

**TOWN OF BROOKLET
CALLED COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 31, 2007**

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:** Mayor Grooms. Members present: Annett Wilson, Sylvia Prosser and William Hendrix.

2. **INTRODUCTION OF CONSULTING ENGINEERS FROM HOFSTADTER AND ASSOCIATES.** Mayor Grooms.

3. **DISCUSSION, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING A SEWER SYSTEM OPERATION.**
Questions and concerns from the public.
Answers and information given by Carl Hofstadter and Charlie Bridges.

Funding: First and foremost issue is funding.
Current populated, developed areas can be funded through a grant. Future developments would have to be funded at the time of development as they would have to tie into an existing system. Grants are available from the Federal Government and the amount is based on the number of people the area will service.

Separate water & sewer system: Water system is separate from the sewer system. The sewer system would be more expensive to service than the water system.

Alternatives: There was a question regarding alternatives to a treatment facility. An alternative to building a sewer system for Brooklet would be to tie into Statesboro's system. The cost would almost double unless a deal with Statesboro could be made. This would actually be more costly than having a sewer system built for Brooklet.

Time frame for getting a system in place: It would take anywhere from three to five years. It would take a year to design and a year to build, with one to three years to get approval and funding from the USDA.

Miscellaneous: Septic systems are not favored by the new director of EPD, Carol Couch, in coastal areas.

It was discussed that older homes would probably not be in favor of a new sewer system as the costs would run around \$50.00 a month.

Further discussion on funding: It was reported that if we did not have the Federal Government's funding, it would be more like \$75.00 a month.

If the system were privately funded, each person would be responsible for the cost of connecting. However if the Federal Government funds the system, they would require everyone to hook up to the system – or at least 90%.

It was discussed that the Mayor and Council would decide whether it would be feasible to mandate everyone hooking up to the system.

Size of system: The size of the treatment facility would be determined by how many gallons used per day. Assuming the schools would come in, it was estimated that somewhere between 150,000 and 175, 000 gallons per day would be used, basing that on 100 gallons a day per person and students, 25 to 50 gallons a day.

If we decide to go with the system, an exact number would be given at a later date.

Growth and expansion of the system. The plant would be put on a lot big enough to have a mirror image on it. H&A would design the head works of the plant to increase in increments as need grows. A splitter box could be put in that would service 250,000 gallons a day. When reaching 225,000 gallons a day, we would begin expansion process.

Location of system: Nothing has been decided about any possible location for the facility.

Reclaimed water usage: It was asked if the system could provide for use of reclaimed water. The procedure would be to have “purple pipe” put in so that sewerage could be treated to a point where it could be reused in watering lawns, etc.

Upgrades discussed. Charles Mallard asked if storm drains could be put in while upgrading streets for the sewer system and also if we could repair the existing water lines at that time also. That would be a viable option.

Strains on current system: Donnie Mincey asked about septic tanks creating ground saturation.

H&A reported that septic tanks contribute to ground water saturation and that the EPA wants this stopped, especially in coastal areas.

As more development comes in to Brooklet, the growth rate would strain the present system to where it could not hold water. It could get to a point where the water couldn't be absorbed, causing the ground to burp up raw sewerage.

Questions regarding location: Questions regarding location and odor coming from the plant were posed. Carl Hofstadter reported that the head works of the plant would be far enough away so that the odor wouldn't be obnoxious.

It was asked if the location would be made public beforehand. Mayor Grooms said that if we decide to go with the plant that all recommendations on location would be presented to the public.

Cost analysis discussed: Charles Mallard asked how cost of current water usage would translate into probable cost for sewer system.

Charlie Bridges from H&A explained that if your average water bill runs around \$20.00 a month, it would translate to about \$50.00 for the sewer portion, making both water and sewer come to a total of around \$71.00 a month. He explained that the output averages to be about 2 to 2-1/2 times your input.

A suggestion was made that the city could average the two, making the water bill around \$35.00 a month and the sewer bill \$35.00 a month, especially if folks don't like the idea of paying more for sewer than for water.

Other questions and suggestions: It was suggested that when a team is sent out to knock on doors asking for approval, that the team have some training before going out so that they can educate and present the proposal properly.

USDA makes the recommendation on water rates but since H&A has been working in the area so long, they know approximately what the costs run.

It was suggested that members meet with the Health Department to get the pros and cons of sewerage system before they go forward.

Carl Hofstadter reported that they had already met with the USDA and they feel that Brooklet would be a viable project. USDA has already said they would be interested in funding the project.

Pete Moon asked if the city borrows the money how the City would make up the difference. Carl Hofstadter stated that it could be paid for by a revenue bond and the revenues collected from the billings for sewer would repay that bond.

There was a question about replacing the old water lines at the time work would be done on a new system. Mayor Grooms said that issue has been discussed and that he felt that it would need to be done during that time.

Unused, abandoned septic tanks: Questions regarding abandoned/unused septic tanks came up. Carl Hofstadter said that all abandoned septic tanks would have the bottoms broken out and they would be filled up to prevent anyone, especially children, from getting hurt in the old, empty ones.

Urgency of project: It was asked if we could wait several more years or is the situation urgent.

Carl Hofstadter said that the grant monies are getting less and less for funding. He said that a new proposal by the president is to cut them all together in future years. He also stated that if we decide to go ahead with the project, we would know beforehand if we were eligible for a grant.

Building process: Carl Hofstadter asked Charlie Bridges to explain the building process.

First step would be to find out how many people would be interested. If there is enough interest, then we would contact the engineers, at which point they would write a preliminary engineering and environmental report for submission to the USDA Office in Athens. That preliminary report would be reviewed by their engineers at which time any changes they deem necessary would be made.

The next step would be the funding. We would begin the process of requesting grant money. After approval, a letter of conditions would come from USDA and a commitment to those conditions would have to be made

The next step would be for the engineers to take the preliminary plans to final design, after which the building process begins. It is estimated that the design process would take around a year and the building process would take another year or so. The process of getting approval for funding and review by USDA can take 1 to 3 years.

There was a suggestion made to put information regarding the sewerage system in the water bill mail outs.

4. **MEETING ADJOURNED:** Mayor Grooms.