

**TOWN OF BEDFORD  
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**TOWN BOARD**  
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## **Summary of Proposed Bedford Hills/Katonah Business Sewer District**

### **Project Description**

The Town Board, having determined that to do so is in the public interest, proposes the creation, construction and operation of a public sewer district and adoption of a Sewer Law to provide sewers to the business districts of Bedford Hills and Katonah, New York and the Bedford Park Apartments in Bedford Hills (BPA), Katonah Elementary School (KES) and St. Mary's School and Rectory in Katonah (St. Mary's). Effluent from these areas would be sent to and treated at the existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility operated by the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS). The proposal requires an affirmative vote of the property owners in the proposed sewer district, the vote on which will be held in a Special Election on March 14, 2017. If the proposal is approved, the Town Board will adopt a sewer law which will require all property owners in the district to connect to the sewer system (and decommission their existing septic systems), set sewer rents and establish other requirements.

Presently wastewaters in these districts are treated by septic systems and cesspools, many of which are beyond their useful life. Under an agreement in the late 1990s with Northern Westchester municipalities, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) established and funded the East of Hudson Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) to help finance the cost of wastewater treatment facilities, such as a sewer system. DEP also established a program (Upgrade Program) to upgrade nearby wastewater treatment facilities at BPA, KES and St. Mary's. These three sites would also be served by the proposed sewer district.

The Bedford Hills and Katonah business districts lie within the Croton Watershed system of New York City's water supply and are close to the Cross River Reservoir. This focus area has been identified as a "Priority Project" by the Northern Westchester Watershed Committee (NWWC), which have committed to expend WQIP funds for the creation of this sewer district.

In addition to concern regarding treatment of wastewater from these areas, property owners within the proposed district have expressed concern about the vitality of their businesses, given the restrictions and in many instances inability to change or expand uses, such as from a "dry use" to a restaurant. DEP has stated that change or expansion of use may be possible should a sewer system be created to serve these areas.

A number of studies and reports on wastewater disposal in Bedford Hills and Katonah have been prepared over the last several decades, each of which has acknowledged that a serious wastewater disposal problem exists and providing public sewers to these areas has been the recommended solution.

The proposed sewage collection system would convey flows to the WWTP through the use of gravity collection sewers with pumping stations and force mains, together with a limited number of grinder pumps to serve individual properties, which are located at an elevation too low to be served by the nearest gravity sewer. Wastewaters collected in the new sewer system would be treated at the WWTP, which currently has excess capacity. DOCCS has agreed in principle to convey the WWTP to the Town and to become a customer of the proposed sewer district.

### **Project Financing**

The total capital cost for establishing a new sewer district and building a collection system is estimated at \$20,459,800. To finance the project, the Town would receive up to \$6,500,000 from Westchester County's WQIP Funds, \$12,800,000 from DEP and \$1,200,000 through the Town's issuance of sewer bonds. User charges would fund the debt service to repay the sewer bonds. All debt service for this borrowing would be paid for only by property owners within the proposed district. No cost would be allocated to property owners outside of the proposed district. Sewer rents would include payment for the debt service on the bonds based on assessed value of the properties (90%) and water usage (10%).

### **Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Costs**

The collection system O&M costs would not exist until after the system has been constructed, all customers have been connected, and wastewater is flowing to the plant. O&M costs of the District would be allocated to customers in proportion to their wastewater flow.

### **Cost to the Typical Property**

Each property located within the sewer district would be required to connect to the system and pay the costs of connecting to the sewer main and decommissioning the existing septic system. Based on the estimated capital cost recovery and O&M rates, as well as the water consumption and assessed property value information, the estimated annual district cost to each property within the proposed new sewer district is listed in Table 5-4 of the Map, Plan and Report. Each year, the New York State Comptroller publishes an average estimated cost threshold for use in determining whether approval of the State Controller is necessary for the creation of special districts in that year. The 2016 threshold amount for a town special district establishment of a sewer district is \$798. Because the anticipated annual average cost to the typical property in the proposed sewer district does not exceed the 2016 NYS Comptroller's threshold of \$798, the Comptroller's approval is not required for the creation of this district.

*Additional information can be obtained on the Town's website at [www.bedfordny.gov](http://www.bedfordny.gov), click on Sewer Proposal or by contacting Bedford Planner Jeff Osterman at [josterman@bedfordny.gov](mailto:josterman@bedfordny.gov) or 914-666-8154*

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