

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING & SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 20, 2021 AT 7:30PM

RECEIVED
@ 8:30 am
OCT 12 2021
Wendy Gannon Lionetti
BY TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
RIDGEFIELD CT

Notice is hereby given that a formal Public Hearing and Special Town Meeting for residents will be held on Wednesday October 20, 2021 at 7:30pm in the auditorium at Veterans Park Elementary School located at 8 Governor Street. Ridgefield, CT 06877. The Purpose of this Public Hearing and Special Town Meeting is to discuss and vote on the allocation of the American Rescue Plan Act funds (ARPA) for the purpose of partially funding the construction of a sewer forced main from Route 7 District two to South Street District one sewer plant. Amount of allocation not to exceed \$2,922,477. See the Town calendar for details of this Special Town Meeting. www.ridgefieldct.org


Rudy Marconi
First Selectman



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
Office of the First Selectman

October 22, 2021

Wendy Gannon Lionetti
Town Clerk

This letter is to affirm that the legal public notices for the Public Town Hearing & Special Town Meeting held on Wednesday October 20, 2021 appeared in *Ridgefield Press* on October 14th, 2021.


Amy Escribano
First Selectman's Office

October 20, 2021 Special Town Meeting Minutes

The First Selectman, Rudy Marconi, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm in the Veteran's Park School Auditorium. Mr. Marconi asked the audience to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

R. Marconi stated that the first item of business was to appoint a Moderator. **Maureen Kozlark moved and Michael Rettger seconded the motion to appoint Ed Tyrrell Moderator for the Special Town Meeting. The "Aye" votes were unanimous and Ed Tyrrell was appointed Moderator.**

Ed Tyrrell called the meeting to order and requested a motion to appoint a secretary. **Barbara Manners moved and Maureen Kozlark seconded the motion to appoint Wendy Gannon Lionetti, Town Clerk, secretary. The "Aye" votes were unanimous and Wendy Gannon Lionetti was appointed secretary.**

Ed Tyrrell read the legal notice of the meeting that appears on page 397 to consider the allocation (not to exceed \$2,922,477) of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the purpose of partially funding the construction of a sewer forced main from Route 7 District Two to South Street District One sewer plant.

Amy Siebert, Chairperson of the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) gave an overview using the information from the slides shown below:

Upgrade the Town's Wastewater Facilities to:

- Address New State Imposed Effluent Limits on Nitrogen and Phosphorus

- Meet 20 Year Projected Flows and Loadings
- Address Aged and Worn Equipment
- Improve Energy Efficiency

Facilities Plan Prepared in 2017

- Goal to Select a Cost-Effective Plan for the Upgrade of the Wastewater Facilities
- Recommended to Consolidate 2 WWTFs at South Street and Increase Level of Treatment

Project Description

Two Construction Contracts:

1. Upgrade South Street WWTF to 1.12 MGD Capacity – (Currently Approx. 50% Complete).
2. Construct New Route 7 Pump Station, 3 Mile Force Main, and Decommission/Demolish Route 7 WWTF (bids received May 18, 2021)

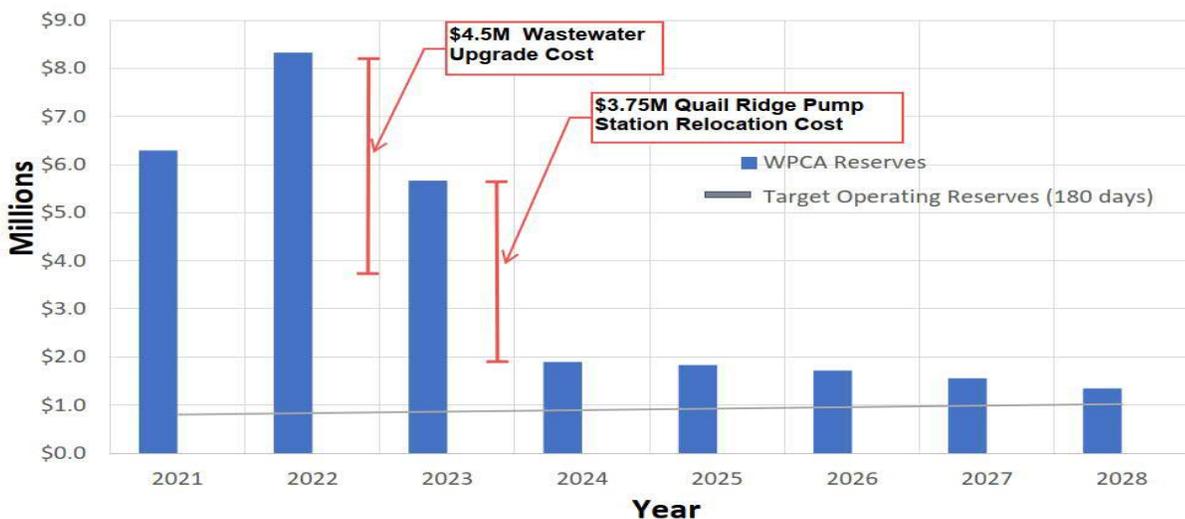
Route 7 Project – Why Are Additional Funds Needed?

- Bids Higher than Estimated
- Estimated Project Cost of \$48 Million Prepared at 60% Design Completion
- ❓ Developed Summer 2018 for November 2018 Voter Referendum.
- ❓ South Street WWTF Upgrade Construction Contract Award Required by July 1, 2019 to Secure DEEP 50% Phosphorus Grant.
- Route 7 Bids Significantly Impacted By Covid
- ❓ 40% Above Estimated Cost.
- ❓ Overestimates of 30% - 80% seen on Other Infrastructure Projects.
- Ability of Town to Completely Fund Project at Award Required to Qualify for DEEP Funding Assistance
- ❓ Funding assistance to subsequently reduce Town share.

