

Meeting Summary

**SE Bend Septic to Sewer Advisory
Committee Thursday, August 10, 2017
Sewer Utility Funding**



CITY OF BEND

Attendees:

Advisory Committee

John Barnard
Bethann Bicknase
Frank Fiedler
David Johnson
Scott Johnson

Geoff Perry
Charlie Rowles
Frank Turek
Jen VanCamp

Staff & Consultant Team

Susanna Julber
Anne Aurand
Skip Martin, P.E.
Sharon Wojda
Melissa Bradley
Orrin Libolt
Liz Baskin

Justin Mason, P.E.
Brian Wilkinson, P.E.
Clark Worth
Libby Barg
Ron Hand
Shawn Koorn

City Council Liaisons

Councilor Livingston
Councilor Campbell

1. Committee Administration

- Committee members unanimously confirmed the election of Bethann Bicknase as Committee chair and Scott Johnson as vice chair.
- City Attorney Mary Winters reviewed provisions of Oregon's Open Meetings Law and encouraged Committee members to copy Susanna Julber on all internal communications so it can be archived. Committee members were also cautioned not to speak with the news media on the Committee's behalf.
- Questions arose about the potential for a majority of the Committee attending Old Farm neighborhood meetings, and how to avoid problems.

2. Tour Recap

- Justin Mason, P.E. gave highlights of the Committee's July 13 tour of the project area. Completion of the Southeast Interceptor this year opens the possibility to serve most of the project area with gravity sewers and reduce the number of pumps consistent with City policy.
- Susanna Julber distributed "Facts and Figures" to answer Committee members' questions on miles of sewers, numbers of pumps, etc.
- Question: will some homes in low areas need to use the pump-to-gravity option? (Yes – there are a few instances.)

3. City Finances and Sewer Utility Funding

- Sharon Wojda and Melissa Bradley presented an overview of City of Bend's financial structure and sewer utility funding. Key points:
 - General Fund resources, a majority raised from the property tax, are not available for sewers.
 - Other resources (beyond the General Fund) are legally restricted. With the exception of the Sewer Fund, these are also not available for sewers.
- Questions:
 - Is the Stormwater Fee/Fund separate from sewers? (Yes)

- Is the debt shown to repay bond funded projects? (Yes)
- How do Bend's sewer costs/rates compare with other communities? (It's not easy to make these comparisons.)
- How does Bend determine affordability? (This is subjective. There are no specific policy guidelines.)
- How are SDCs calculated? (There is a legally mandated methodology.)
- What does the current \$5,200 sewer SDC pay for?
- Will Kings Forest neighborhood residents be required to pay the SDC?
- If Bend's sewers were initially supported by federal funds, is it inequitable to impose a different rate structure for "new" sewer customers?
- How is the current \$1 million per year reserve fund being used?
- Is it true that property taxes have never been allocated to pay for sewers? (Yes – that's true)
- Were properties promised sewers at the time of annexation? What promises were made about when sewers would be constructed, and how they would be financed? (Susanna Julber reported the original annexation documents are posted on the Committee's webpage.)

4. Septic System Finances

- Justin Mason, P.E. gave an overview of typical septic system construction and maintenance costs.
- Questions:
 - Are there any of the more costly sand filter systems in the project area? (Yes – at least one.)
 - Are there differences between concrete and steel septic tanks? (Yes – concrete tanks last longer and are less subject to leaking.)
 - Is there information /history on private septic systems available on Deschutes County's website? (Yes.)
 - Which component of a septic system fails first/most often – the tank or drainfield? (Tank)
 - Are concrete tanks now more standard in the area? (Both types are still common but concrete tanks are the current standard.)
 - Has the topographical map of the project area been completed? (Not yet.)

5. Look Ahead: Solutions in Peer Communities

- Shawn Koorn, HDR utility finance lead, offered a preview of the committee's September 7 meeting. Several professionals who have worked on successful sewer projects in other communities will join a panel to present case studies and answer questions.
- Questions/Comments
 - Will these peers be from Oregon or other states? (Both)
 - Can the examples include Tigard's model?
 - The presentation should highlight incentives used elsewhere.

- If the rationale for sewerage Kings Forest is DEQ requires it – why doesn't the State pay for this?
- What are the tangible benefits to the community: protect groundwater, etc.?
- What is the potential for this solution to fit other Bend neighborhoods?
- What other Central Oregon communities have addressed this problem? Redmond? Eagle Crest?
- What effective strategies were used in other communities for public involvement?
- How do Bend's annexation policies compare with peer communities?

6. Public Comment

- Robert Larkin, SE resident: Peer cities should include Salem; be cautious about using other states with different laws.

7. Announcements

- April Ott, the City staff person who was supporting the Committee, has left the City and meeting notices are being resent by Susanna Julber.