem, Committee Chair

Don Frazier, Councilman

Jackie Jones

Joe Vigliotti, Councilman

Gail Wilson

**Absent:**

Barbara Cook

Meeting convened at 10:01 AM in City Council Chambers Conference Room.

Mayor Pro Tem Diane Foster opened the meeting explaining that she had heard from City Manager Henry Heine regarding the recommendation of the committee that the Maryland Environmental Service be contacted to deliver an estimate on utilities efficiencies. An official at MES noted that the only free service provided was for compliance documentation, and all other services provided come at a cost. The committee then moved into member reports.

Gail Wilson revealed that Taneytown does not meet the 51%-threshold for low-to-moderate income, and so is ineligible for particular grants. She noted that Taneytown citizens are, however, eligible for IPP grants. The city would have to administer the program and each citizen interested in applying for an IPP grant would do so through the city offices. Wilson noted that she was awaiting a meeting with Kendra Harman at USDA for information on a grant that could potentially retroactively help pay for the wastewater treatment plant upgrade. Councilman Don Frazier indicated his willingness to accompany Wilson if she decided to meet in person with Harman.

Frazier then moved on to his report. He thanked Foster for forwarding color copies of his question-and-answer sheets to the members of the committee. Frazier noted that he has received more information from the city, and revealed that the city has taken in substantially more revenue with the higher water and sewer rates. Frazier noted that additional ways of generating revenue –such as the installation of wireless internet on water towers –is a good idea to help lower rates. Jackie

Jones questioned how the city government could not raise rates, and the current rate structure should stay in place. Councilman Joe Vigliotti noted that before deciding for or against lower rates, it would be important to see the recommended rates, and reiterated his desire to assist Frazier. Foster questioned if Frazier's recommendation would be ready by the final committee meeting, and noted again that if the recommendation needed more time, Frazier could certainly do so, presenting the recommendation to the Mayor and Council when ready. Frazier stated this would not be necessary.

Vigliotti then moved into his report. He unveiled a basic rough draft of the *Final Report*, which included eight action items discussed over the past two months by the committee. Frazier noted he did not like the eighth action item, which would advocate for continued compensation for homeowners who have been assessed estimate water and sewer rates. He stated that he did not believe there should be a special class of citizens receiving special treatment, and that all citizens should receive the same treatment. Wilson noted that it was important the city compensate those citizens who had been assessed inaccurate water and sewer rates.

Comments from the audience were then taken. Robin Frazier suggested that the eight action items in the *Final Report* might be altered to include a stipulation that the city never assess estimated bills for more than four quarters, after which time the town would no longer be allowed to collect fees from the homeowners in question. This would compel the city to take the lead in replacing failed water meter batteries. She also suggested speaking to MES again specifically on the question of efficiencies proposals, that such proposal studies were indeed free. Frazier expressed his desire to help the city manager and city attorney draft the official letter to be sent to MES.

Carl Ebaugh complimented the actions of the committee, but noted that the utilities fund owes the general fund \$2.5-million. He encouraged all committee members to attend budget meetings. He also noted that the information Frazier had gathered means nothing because it lacks all of the facts concerning the budget and the city's financial obligations and expenses.

With no further business to attend to, the meeting was adjourned at 10:53 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Vigliotti  
Taneytown Water and Sewer Committee Recording Secretary  
Taneytown City Councilman