



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STEVEN E. CHESTER
DIRECTOR

January 30, 2008

Mr. Robert Monroe, Superintendent
Gun Lake Area Sewer & Water Authority
12588 Marsh Road
Shelbyville, Michigan 49344

Dear Mr. Monroe:

SUBJECT: Amended Operating Plan Approval for Gun Lake Area Sewer & Water Authority

The Gun Lake Area Sewer & Water Authority amended operating plan has been reviewed and approved by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Water Bureau, Drinking Water and Environmental Health Section, On-Site Wastewater Unit. The amended plan has been posted on the Septage Waste Program website at www.michigan.gov/deqseptage. It can be viewed by clicking on "Approved Septage Waste Receiving Facility Operating Plans" located under "Downloads."

The septage waste receiving facility must operate in accordance with the approved plan. If a change in operations or conditions is anticipated, please file an amendment to the plan at least thirty days prior to the proposed date for implementation.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at the number below.

Sincerely,

Matthew Campbell, Coordinator
Septage Waste Program
On-Site Wastewater Unit
Drinking Water and Environmental Health Section
Lansing Operations Division
Water Bureau
517-335-4178

mcc:ckp

cc: Mr. Eric Pessell, Barry-Eaton District Health Department
Mr. Richard Falardeau, DEQ
Mr. Dave Timm, DEQ

Gun Lake Area Sewer & Water Authority

12588 Marsh Road
Shelbyville, MI 49344
Ph: (269) 672-5588
Fax: (269) 672-5580

Septage Receiving Operational Plan 8/31/2006 Revised 12/07/2007

Hours of Operation: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm
Monday – Friday (Closed Weekends & Holidays)

WWTP Location:

12588 Marsh Road
Shelbyville, MI 49344
Robert H. Monroe, Manager

Septage Received:

Domestic only (no grease traps)

Fee: \$75 per 1000 gallons (.075/gallon)

Required: Driver furnishes address of residence, gallons and date pumped and provides sample of load for laboratory analysis.

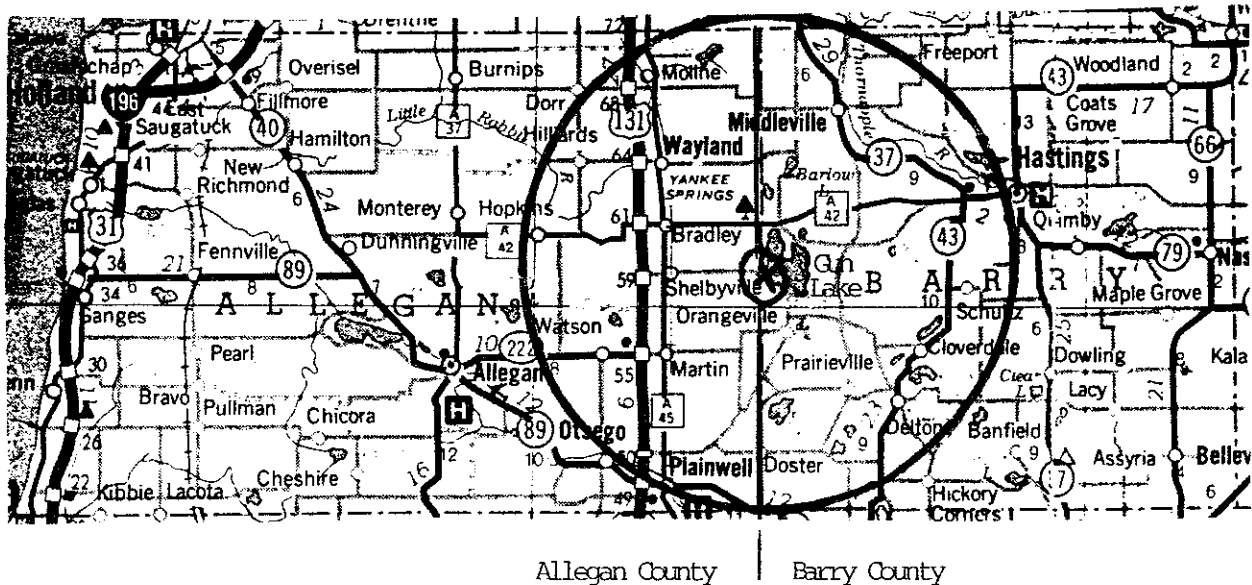
Receiving Facility's Capacity: GLASWA will accept up to 10% of the plant's normal daily influent flow.

