



## **Wastewater Questions and Answers**

### **August, 2017**

#### ***New Information – What's Changed?***

##### ***1. Why has Council decided to expand the scope of the Municipal Utility for the Local Wastewater Line?***

As we shared in our October 2016 Wastewater Newsletter, Council has been reviewing a number of funding options in an effort to minimize the financial impact of hook-up costs for residents. The Building Canada Grant, which was approved at a funding level of two thirds of the cost estimate to construct the local wastewater line, can be applied towards only those assets which will become part of the Municipal Utility and property of the Summer Village – essentially everything up to the residential property line. However, if the Summer Village expands the utility to include some of the on lot costs, available Grant funds may be applied.

##### ***2. How is the Summer Village going to finance this expanded scope?***

As a Municipal Utility, the Summer Village is able to obtain financing at a very competitive rate. Through the implementation of a Local Improvement Levy, we can recoup the costs over a 25 year period. Residents will pay the Levy each year along with their taxes. Any property owner who would rather repay the hook-up costs in an upfront lump sum payment rather than the annual Local Improvement Levy will be welcome to do so. Information regarding the estimated cost of the Local Improvement Levy has been sent to affected Owners

##### ***3. How does this impact my hook-up costs?***

As the Municipal Utility will not include the cost to purchase or modify a holding tank or to provide electrical service (120 V) to the tank, property owners will still be responsible for these hook-up costs. Also, in the event that you have an unusual tank depth or location any incremental cost associated with that circumstance will be your responsibility. In addition, while any excavations required to complete hook-ups will be filled in, final landscaping and related surface costs will be the responsibility of the property owner.

##### ***4. How will the hook-ups be managed? Will I need to find a contractor or will the Summer Village manage the contract?***

The Summer Village will manage the contract for the residential hook-ups.

**5. *What do I have to do to maintain the equipment on my property?***

With the Municipal Utility now owning the pump, valves and lines on your property, the Summer Village will be responsible for maintaining this equipment. We will secure the services of a reliable contractor to perform the maintenance, thereby obtaining competitive rates, consistent work standards and economies of scale. These costs will be included in the annual operating budget for the local line.

**6. *How much will the operating costs for the Regional and Local Lines be?***

The Regional Line will be managed under a Commission comprised of representatives from each of the participating municipalities. The commission will ensure that costs are fairly allocated. The current estimate for Regional Line costs is about \$75 per year per lot. This includes the costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the lines, pump stations and lagoon; capital replacement costs, and administration. For comparison purposes, there was a \$122 wastewater fee included in your overall tax bill, prior to construction of the Regional Line. This charge will apply to all taxable properties in the Summer Village as it is considered to be an infrastructure cost.

The Local Lines will be managed as a Municipal Utility. Each municipality will be responsible for the operating and maintenance costs for their lines. Local Line operating costs include the operation, maintenance, capital replacement and administration of these lines and are expected to be less than \$195 per lot per year per wastewater producing lot.

Therefore, the total operating costs for the Local and Regional Line for wastewater producing lots are currently estimated to be less than \$23 per month or about \$270 per year per lot. This is in addition to the Local Improvement Levy noted above.

**7. *What about my direct on-lot costs?***

We are estimating that direct on-lot costs to homeowners will be approximately \$20 per year. This includes electrical costs (\$5 per year) and a pump out every ten years (\$15 per year).

**8. *What is the status of the Project?***

The South Pigeon Lake Wastewater Project is rapidly moving forward. The design for the Regional Line Phase 2, which includes a pipeline extending from the Village at Pigeon Lake (VPL), along Hwy 13 and then north along Hwy 771 to a new pump station is complete.

Construction work for the local collection systems has commenced for some of the summer villages. The final design work for the Poplar Bay/Grandview system is complete and the tender package was issued July 25, 2017 with a closing date of August 17, 2017. We will be able to provide more detailed information at the Annual Information Meeting on Saturday September 2, 2017.

