



**Water and Sewer Systems
Town of Fallsburg, New York
Presented to Town of Fallsburg Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board
Responses to Questions at the May 9, 2022 Presentation**

DRINKING WATER:

1) What Engineering Reports were referenced in the May 9, 2022 Presentation?

The following reports were used as a reference for the “State of the Water and Sewer Systems” presentation on May 9, 2022:

“Sanitary Sewer Master Plan Update” by Camp Dresser & McGee (CDM) dated July 2006 and “Water System Improvements” by Barton & Loguidice (B&L) dated November 2012. Copies of these reports may be viewed at the Clerk’s Office, Town Hall, 19 Railroad Plaza, South Fallsburg.

2) How does the Town determine if there are leaks in the water piping?

On daily basis the Town Water Department monitors the water level in the tanks and pressure in the lines. A leak is evident if the water level in a tank begins to drop or can’t be maintained under normal pumping and consumer use. A visual inspection of the tank and adjacent piping is conducted. In the past, tanks have developed leaks in the walls or floor which have been repaired. Leaks in the piping often present themselves on the ground surface in normally dry areas. Surface water can be tested for presence of chlorine to differentiate between storm water and treated potable water. If a leak can’t be found visually or located via a pressure loss in a section of line, the Town engages a leak detection service with equipment to hear the leak underground. The Town is responsible for the water lines from the curb stop to the main. The homeowner is responsible for all lines and equipment from the curb stop to the house. The Town fixes all of the lines they are responsible for. Major projects are designed and bid out accordingly.

3) Is there a hydrant replacement program?

The Town has approximately 598 hydrants in the water systems. Hydrant assemblies are expensive to purchase and require considerable labor time to install. The Town typically replaces 6 to 10 hydrants on a yearly basis. Hydrants that leak or do not function properly are given priority over replacing older hydrants that still function. Staffing obligations for regular maintenance and emergencies hinders the time allocated to the replacement program. To be proactive, the Town has been working with a third-party hydrant contractor to try to negotiate a replacement program for hydrants in order to replace more hydrants each year. This is still in the negotiation stages.

4) Does the Town have PFAS in the drinking water?

In 2020, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) requested testing for PFAS for all public water supplies. The Town tested slightly above the allowable limit per NYSDOH for the substance in one active well. Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of manmade chemicals that include Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA). Companies used PFAS for a variety of products including: stain and water-resistant fabrics, non-stick products, polishes, waxes, paints, cleaning products and fire fighting foams. The production of PFAS substances began phasing out in 2000 and were prohibited for use in 2012.

The Town has worked closely with the NYSDOH to develop a plan to reduce the PFAS in the drinking water to allowable levels. The plan will be implemented this year. Currently to confirm the water is safe to consume, it is being tested by the Town and the results reviewed by the NYSDOH at regular basis.

WASTEWATER (SEWER):

5) What are the Operation and Maintenance Plant Costs (O&M) for the South Fallsburg Wastewater Treatment Plant (SFWWTP/WHOWWTP)?

The current operation and maintenance (O&M) costs for the South Fallsburg Wastewater Treatment Plant (SFWWTP/WHOWWTP) are being reviewed as part of the current study to update the plant. A comparison of O&M costs between the existing facility and the proposed treatment plant will be provided once the NYSDEC issues a SPDES permit with new effluent discharge limits. The Town cannot accurately calculate O&M costs until the limits are received. Once the new effluent limits are issued, Delaware Engineering, Keystone Engineering and the Town of Fallsburg staff will evaluate operation and maintenance costs. All project cost estimates will have a built-in contingency (usually 20% of construction costs) which covers incidental expenses that might arise during the life of the construction project. This is a standard practice for infrastructure upgrade projects such as this.

6) Can developments open if sewer is not available?

Developments within the existing sewer district are required to connect to the municipal sewer. Developments outside the district may request an extension of the district to the Town Board or they may also install their own sewage treatment system but must have NYSDEC approval. NYSDEC reviews all projects requiring sewer connections and treatment. It is not in the Planning Board's authority to deny connections or individual treatment systems. If capacity is not available for new development construction then the Town may not have to supply services, until capacity is available.

- 7) **With regard to the WHO plant, they said that the MBR system works better in warm temperatures and less so in cold temperatures. What happens if all of the seasonal residences start being used year-round? Will the new design be able to keep up with the demand all year, especially in the winter months?**

The WWTP will potentially be permitted to treat 4.5 MGD year-round, which means all equipment at the WWTP will need to be able to handle that flow at any time. Generally speaking, the discharge concentration is the same in the winter versus the summer. The plant operator can make adjustments to the biological treatment process to account for higher flows. These plants are very robust in being able to accommodate seasonal fluctuations in flows and that is why we chose the MBR process for the WWTP upgrade.

