

Comments to the Northampton County Board of Supervisors, 1/14/2014,  
by David Boyd (similar comments were made to the PSA, 12/17/2013)

- 1) Is the additional \$70,000 in funding being proposed by the PSA an addition to the earlier funding of \$90,000 the BOS spent earlier out of taxpayers money, without the county residents being made aware of it (apparently even the BOS chairman wasn't aware of it)?
- 2) Is there a plan to recoup this \$70,000 and the earlier \$90,000 from the proposed commercial customers and re-pay it to the County taxpayers?
- 3) Does this project include engineering for an alternate route to the Bayview treatment facility? If not, why not? That's a much shorter run to an underutilized facility – costs should be much cheaper.
- 4) Why is this engineering plan not designed to include the Town of Cheriton? Any central sewer design in this vicinity needs to include Cheriton. Studies of fecal pollution in Kings Creek indicated the majority of that pollution was coming from Cheriton.
- 5) The survey for the interest in this project is inherently flawed. It assumed anyone who didn't say no was interested in hooking up, thus skewing the results to show more were interested than is likely the case. It would have been just as valid, perhaps more so, to assume those that didn't say they were interested would NOT be potential customers. The survey and analysis was conducted with inherently biased assumptions, and is therefore not a valid estimate of interest, as presented.
- 6) Has the total cost of this project been calculated, so we know what the potential indebtedness to the county residents will be?
- 7) If it is assumed the commercial customers will eventually pay for it, has a valid study of the number of customers, versus the total cost of the project been made, to determine if this project is within the realm of reason for those customers to pay that cost?
- 8) Remember the County population is shrinking and has done so consistently for 80 years. If, in 50 years we have 1/2 the current number of residents, the cost per resident will be twice what it would be with current population numbers. Furthermore, virtually every project such as a regional central sewer system has built in assumptions of substantial population growth. That would mean in 50 years there would be perhaps twice the population to pay the costs, so the cost per person would be 1/2 the number based on current population numbers. If you compare per capita cost estimates for an area with a shrinking population like Northampton County, to the estimates normally used for this type of project, we may be paying 4 times as much per person as in the usual sewer project.

Ultimately, Northampton County residents are liable for whatever project costs the PSA is unable to fulfill. Given the way real estate and other taxes have increased so dramatically in the past 10 years, I don't think we can afford another project to saddle the residents with far more debt than the average sewer project customer.

It is also VERY important to keep in mind, central sewers are generally needed to offset increasing sewage load based on constantly growing population - Northampton County does not have those needs.

Roughly 150 people turned out at the Cheriton PSA public comment session, and another 100 or so turned out to tell the BOS what they thought. Well over 90 % of them were opposed to this project. It seems to have made little difference what their opinions were.

Since then, a general election ousted the Chairman of the BOS, in favor of someone inclined to think more reasonably on issues like this. I believe this sewer project had a major influence on those election results.

Please heed the wishes of Northampton County residents to halt this sewer project.

Sincerely,  
David Boyd