

WEST MILFORD MUNICIPAL UTILITY AUTHORITY

WHAT'S GOING ON! Issue No. 11

July 28, 2014 – STATE OF THE MUA

It has been a little over two years since the Town Council appointed this Board of Commissioners. Our goal remains the same: To maximize the quality of service to the MUA users, while maintaining the current rate. We are just as determined today to achieve this goal as we were two years ago. Planning for the future of this MUA is also an imperative. It is an arduous task that is a continuous work in progress.

We take this opportunity to look back on what has been accomplished and to see where we are headed in the future.

There is now a plan for asset management. This ensures existing equipment and replacement equipment are logged and that service and maintenance is scheduled efficiently. Our assets are tracked and protected.

Until recently, the Administrator, along with the Operations Committee, has monitored the performance of the current operator. **Based on annual reports from the DEP, water and wastewater systems continue to improve in the third year of service with our current operator.** Due to the recent **hiring of a Director of Field Operations** (See What's Going On Issue No. 10,) we anticipate further changes and improvements.

Communication has improved significantly. **More direct contacts** have been made to individual users who have issues than ever before possible. The **MUA website** has been developed into a great source of information. The **What's Going On** newsletter is posted on the website periodically for those interested in tracking progress. A more welcoming **atmosphere at meetings** sets the tone for an open exchange between Commissioners and the public. **A reverse 911 system** will begin soon to speed alerts to the customer base in emergencies. **Quarterly reports to the town Administrator** and Council open the door for working with the Township and show the accountability and transparency of this MUA.

Upgrades to technology serving the office have maximized efficiency. Time is now available for further education of the staff and time for the Administrator to work with the Director on **creative ideas for future improvements.**

\$ have been spent on Capital Improvements and Repairs and Maintenance over the past two years. The **financial statements for this period are in-the-black** despite **rumors of bankruptcy, which are totally without merit.**

While things appear to be going well, we are still concerned about lack of sustainability. We seek to understand the complexities of **sale of a utility authority**, with the best interest of the users as the main priority. There are clear benefits and drawbacks know at this time, along with legal issues to overcome. As an autonomous body, there is no rush to make hasty decisions.

While there has been no response to our request for assistance from the Governor's Office and the Township has not yet budgeted for sharing engineering expenses for **consolidation of services**, we continue to look for other solutions. Creative ideas have been offered by our new Director of Field Operations and Administrator. This MUA still needs help from others, but we continue to work to build a stronger utility authority.