

March 8, 2013

The Future of the MUA

Users of the MUA are entitled to as much transparency as we can give. It is difficult to understand the whole picture unless you have been on the Board of Commissioners. Even at that, the learning curve is unending. That being said, we report to you what has happened since Issue No. 4 about Hurricane Sandy.

Future of the MUA

The ability of the MUA to secure private and/or public loans to fund all the necessary capital improvements is out of reach at this time. Once the current loan to debt ratio improves, this option can be revisited.

On the positive side, operations are improving. This is indicated by test results for the past three months. All facilities are currently in compliance with DEP standards as of the last testing cycle. This is due to the good work and efforts of our current operator, JES, working in conjunction with Agra Environmental and the DEP.

The MUA faces major challenges. Through our professionals, a draft sustainability study was prepared that indicates the MUA is not sustainable as currently structured. Representatives of the MUA and West Milford Township have met with the Department of Community Affairs and the DEP to discuss possibilities for the future of the MUA, including but not limited to the sale of the MUA. While the MUA has pursued discussions with potential buyers, it turns out that this is not an option.

The MUA has also written directly to the Governor to find help on the State level.

At the local level, the West Milford Township Council has designated Councilwoman Carlla Horton as a liaison for the MUA. The MUA has a subcommittee designated to work with her. One of the goals of the subcommittee is to work with the Township to reach out to our legislators to seek their assistance to develop regulatory changes that could potentially defer or eliminate DEP fines from past violations.

As stated previously, the DEP and MUA maintain the position that the Township of West Milford bears some accountability for the future of the MUA, as the MUA was created by Township Council by resolution.

Sincerely,

Carol Hardy, Chairperson