Project Cost and Funding Summary

Item	Original Estimated Cost	Actual/Proposed Cost	Difference
Costs			
South Street WWTF Upgrade	\$40,500,000	\$45,759,382	(\$ 5,259,382)
Route 7 Pump Station, Force Main and WWTF Decommissioning	\$ 7,500,000	\$ 9,663,095	(\$ 2,163,095)
Total	\$48,000,000	\$55,422,477	(\$ 7,422,477)
Funding			
Clean Water Fund Borrowing – WPCA Portion	\$28,500,000	\$28,500,000	-
Clean Water Fund Borrowing – Town Portion	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 8,000,000	-
DEEP Clean Water Fund Grant	\$11,500,000	\$11,500,000	-
WPCA Fund Balance	-	\$ 4,500,000	(\$ 4,500,000)
Proposed ARPA Funds	-	\$ 2,922,477	(\$ 2,922,477)
Total	\$48,000,000	\$55,422,477	(\$ 7,422,477)

WPCA Operating Reserves



Route 7 Project – Why Use ARPA Funds?

- Use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds:
 - No Increase in Tax Rate or Sewer Use Fee
 - ARPA Funds Targeted for COVID Related Costs Including Water, Sewer and Broadband Infrastructure
- WPCA will Continue to Seek Additional Grant Funds, and the Amount of ARPA Funds Would be Reduced by Any Additional Grant Funds Secured
- Use of ARPA Funds in the Amount of \$2,922,477 Requires Town Meeting Approval

What if ARPA Funds are Not Approved?

Project Would Need to be Deferred and Rebid

- Low Bidder's Bid Expires in November.
- Rebidding Anticipated to Increase Bid Price.
- Loss of Current Favorable Bid Price (next bidder ~ \$1.7M higher).
- COVID Impacts on Construction Costs Continue.
- Loss of DEEP Clean Water Fund Grant Assistance.
- DEEP Grant Amount Anticipated to be Between \$900,000 and \$1.5 Million.
- New Route 7 WWTF Interim Upgrades Required (\$) to Meet its Effluent Permit.
- Town/WPCA Exposed to DEEP Enforcement Action for Permit Violations.

Bottom Line: A Vote Against Using ARPA Funds for this Project is A Vote to Increase Sewer Use Rates and/or Taxes

Moderator Ed Tyrrell then asked for public input during the public hearing portion of the evening (found under separate cover in the 10/20/21 Board of Selectmen meeting minutes).

The Town Meeting resumed at 8:00 pm and the floor opened for discussion:

- Susan Cocco, 513 Branchville Road, applauds the use of ARPA funds for the good of our town.
- Russ Porter, 14 Pilgrim Hill Road, stated he is in favor of using the ARPA funds; it is the best option on the table. Requested the BOS, BOF & WPCA look at the process that got us here.
- Mike Rettger, 25 Fairview Avenue and BOF member, stated he is in favor of using the ARPA funds; the project is an appropriate use of these funds.
- Geoffrey Morris, Economic & Community Development Commission (ECDC) Chair, stated he seconds Mike Rettger's comments. It is the best solution for this problem.
- Sean Connelly, 550 Barrack Hill Road resident & BOS member (absent from meeting), sent an email which was read by Moderator Ed Tyrrell: I fully support the use of ARPA funds for this project.
- Steve Jameson, 153 West Mountain Road, stated that the ARPA money is meant to benefit all residents and if it is used for this project, it will benefit a small group of people of our community. Why not use the WPCA reserve funds to pay for the project instead?
- Corinne Ketchum, 70 Fulling Mill Lane and WPCA member, she fully supports the use of ARPA funds for this long overdue project. At the end of the day it will be paid by tax dollars; it is critical infrastructure for our town.
- Glori Norwitt, 143 High Ridge Avenue & ECDC member, supports the use of ARPA funds. She is disappointed that we have to use these funds, but we will all indirectly benefit from them being used for this project.
- Andrew Okrongly, 34 Tanglewood Court and BOF member, supports the use of the ARPA funds rather than bonding the project. Interest rates are increasing.
- Robert Lavelle, 38 Aspen Mill Road, stated he has a septic system and fully supports this project. It must be done; it is not optional.
- Ed Tyrrell, 17 Pond Road, stated he is against using ARPA money to fund this project. When the original funding was requested in 2018, we were told no additional money would be requested of the general taxpayers. This request violates the spirit of our charter. I will vote against the use of ARPA funds for this project.
- Carol Mark, 27 Fairview Avenue, stated it would be fiscally irresponsible to not approve this request. We don't have children in school, but pay taxes that support our schools and we do so gladly. This will benefit all our town.
- Jackie Putman, 16 Kiah's Brook Lane, agreed completely with Ed Tyrrell. I do not support this request.
- Bob Hebert, 58 Prospect Street and BOS member, stated that in August he voted against using this ARPA money. After meeting with WPCA members, the First Selectman and the Town Controller, it was made clear that this is a project that must be done and this funding is an appropriate source.

- Greg Kabasakalian, 2 Washington Street & BOF member, stated that he voted against this as a BOF member because this money was intended for Covid and thought we should keep our powder dry. But this is a necessary upgrade and so I am going to support this reluctantly.

The Moderator asked for a motion to approve. **Susan Cocco moved and Corinne Ketchum seconded the motion to approve the allocation (not to exceed \$2,922,477) of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the purpose of partially funding the construction of a sewer forced main from Route 7 District Two to South Street District One sewer plant. The “Aye” votes carried, and the motion was approved.**

Rudy Marconi moved and Corinne Ketchum seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The “Aye” votes were unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Gannon Lionetti, Town Clerk