Creation of the Regional Sewer District Meeting

January 18, 2023

6:00 pm.

Attorney John Albers welcomed the Willard City Council and Trustees from New Haven, Richmond, Greenfield and Norwich Township.

**Roll Call:** In attendance from the Willard City Council: Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, and Sattig. Olson was absent.

City Manager, Bryson Hamons and City Engineer, Dan Thornton were also present.

**New Haven Trustees**: Dave Montgomery and Tom Kennard

**Richmond Trustees**: Mark Martin, Ben Kochel, Neal Weaver

**Norwich Trustees**: David Homan, Clifford Martin, Richard Wiles

**Greenfield Trustees**: Jerry Tanner, Jeremiah Huffman

Attorney Albers stated for the record that a majority of Council and Township Trustees are present.

Huron County’s Assistant Prosecutor, Randal Strickler was present.

**Special Order of Business:** Creation of the Regional Sewer District

Also, for the record, a notice of this meeting was published once a week for two consecutive weeks in the Norwalk Reflector. These publications occurred on December 30, 2022, and January 6, 2023.

**Statement of Purpose:**  The purpose of tonight’s meeting is to present a preliminary study of reasons for the proposed establishment of the Southern 5 Sewer District, and to receive public comments on the study. An Ordinance will be presented to all entities approving the filing of the petition in the Common Pleas Court of Huron County to establish the district and signed petition. The statute requires a public meeting to talk about the reasons why we are forming the district and receive public comment. Note that the statute says public comment not questions however, a few questions are welcomed.

**Background information and Benefits of a Regional Sewer District:**  The City and Townships have been studying the sewer needs of the area for many years. The City has been responsible for and operating sewer facilities owned by the City and serving areas around the City and extra treatment capacity is available. Ongoing discussions have occurred relating to the best method for providing sewer services in particular to Holiday Lakes subdivision and Celeryville. In reviewing current and future both the City and Townships agree that the most cost-effective method to serve such areas would be through a single entity, a regional sewer district. Such regionalization achieves the best economic outcome for the customers by achieving cost efficiencies and economies of scale. Chapter 6119 of the Ohio Revised Code was created by the Ohio General Assembly for the very purpose of allowing multiple political subdivisions to combine their operations and systems under the auspices of a single entity, that being a regional district. The creation of the district which will serve as a single entity owning, operating, and constructing future need facilities. A district will qualify as an applicant for grants and low interest loans from the U.S. government, the State of Ohio, and the OEPA. The City will operate and maintain the facilities by contract with the district that is formed.

The Holiday Lakes area was studied by the engineering firm GRW Engineering, Inc. and that study held that there are significant cost savings by the entities forming a district that would serve the Holiday Lakes area. Holiday Lakes consists of 1,348 platted lots. Creating the District would promote and enable the provision of public sewer services to current and future homes constructed. Failing septic systems and the replacement costs of such systems strongly favors regionalization, which is also promoted by OEPA as the best solution.

 Celeryville consists of eighty-five homes, two churches, one school, and two vegetable farms, which would all be served by the regional district.

 As of now, only the Holiday Lakes and Celeryville locations will be serviced. Anyone wanting to enter the district would need to file a petition. The District, once created, will have the authority to construct the necessary sewer systems and associated facilities as needed. It is anticipated that properties located within the district would be required to connect to the sewer facility. Also, the District Board will consist of five board members, one person elected by City Council and one by each of the Townships.

**Organization Procedure:** Petitioners will prepare a Plan of Operation for the Court to review. This document will include the results of the study of the demographics and characteristics of the proposed District boundary area and the various alternatives for providing sewer services to the District boundary area. The Plan of Operation will also provide information regarding estimated costs for the various types of systems. Once formed, the District will be a political subdivision of the State of Ohio and will be empowered under law to plan, construct and operate central sewer services, and apply for grant and loan assistance to fund such projects. The District will be governed by a Board which will be comprised of five persons. The District will be a separate entity, independent of the City and Townships, but the City and Townships will appoint all of the members of the District Board of Trustees.

**Ordinances & Resolutions:**

**Ordinance No. 5935-23**

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE COMMENCEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS TO CREATE A REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT PURSUANT TO OHIO REVISED CODE CHAPTER 6119 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY,** was presented by Council President for its first reading by title only. This was done by the Council Clerk.

Moved by Sattig, seconded by Babcock to strike the term “Declaring an Emergency” from the Ordinance. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, and Sattig voted yea. Elmlinger, Johnson, and McKenzie voted nay. Motion failed.

Moved by Babcock, seconded by McKenzie that the Ordinance be declared an emergency measure and the rule requiring it to lay over for 7 days be waived. In a called vote, Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, and McKenzie voted yea. Sattig voted nay. Motion carried.

Moved by Babcock, seconded by McKenzie that the Ordinance be adopted. In a called vote Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, and Sattig voted yea. Motion adopted.

Moved by and seconded by a Trustee of each Township that a Petition in the creation of a Regional Sewer District be filed. Each Trustee voted yea. Motion adopted.

New Haven Township – Passes

Richmond Township- Passes

Greenfield Township- Passes

Norwich Township- Passes

Moved by Babcock, seconded by McKenzie that Council adjourn. In a called vote therein, Babcock, Daniel, Elmlinger, Johnson, McKenzie, and Sattig voted yea. Motion carried. New Haven, Norwich, Greenfield, and Richmond Township moved to adjourn, all voted all aye.

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 President of Council Clerk of Council