



## Tiverton

### Hearing set Monday on new impact fees

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By Gina Macris

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TIVERTON — A public hearing on brand new impact fees — intended to offset the cost of capital improvements to public services resulting from future development — is expected to dominate a special Town Council meeting Monday night.

The meeting will also address proposed increases in sewer-use fees — which would primarily affect seasonal residents and large institutional users — as well as a variety of other fees and assessments levied by town government.

Seasonal residents, most of whom go south for the winter, would see their sewer-use charges increase by about \$20 to \$30, according to John Lincourt, director of wastewater management. The 10 or so largest users in town would pay increases of 3 percent to 4 percent, he said.

The impact fees, however, are the most time sensitive issue on the agenda, according to Town Solicitor Andrew Teitz, who developed the proposal in conjunction with planning consultant Sam Shamoon, of Providence.

Their proposal would establish an impact fee of at least \$3,500 for each new dwelling unit constructed that is projected to contribute students to the school system in the next 10 years, Teitz said.

The fee would be assessed at the time a developer receives a building permit and would be collected before a certificate of occupancy is issued, Teitz said.

Because impact fees can be applied to bonded indebtedness, Teitz said, he would like to have an impact fee in place to address the needs of the schools before the town issues \$21 million in school bonds in August.

The bond issue will cover the nearly completed new Walter E. Ranger Elementary School and the upcoming renovations of the Pocasset and Fort Barton elementary schools.

UNTIL NOW, the town has used bond anticipation notes to meet construction expenses, Teitz said.

The impact fees will only be used to pay for a percentage of the bond that corresponds to new school enrollment in the next 10 years, said Teitz, who has worked with Shamoon in developing impact fees for other communities, including neighboring Portsmouth.

Teitz said that he and Shamoon expect to put forward separate development impact fees for future capital improvements related to roads, recreation and public safety sometime during the next year.

The information necessary to configure the fees is not as readily available for the other public services as it is for the schools, he said.

In general, Teitz said, Shamoon analyzes capital improvement plans and historical data kept by various departments of municipal government to make projections about future use of public services and calculate the amount new users should be paying toward capital improvements.

TIVERTON HAS much less computerized historical data stored than other towns, he said, making it laborious and expensive to collect and analyze the data by hand.

“So instead we took data we do have and the experience of myself and Sam Shamoon from other communities, in terms of extrapolations, to come up with a reasonable plan,” Teitz said.

He said the Planning Board has looked at the proposed school impact fee and has proposed factual corrections to the underlying historical data based on first-hand “institutional knowledge”

The comments of Planning Board members will be addressed at the public hearing, Teitz said.

Meanwhile, Public Works Director David Webster said the proposed new schedule of sewer-use fees is intended to more fairly and equitably distribute the fixed costs of operating the sewer system, which pumps wastewater from about 465 users in the north end of Tiverton to the Fall River sewage treatment plant.

THE CURRENT fee structure, based on usage, places an unfair burden on year-round residents with average water use, according to Lincourt, the director of wastewater management.

About 365 of the town’s 465 sewer users are seasonal residents, with many of them going south for the winter, Lincourt said.

But “even if they’re not here, there are fixed costs that keep on going,” Webster said.

The fixed costs include the salaries of Lincourt and the billing clerk and the maintenance of the pump station, which pumps sewage to the Fall River pumping station, Webster said.

Lincourt said the new fee schedule will raise an additional \$30,000 to \$40,000 in revenue annually.

Average users, residential properties consuming about 7,500 to 10,000 cubic feet of wastewater, would see their bills reduced by an average of \$43, according to a summary prepared by the Wastewater Management Commission.

A HOMEOWNER at the large end of that range, using 9,500 cubic feet of wastewater, now pays a total of \$710 in sewer-use fees. That homeowner would see an \$85 reduction in the overall bill, about twice the \$43 average.

Meanwhile, a seasonal resident using 4,000 cubic feet of wastewater now pays \$313 a year. That property owner’s bill would increase by \$25 under the new schedule.

The Wastewater Management Commission calculated that about 365 users, all but 100 consume less than 5,000 cubic feet of wastewater a year.

Because there are so many seasonal users, Lincourt said, “just a small increase will give us that additional revenue that we need.”

In addition to impact fees and sewer-use fees, Monday’s special Town Council meeting is to address proposed increases in fees for entertainment licenses, building code permits and inspections, fire inspections, and other miscellaneous charges.

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