

July 11, 2013

The good news

The MUA's Auditor has presented the financial statement and audit for the year February 1, 2012 through January 31, 2013. With one full year under our belts, this Board of Commissioners is proud of the fact that the MUA is "in the black," for the first time in any number of years. It is quite an achievement.

The financial statement has been submitted to the State, and once approved; it will be available on-line for your review. The Audit Report is set up in accordance with State guidelines which can be confusing. To make a long story short, we attribute last year's improvement to the following:

- 1) Renegotiation of contracts for Operations and Laboratory Testing;
- 2) Renegotiation of contract with electricity supplier;
- 3) Strengthened internal controls;
- 4) Cautious spending due to unknown circumstances; and
- 5) Final NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust reimbursement.

For this year, the MUA Board looks forward to achieving more efficiency by implementing a new billing software system and updating plant communications from expensive cable mode to more inexpensive wireless mode. Many of the users who have attended MUA meetings have commented that it is not, "business as usual."

After careful planning and consideration, the MUA Board has also made capital improvements and maintenance expenditures of significant importance.

The challenges

The MUA Board's immediate goal is to maximize the quality of service, given the limited resources at our disposal. The long-term goal is to guarantee the future ability of the MUA to provide that service. To accomplish this goal, we need the cooperation of the Township, State, and perhaps Federal Government. A professional Sustainability Study and Capital Improvement Plan have been completed to substantiate the MUA's needs. In March, we wrote to the Governor seeking assistance and await his reply. All this takes time and effort from the volunteer Commissioners and small staff.

The obstacles

Public health and safety is dependent upon performance of the MUA systems. Immediate response is needed to emergencies and unexpected event by the MUA office staff, which makes it a very busy place. This past year has been especially challenging. In addition to addressing customer complaints that “my bill has to be wrong,” other obstacles to routine procedures, have been a fire at a sewerage treatment plant; street conduit boxes sinking; uncommon odors from a treatment plant; brown water and low pressure complaints; water and sewer main breaks; brown-outs; and theft of water from hydrants.

We appreciate the support that has been expressed by many of you and will continue to keep you informed.

Sincerely,

Carol Hardy, Chairperson