

# **RIDGEFIELD ROUTE 7 PUMP STATION, FORCE MAIN AND WWTF DECOMMISSIONING PROJECT SUMMARY**

**For a Public Hearing and Town Meeting on Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 7:30pm  
at Veterans Park School, 8 Governor Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877**

## **Why is the Route 7 Pump Station, Force Main and WWTF Decommissioning Project needed?**

- Consolidating the two Town WWTFs is being implemented to cost-effectively address the aging facilities and the 30-50 years old equipment and to meet the new DEEP effluent permit requirements.
- The “Route7 Project” includes construction of a pump station at the location of the existing Route 7 pump station, construction of an approximately three-mile-long force main (a pressure pipeline) to convey the collected wastewater from the Route 7 District to the South Street WWTF, and decommissioning of the Route 7 WWTF.
- Combining these two plants into one will result in significant long-term operational cost savings.

## **Why are additional funds for the project needed?**

- The Route 7 Project low bid of \$8.3 million was approximately 40% higher than the estimated cost of \$5.8 million. Other recent and similar project bids in other communities came in between 30-80% over their estimated costs. These recent higher bid costs are the result of the impact of Covid 19 on building materials, equipment, and labor.
- The WPCA has worked with the low bidder to reduce the scope of work and cost where possible and deferred a future WPCA capital project to narrow the project funding gap to approximately \$2.9M.

## **Why are American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds being proposed for the Route 7 Project?**

- The Town is fortunate to have received ARPA funding from the federal government to address Covid related cost impacts experienced by the Town focused specifically investments in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure.
- Use of these funds are a preferred method to close the project’s funding gap in lieu of increased sewer user charges and/ or an increase in the Town’s tax (mill) rate.

## **Why doesn’t the WPCA delay or rebid the project?**

- The low bidder’s bid price was favorable compared to the other bidders, so awarding the project provides cost advantages.
- Rebidding on the project is anticipated to increase the bid prices as the impacts of COVID continue.
- The current low bidder’s bid holding period ends in November after which rebidding would likely be required.
- The DEEP would not be able to provide Clean Water Fund Grant assistance to the project if the project is delayed. The DEEP grant amount is anticipated to be between \$900,000 and \$1.5 million depending on DEEP funding availability when the project is awarded.
- DEEP would require Route 7 WWTF interim upgrades to meet the new effluent permit (costs that have not been planned for).

## **What happens if the ARPA funds are not allocated to the project?**

- The low bidder’s favorable bid will expire.
- The project would need to be rebid with the expectation that the new bids will be higher, increasing the funding gap.
- The anticipated larger funding gap will need to be made up through additional funds from increases in sewer rates and/or the town’s tax (mill) rate.
- The project will likely lose the \$900,000 to \$1.5 million Clean Water Fund grant from the DEEP increasing the funding gap
- The WPCA will be required to expend additional funds to bring the Route 7 WWTF into compliance with the effluent permit until the Route 7 project is advanced.
- **Nonuse of ARPA funds could add significant dollar increases to the project and could result in increased annual sewer use charges.**