Average daily gallons of septage received: 12,000 gallons.

Plant daily flow: 300,000 gallons (Winter) = 30,000 gal/day septage maximum.
500,000 gallons (Summer) = 50,000 gal/day septage maximum.

5 Day Biochemical Oxygen Demand: 788 lbs per day (Winter)
1314 lbs per day (Summer)

Service Area: Allegan & Barry Counties (see county map below)



Copies sent to MDEQ, Allegan & Barry-Eaton County Health Departments and Controlling Townships of Yankee Springs, Orangeville, Wayland and Martin.

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WELL CONSTRUCTION UNIT

Gun Lake Area Sewer & Water Authority

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December 12, 2007

To all Septage Haulers

Re: Septage rates

For the past several years the amount of septage that is being brought to our MDEQ approved Septage Receiving Facility has dramatically increased from several thousand gallons to over three million gallons received this year. Unfortunately, by processing this quantity of septage, we have had to build a Septage Receiving Station at a cost of over \$500,000.00. (Our current charge has been (.05/gal) or \$50/1000 gallons since July, 2003).

At our request, OMM Engineering undertook a rate study to determine what we should be charging. They cited such determining factors as the high solids concentration of the septage biosolids, the cost of treating and disposing of it, the cost of the construction or capital improvements incurred building the Septage Receiving Station, the rate of inflation (traditionally 3.5%), and paying back the capital improvement from revenues as a loan over 6-10 years. Also taking in consideration the fact that septage haulers have never had to pay a right to hook-up fee to the sewer system and the septage does take up plant capacity. The Engineering rate study shows that GLASWA needs .062/gallon just to break even with the treatment and disposal of the biosolids. The study also recommends that in order to pay back the capital expenditure, GLASWA should be charging at least .075/gallon.

At our December Authority Meeting the Board adopted a resolution to increase the septage fee to (.75/gal) or \$75/1000 gallons effective January 1, 2008.

Sincerely yours,



Robert H. Monroe, Manager
Gun Lake Area Sewer & Water Authority

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December 5, 2007

REGULAR MONTHLY AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Terry Sturgis called the December Monthly Meeting of the Gun Lake Area Sewer & Water Authority to order at 4:00 PM.

ROLL CALL: Township supervisors present: Terry Sturgis of Martin Township, Tom Rook of Orangeville Township, Roger VanVolkinburg of Wayland Township, Al McCrumb of Yankee Springs Township and Trustee Bob Perino of Orangeville Township. Mr. Joel Davenport of OMM Engineering attended. GLASWA employees present were Secretary Lois Kahllo and Manager Robert Monroe.

REVIEW AUTHORITY MINUTES: The Board Members reviewed the minutes from the November 7th Authority Meeting. Mr. Rook made a motion to accept the minutes as printed, with Mr. VanVolkinburg supporting, motion carried.

HERE THOSE PRESENT: Mr. Joel Davenport PE of OMM Engineering.

OLD BUSINESS: The Septage Receiving Station being built by Davis Construction is progressing. The walls and roof of the building that will house the equipment are in place but dewatering of the area for the in-ground septage holding tank has slowed the construction down. The first draw will be presented to GLASWA for payment this month.