Right now, the demand is for new dwelling units that are only occupied on a seasonal basis, but all of those communities have the potential for year-round occupancy in the future. The SPDES permit is not a seasonal permit, it is a maximum permitted capacity for any time during the year. Generally speaking, because these types of projects are financed over a 30-year period and that is the average life expectancy of the equipment and facilities, we try to anticipate future demand and development for that same time period and that is factored into the new permit and the future upgrades and equipment capacities.

An overall growth factor is taken into account as well as projects that have received Planning Board approval but are not yet constructed or connected to the sewer systems, as well as projects currently under review.

- 8) **Considering that WHO plant is already operating at capacity, and there will be at least a 2-year time lag, Delaware Engineering indicated that there will need to be additional chemical treatment required in the meantime? Has that been factored into the SEQR process?**

There will NOT be an increase in chemical treatment during construction or after construction is complete. This question has been asked many times and may have been mis-stated in the past.

- 9) **At a meeting last year, regarding the WHO sewer plant and increasing its capacity, it was said that the Town may have to go against the DEC regulations or apply for a waiver of some kind during the construction period? Is that true?**

The NYSDEC has not completed its review of the Town's SPDES permit application, because they are waiting for the Town to complete and submit additional information, including a mussel survey of the Neversink River. The new SPDES permit will have additional requirements and the new WWTP processes will improve nutrient removal – this means less contaminants (Nitrogen & Phosphorus) in the Neversink River. The Town will act in accordance with DEC guidelines during construction.

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT:

10) What is the projected growth in Fallsburg?

The projected growth for full-time residents and summer residents has many variables, and an exact projection has not been calculated. However, there is a trend indicating an increase in summer residents since 2020 and it appears that summer residents also occupy their homes at other times during the year on weekends and holidays. As indicated in the presentation data, the Town is tracking the future demand for water and sewer via the applications for projects at the Planning Board. The increase in demand for both utilities for projects under construction and projects in planning is documented in the presentation.

11) Should the Town consider a development moratorium?

The Town Board has the authority to issue a moratorium which would temporarily stop future development projects. The Town is evaluating the issues with the water and sewer systems in regard to capacity and development.

USER RATES AND DEVELOPMENT FEES

12) What are the current water charges?

The following are the current rates charged to consumers within and outside the Water District:

<u>Quantity / quarter</u>	<u>User Rates:</u>	
	<u>In District:</u>	<u>Out of District:</u>
0 to 15,000 gallons	\$43.86	\$109.65
15,000 to 2,000,000 gallons	\$2.96/1,000 gallons	\$7.40/1,000 gallons
2,000,000 and over	\$1.89/1,000 gallons	\$4.69/1,000 gallons

13) Do larger water consumers pay lower rates?

Please see rate table in Question 12.

14) How are the Water and Sewer Department funds administered?

The Water and Sewer Department funds are separate accounts used for capital improvements and operation and maintenance of the systems. Improvements that the funds have been recently used for include two new municipal wells, new water mains improving water flow and upgrades to the sewage treatment plants. New York State conducts a yearly independent audit on the Town's finances which includes the administering of these funds.

15) How are the Recreational Development Funds administered?

The Recreational Development fees are utilized for park recreation and golf course improvements as well as equipment. Some recent improvements include a new pavilion, improvements to the Morningside Park pool, and improvements to the golf course irrigation.

16) Development fees?

The Town is currently researching development Fees that could be charged to the developments within and outside the water and sewer districts for increases in demand for either or both utilities. Further review is required prior to consideration by the Town Board.

17) What Federal and State funding is available to help pay for infrastructure upgrades?

The Town monitors the Federal and State funding opportunities on a continual basis. Federal funding is typically administered by the State. Funding is typically in the form of grants with or without a matching component. The Town applies for funding based on the specific criteria of the grant and competes with other municipalities across the State. The applications are very competitive and often costly to complete. Some funding applications include New York State Consolidated Funding Application (NYSCFA) which includes Engineering Planning Grants and Community Development Block Grants. Also included under the CFA process are NYSDEC grant opportunities and grants through Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC). As indicated above, the Town and the Town's Consultants continually monitor the grant opportunities offered. The Town was awarded a grant to study the water infiltration into the sewer system along the Laurel Avenue corridor last year. This year the Town is seeking a WIIA grant to construct (2) 1-million-gallon water tanks to add to the system. Next year the Town will seek grants for the WHO WWTP upgrade.