



Town of Eliot
Public Works Department

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Joel C. Moulton, Public Works Director

February 11, 2015

To: Eliot Town Charter Commission
Re: Article 5 "Wastewater"
From: Joel C. Moulton, Public Works Director

I have had a chance to ponder the suggestion to eliminate Article 5, Wastewater from the Towns Charter. I would like to provide some additional input as it relates to why I feel that would not be a good idea for the Town of Eliot. My comments are as follows:

- 1) The sewer system within the Town of Eliot is the only public utility the Town owns. It is a standalone utility which is operated and maintained without impacting municipal property taxes. It is strictly a user based system fully funded by the sewer users. The sewer department is operated financially by an Enterprise type account.
- 2) It should be noted that the sewer system is one of the Towns many departments however, it has some unique management issues. All departments are under the management of the Town Manager, but in accordance with the Inter-Municipal Agreement and Sewer System Ordinance there are certain decisions and responsibilities that rest solely on the Sewer Superintendent (DPW Director) that can only be appealed or overturned by the Board of Selectmen. An example of an item is the refusal of a request for sewer abatement.
- 3) The sewer department was previously under the responsibility of the Town's Administrative Assistant. When the Town changed from an elected Road Commissioner to a hired Public Works Director, the responsibility of the sewer department shifted to the Public Works Director. The position of Public Works Director is a position that should have a working knowledge, operational education and experience in the operation of the utility. Though many departments fall under the supervision of the Town Manager, the day to day operation and management of the sewer system requires more specialized knowledge and experience. Therefore, it should be noted as a department under the Public Works Department.
- 4) There has been mention of restructuring the Eliot Sewer Department into a Sewer District. A Sewer District would be an independent entity of the Town therefore being self-funded by sewer users. A District would be an independent utility requiring separate management and equipment-based operation. It would require an independent sewer superintendent funded by users. The sewer system within the Town of Eliot consist of approximately 6 miles of sewer line and three pump stations which pump the Town's waste to The Town of Kittery for treatment. My opinion is that the sewer system is a not a large enough utility to be a District and would not be financially feasible for the users.
- 5) There has been mention of the Eliot Sewer System becoming a utility of the Town of Kittery. If this was to occur there would be minimal or no control of rates and fees implemented by the Town

of Kittery. The Town of Eliot has an IMA (Inter Municipal Agreement) with the Town of Kittery which governs capital costs and expenditures in Kittery for the treatment of Eliot's waste. The IMA controls spending by Kittery and allows Eliot some control and input over its cost sharing.

It is my opinion that Article 5 should be a separate article within the Town's Charter for those and possibly other reasons stated above.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel C. Moulton
Public Works Director
Town of Eliot

This document is intended for informational purposes only. It is a working draft of the Eliot Maine Charter Commission. The Commission welcomes public comment on this Article.

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