

## Wayne saves \$600K from adjustments at sewer plant

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WAYNE – As part of a continued effort of thinking outside the box to keep taxes down, officials in Wayne recently examined the day to day procedures at its sewer plant and made some cost effective changes.

Unbeknownst to many, the township operates and maintains a fully staffed sewer plant called the Mountain View Wastewater Treatment Plant, which treats all sanitary waste that enters the township sanitary sewer system from Wayne residences and businesses. It handles 13.5 million gallons per day. Located on Dey Road, the treatment plant also includes a complete laboratory used for testing and monitoring treatment process. It is staffed 24 hours day, 365 days a year, as stated on the township website.

The plant up until 2013 incinerated the waste sludge and delivered the remaining ash to a disposal site, according to Heather Vitz-Del Rio, director of public works. However due to increased regulations and requirements for incinerators from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), township officials, she added, decided it was more cost effective to deliver the sludge to the Passaic Valley Sewer Commission (PVSC), located in Newark.

Sludge, explained Vitz-Del Rio, is the material remaining after the sanitary sewage is treated.

"When waste enters the sewer plant it is treated so that the solids can be separated from the liquids. The liquids are treated and purified and the solids are concentrated into a sludge material," she said. The purified liquids, she added, are then discharged to a tributary of the Singac Brook as per the New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

According to Mayor Chris Vergano, based solely on the operation of the plant including the annual utility costs and sludge removal to the PVSC, this move has saved the township \$200,000 a year. The savings is a comparison 2012 operating costs versus 2015 operating costs.

"These are the things you don't see on a constant basis. Most people don't even know we have a sewer plant. But every quarter taxpayers get a bill from us for \$99 that goes to the sewer. And you wonder, where does that money go? And if you notice that number hasn't gone up in a very long time. It's because we're trying to do different things," Vergano said at a recent Township Council meeting.

Vitz-Del Rio added that an additional \$400,000 is also saved due to personnel changes, bringing the total savings to \$600,000. The savings is a comparison 2012 operating costs versus the 2015 operating costs.

"The main cost savings are in the reduction in staff and the annual utility costs, which are offset by the cost of sludge removal to the PVSC. We estimate the overall annual operating cost at the plant has been reduced by \$600,000 or approximately 16 percent of the overall costs," she stated. Incineration stopped, she added, and the trucking of the sludge began in January of 2013.

It should also be noted that the township also saved \$16 million that would have footed an upgrade at the sewer plant by replacing old equipment and bring the facility into compliance per new EPA requirements, he added.

"And if you notice the smell is also gone since we stopped the burning. That's another positive thing," Vergano added.

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