Twenty two of the twenty eight residences at Fawn Lake have now connected to the Gun Lake Sewer System. GLASWA has received the \$70,000 due for connection fees from the special sewer assessment district payable from the Barry County Drain Commission.

NEW BUSINESS: OMM Engineering was asked to do a Rate Study on the cost of receiving, treating and disposing of residential septage from local septage hauling companies. Rates have been .05/gallon or \$50/1000 gallons since July of 2003. The study looked at the high solids concentration of the septage biosolids, the cost of treating and disposing of it, the cost of the construction or capital improvements of the septage receiving station, the rate of inflation (traditionally 3.5%), and paying back the capital improvement from revenues as a loan over 6-10 years. Also taking in consideration the fact that septage haulers have never paid a right to hook up to the sewer system and are taking up capacity. The Engineering Rate Study shows that GLASWA needs .062/gallon just to break even with the treatment and disposal of the biosolids. The Study also recommends that GLASWA charge .075/gallon in order to pay back the capital expenditure. The only other sewer plant in Allegan or Barry Counties that accepts septage is South West Barry County Sewer & Water Authority in Delton. After discussion from the Board, Mr. Rook made a motion to adopt a resolution to increase the septage gallonage fee to .075/gallon (\$75/1000 gallon) effective January 1, 2008. Mr. Van Volkinburg seconded the motion. A roll call vote passed the motion 4-0.



Improving The Environment

LETTERS

from our readers

Reasons behind septage rate increase

To the editor:

I am writing in regard to the septage receiving rate increase, which will go into effect for haulers who bring septage for treatment to the SWBCSWA, effective Jan. 1, 2008.

At the September Board meeting, as sewer administrator, I reported to the Authority Board that additional infrastructure was needed at the plant in order to continue accepting septage pumped from private tanks for treatment. The Board instructed me to conduct a survey of these additional costs and to report back to the board with a recommendation regarding a price increase. At the October Board meeting, I presented those findings and made the recommendation that the septage receiving rate should be set at 7.5 cents per gallon, effective Jan. 1, 2008, in order to cover our costs. The Board passed a resolution that was drafted by our legal counsel to establish the rate at 7.5 cents, and permission was granted by the DEQ to charge this rate, since this price reflects the average being charged.

Septage that we receive from private sources is of a much higher strength than septage that we receive from those customers on our system. There are higher costs associated with treating this kind of septage. It is the policy of the Authority that our customers come first. The customers on the system should not have to subsidize an artificially low rate of disposing of septage for people not on the system.

Added improvements are needed at the plant to continue accepting private septage.

The costs of these improvements are to be borne by people with tanks to pump, not the people on the system. These improvements include added storage for septage and better screening, added testing, personnel, utilities, etc. The Authority does not intend to make people on the system pay for this.

Mr. and Mrs. Lyons, along with Barb Cichy, appeared at the November Board meeting asking that the Board adopt a discriminatory policy by charging out-of-county septage at a higher rate than septage generated within Barry County. They were told that the Authority cannot charge a different rate, unless it can be shown that the cost of treatment is higher for out-of-county septage. We cannot show that.

If a tank is pumped on the Allegan side of the county line, it costs the exact same to the Authority to treat and dispose of it as a tank that was pumped on the Barry County side of the line. Also, the added paper work and bureaucracy required to split out the costs for tankers from multiple destinations would add addition costs to the Authority. Therefore, the Lyons' and Cichy plan to apply discriminatory pricing was rejected by the Board.

This price increase will pay for infrastructure at the plant that is necessary to allow people to have their tanks pumped, in order to protect the environment, at a reasonable cost to area residents who are not on the public sewer system.

Mark A. Doster
Sewer Administrator
SWBCSWA

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Water Division
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WELL CONSTRUCTION UNIT

Rates may rise for septic haulers

by Patricia Johns
Staff Writer

At the end of October, the Southwest Barry County Sewer and Water Authority sent letters to septage haulers in Barry and surrounding counties that rates will rise from .05 cents per gallon to .075 cents per gallon Jan. 1, 2008.

