

# Voters To Get Piecemeal Approach To Phase Two Of Wastewater Plan

By William F. Galvin Cape Cod Chronicle Harwich Edition March 8 2017

HARWICH — Selectmen agreed Monday night to tiptoe through the funding of phase two of the comprehensive wastewater management plan, slated for the May annual town meeting.

The board voted not to put forward a single request for \$34 million to implement phase two, which calls for the design and construction of sewers in the Pleasant Bay watershed; payment to the town of Chatham for the purchase of treatment capacity for wastewater through an as-yet-to-be-agreed-upon inter-municipal agreement (see page 3 for more details); implementation of the Cold Brook project; and a restoration project for Hinckley's Pond.

The warrant contained the one article seeking to fund the entirety of phase two of the plan, but selectmen last week directed Town Administrator Christopher Clark to shape separate articles for four components of the plan.

“It's my strong recommendation to just do the one article for \$34 million and have faith in the voters,” Clark told selectmen Monday night. He pointed out that the town of Chatham used the single-article approach to fund a large phase of its wastewater project, and it was approved.

He said there are other towns which chose to do design first and construction second, and when construction funding is rejected, millions of dollars worth of plans are sitting on shelves. Harwich has had success in splitting up projects, Clark said, citing the Saquatucket Harbor waterside improvement project design first winning approval followed by voter support for the \$7 million construction project.

While Selectman Jannell Brown concurred with Clark that single-article funding for phase two should be placed before the voters in May, Selectman Angelo LaMantia said he did not agree with that approach, recommending an article for \$9 million. The article would encompass the costs associated with the IMA with Chatham and provide funds to design sewers in the Pleasant Bay watershed and a connection to the Chatham system.

“It's very dangerous,” LaMantia said. “It's hard to vote for \$34 million when you can't point to where a pipe goes in the road or where it will be sewerred.”

“I don't feel comfortable going to the taxpayers for a \$34 million debt exclusion,” Board of Selectmen Chairman Michael MacAskill agreed. “I'm a fan of voting individually and giving the people an option.”

“I agree Cold Brook and Hinckley's Pond should be separate articles,” Selectman Julie Kavanagh said.

Selectmen examined four articles which segregated parts of phase two. One article contained the \$9 million for the design phase for sewers, the interconnection and the IMA agreement to be worked out for treatment in Chatham. The second article called for \$22.5 million for construction of the connection with the Chatham sewer and construction of sewers in the southern section of the Pleasant Bay watershed.

The third article contained a request for \$2 million for the design, construction and implementation of the Cold Brook project, and the fourth article included \$550,000 for the design, construction and implementation for the restoration of Hinckley's Pond.

MacAskill said he did not want voters to approve construction without first approving engineering, which would be a voter option with the four articles. Clark suggested creating an article placing the design money first, including the Cold Brook design and the sewer infrastructure engineering. This would show that the project is moving forward, he said. It's a fairly complex phase, he added, suggesting construction funding and work could be addressed two years later.

He also said this would provide the opportunity to go back to the community preservation committee seeking the funding for the Hinckley's Pond restoration project, which Clark and selectmen agreed should be funded through Community Preservation Act monies. The board, absent Selectman Peter Hughes, assessed each of the article options to be included in the annual town meeting warrant. They unanimously supported inclusion of the article seeking \$9 million, agreeing if an IMA does not come to fruition, the funds would remain in Harwich.

However, the board voted not to include the article seeking \$22.5 million for the construction phase of the connection and sewers in the southern section of the Pleasant Bay watershed. Board members made it clear they need to inform voters they will be back in two years for those funds.

Selectmen also supported the inclusion of the article seeking \$2 million for the Cold Brook project. Clark emphasized that the project allows the town to avoid sewerage 240 homes in the Saquatucket Harbor watershed, which he said equals \$6.75 million in infrastructure savings.

The board also voted not to include the \$550,000 Hinckley's Pond restoration project request on the warrant this year, again citing the hope that funding will come from Community Preservation Act monies.