## ***Previously Communicated Information - What Hasn't Changed?***

### ***9. How does a low pressure STEP system work?***

As previously communicated, the engineering firm has recommended a STEP – sewage treatment effluent pump –system be installed. This is a low pressure system that requires a two compartment, two access tank. Components include the municipal line along the roadway, curb stop valves between the road and the tanks, check valves, pumps with filters and pump casings (the biotube) in the second compartment of the tank and an electrical control panel for the pump unit.

Wastewater from your home goes into the first tank compartment. In that compartment, solid wastes are “digested” and a small amount of indigestible solids sink to the bottom as sludge. The liquid component then flows into the second chamber. The pump is installed in this chamber and the effluent is pumped through the low pressure line to the pump station.

### ***10. Will I have to get a new tank?***

If you have a compliant 2 compartment tank with 2 accesses at the surface (risers) and a capacity of at least 1200 gallons, your tank can be hooked to the system.

Competent single chamber tanks may need a pump vault or secondary tank installed in close proximity to the existing tank to provide the second chamber.

Tanks will be inspected prior to construction to determine if a new tank will be required. If you have a relatively new tank, it is likely to meet the requirements. However, many older tanks continue to remain in good condition and will also be acceptable.

For residents who qualify for Seniors Special Assistance, sewers and septic tanks qualify under that program. For more information see <http://www.seniors-housing.alberta.ca/documents/SNA-Information-Booklet.pdf>

### ***11. Do I still have to pump out my tank?***

The first stage of two compartment tanks on the STEP system will need to be pumped out occasionally. Our estimate is that the pump outs will be required in about 5-15 years depending on the volumes of wastewater and the types of materials allowed into the tank (refer to question #9).

### ***12. So what will my total annual operating cost be with the new system?***

The total cost for a wastewater producing lot including the Regional, Local, and on-lot costs is estimated at \$270 per year, or \$23 per month. Based on this, anyone who pumps out more than 2 times per year will be saving money by using the system.

### ***13. Do I have to hook up?***

Poplar Bay's Wastewater Bylaw # 232 states that all wastewater producing lots must connect to the wastewater system within one year. A wastewater producing lot is defined as a parcel of land on which a dwelling, structure, or other accommodation exists in which wastewater is produced for the purpose of sanitary sewer and other daily needs. Further, the parcel of land must also have a cistern, well or other water supply.

### ***14. What happens if I build a new home in the future?***

As part of the development permitting for the new home, a holding tank permit will be issued. Before the tank can be connected to the system you will be expected to pay a connection fee to the Summer Village to cover the cost of the lines, pumps and related equipment. This fee will vary in the future based on the costs of the installation at that time.

### ***15. Why do we need a wastewater system?***

The Councils of the Municipalities on the South Side of Pigeon Lake have been working on a wastewater system for many years. The project has been discussed in a variety of forums including Annual Information Meetings, newsletters, the website and Council meetings. A wastewater system will provide benefits in several aspects of our lives at the lake. They include Health and Safety, Environmental Protection, Convenience, and Social Impacts.

**Health and Safety-** A well-managed and watertight wastewater system will reduce exposure to toxic waste materials that are evident on private property when tanks are pumped and along roadways if there is leakage from the sewage trucks as well as eliminating all septic fields. In addition, potential exposure of water wells to wastewater contamination will be significantly reduced.

**Environmental Protection** – This closed system will reduce run off and leakage of wastewater into Pigeon Lake, demonstrating our commitment as ratepayers and Councils to the health of the lake by taking the steps that we can to reduce nutrient build up.

**Convenience** – This system will provide the on-going disposal of wastewater at an approved treatment facility for many years to come. You will no longer need to worry about tank levels and company coming; measuring of tank levels to plan for a pump out when you will be at the property; waiting around for the truck to arrive; the tank needing to be pumped out on a Sunday or holiday when trucks may not be available.

**Social and Economic Impacts** – There will be no offensive odours to offend guests or neighbours when a pump out may be required on a hot summer day. Road maintenance and repair costs will be significantly reduced as Wastewater truck traffic becomes negligible.