According to Barbara Lyons, who, with her husband Joe, owns Lyons Septic Service, this amounts to an additional \$25 for each 1,000 gallons taken to the treatment center.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality requires that septage

go to licensed treatment plants if tanks are pumped within 15 miles of a treatment plant.

Lyons said she is concerned that as a hauler, the company might need to pass on the increase to homeowners when the rates at treatment plants rise. Currently, Lyons Septic Service charges homeowners to pump out septic systems and haul away the contents. They collect the disposal fee and pass that on to the Sewer Authority.

"This is coming at a time where a lot of Barry County residents are feeling the pinch in their wallets," said Lyons.

She said she is concerned that some home-

owners may now avoid having their septic tanks pumped, which could lead to soil and water contamination.

"This was really going to hurt the rural homeowners and this business and set it back to where people are just going to ignore their system after all the work over the past three years of bringing people on board to maintain their system and the importance of doing so," she said.

Mark Doster, administrator at SWBCSWA, noted that several factors brought about the rise in rates. The plant needs additional maintenance and equipment. Unfortunately, the

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plant cannot charge two rates, one for in-county haulers and the higher rate for out-of-county haulers, he said.

Doster said that the plant has only been accepting septage for two or three years. This discussion of septage is unrelated to a problem about not having enough material for treatment which happened when the system was first installed, he said.

At the September Board meeting, Doster reported to the Authority Board that additional infrastructure was needed at the plant, in order to continue accepting septage pumped from private tanks for treatment.

Septage the SWBCSWA receives from private sources is of a much higher strength than septage received from those customers on the system, he said, noting higher costs associated with treating this kind of septage.

Doster said that additional improvements are needed at the plant to continue accepting private septage. The costs of these improvements are to be borne by people with tanks to pump, not the people on the system. These improvements include storage for septage and better screening, added testing, personnel, utilities, etc. The Authority does not intend to make people on the system pay for this.

The price increase will pay for infrastructure at the plant necessary to allow people to have their tanks pumped, in order to protect the environment, at a reasonable cost to area residents who are not on the public sewer system, said Doster.

At a meeting of the SWBCSWA Nov. 19, Lyons and others suggested that Barry County residents be charged a lower rate and those from outside the county pay a higher fee.

"Why should the Barry County residents be penalized by the treatment plants in Barry County for their greediness to accept septage from surrounding counties when their plant is only capable of handling a certain amount of septage?" she later asked.

Doster said he thought the separate fees were illegal and discriminatory.

Lyons said that Doster reported that the Authority was barely making money.

"As the meeting continued, we found that this increase is not for operational growth," said Lyons, but for capital improvements, such as a tractor.

Bob Monroe, director of the Gun Lake Area Sewer Authority Waste Water treatment plant told the *Banner* that no decision has been made about whether to raise rates.

Monroe noted that fees charged by treatment centers cover a wide range. In Kalamazoo, the fee is more than 10 cents per gallon, he said.

The GLASWA plant is installing a new 500,000-gallon septic receiving station that will be ready in April. Yankee Springs Supervisor Al McCrumb, who sits on the GLASWA board, said that some of the money earned from treatment of septic waste will be used to renovate the existing plant which is nearing 30 years of age.

"We are not trying to gouge anyone," Monroe said. "We need to pay back our costs and maintain the plant."

A plan for the Hastings Waste Water Treatment plant to accept septage will be on the agenda of the Dec. 10 Hastings City Council meeting. This plan has been approved by the MDEQ. This will be a required public hearing.

The plant will only be open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and locked to prevent unauthorized dumping. Septage haulers will have their loads tested and will be charged based on that testing.

Rates in the Hastings plant are set by a fee structure formula approved last year. The fee structure was approved in ordinance 2006-25. Information about this fee structure is available by contacting the City of Hastings.