

Minutes

Lemoyne Borough Sewer Committee

July 14, 2021 6:30 pm

1. A meeting of the Lemoyne Borough Sewer Committee was called to order Wednesday July 14th at 6:34 pm at Lemoyne Borough Building
2. Attendees – Committee Members – Gale Gallo, Gene Koontz, Jesse Monoski
Staff – Cindy Foster Borough Manager, Bob Oakes Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent
Public – John Carroll, Dennis McGee, Steve Spangler all with Lemoyne Municipal Authority,
Mayor Dave Beasley
3. Approval of Minutes – Chair Koontz noted that the prior meeting (8-15-2019) minutes were approved/accepted by Council 9-19-2019
4. Unfinished Business – none
5. New Business
 - a. *Revision to Ordinances*
 - i. *420-1 Definitions – Service Lateral and House Connection*
 - ii. *420-11 Maintenance, Repair and Replacement is Owner's Responsibility*

Mr. Oakes presented a proposal that he had made earlier in writing to Borough Council to modify the ordinances listed above to reassign responsibility for the service lateral (that portion within the street) from the Borough to the property owner. Currently the property owner is responsible for that portion (house connection) from the building to the curb line or property line. He indicated that most local municipalities have made this change. He indicated that although generally only a few per year, repairs to service laterals are difficult to accurately budget and can impact staffing plans. He further indicated that insurance is available to residents to partially offset costs.

Mr. McGee spoke in opposition to this change. He indicated that the costs can be unfairly allocated among residents depending on the location of the sewer pipe within the street and the nature of the street. He also indicated that most insurance coverages would not cover the entire costs for both the house connection and the service lateral. He further stated that the median income in Lemoyne is lower than in many of our neighboring municipalities so we may need to have different rules for residents' responsibilities.

Mr. Spangler also spoke in opposition. He felt that it is not a good time to be placing more financial responsibilities on the citizens.

Mayor Beasley also was opposed to the change. He indicated that Borough trees can cause issues with service laterals and house connections and wondered who would be responsible. Ms. Foster indicated that if a Borough tree caused the problem, the Borough would accept responsibility.

Mr. Monoski indicated that he felt the Borough is in a better position to manage the costs of service lateral repairs than residents.

During discussion, the Committee recognized Mr. Oakes valid concerns with the current policy yet also agreed that the concerns expressed in the public comments were valid. Not seeing an overwhelming advantage to either position the Committee agreed the policy and ordinances should not be changed at this time. The Committee asked Mr. Oakes and Ms. Foster to keep records of the number and type of service lateral repairs, staff time involved and costs of repairs for a two-year period. The Committee will revisit in 2023 with more complete data available.

Motion:

Ms. Gallo moved, and Mr. Monoski seconded to recommend to Council that no changes be made to Ordinances 420-1 and 420-11 at this time, and further, that staff monitor the number, type, costs and staff time for service lateral repairs for a two-year period, and further, that the Sewer Committee shall revisit the proposed changes following the two year period.

b. Review programmed 2022 rate increase (1.75%)

Chair Koontz noted that based on prior Council actions a general sewer rate increase of 1.75% will become effective January 1, 2022. He noted that this increase was postponed from January 2021 when the economy was very weak. He indicated that recent Borough tax and fee revenues indicate a general economic recovery is underway, and that increasing inflation will affect expenses, so is in favor of letting the increase stand. Ms. Gallo felt that the recovery within the Borough was not yet strong enough and at this time would not support the increase. Mr. Monoski would prefer to wait until the fall when more revenue and expense numbers are available to make a final decision. Mayor Beasley remarked that smaller, regular increases are preferred to sporadic large increases. The Committee agreed by consensus to not make a

recommendation at this time and have the entire council address the issue during budget preparation.

6. Next Meeting – will be scheduled as needed
7. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm