

**TOWN OF POTSDAM**  
**NYS ROUTE 56 WATER AND SEWER DISTRICTS**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**UPDATED: October 20, 2020**

1. **Q:** What is the charge per unit of water used and sewage discharged?

**A:** The first-year costs will be: Water - \$166 per year for 40,150 gallons of water used, and; Sewer - \$186 per year for 40,150 gallons of water used. These numbers are based on what a typical home that is metered uses, which is generally 110 gallons per day. The rates for additional usage will be developed and adopted by the Town Board as part of the Local Law for each utility approved by District voters.

2. **Q:** When the trunk lines are installed for the water and sewer, who pays for the connection from the curb to the building?

**A:** For parcels that are “improved” (i.e. have a home or business on the property at the time of the vote) and whose property owner agrees to connect during construction of the project, the cost of extending the service lateral from the road right-of-way boundary to the building, and connecting to the building’s plumbing is included in the costs quoted for the project.

3. **Q:** When does the property owner have to make a decision whether or not they will connect to the system?

**A:** Letters requesting intent to connect will be sent to the owners of “improved” properties shortly after the utility District is approved by District voters. The property owner must make his/her decision while the project is designed, no later than when it is issued for bidding by contractors.

4. **Q:** If the property owner does not make a decision by the deadlines stated above, who makes the connection and what is the estimated cost for hook-up?

**A:** The property owner will be responsible for contracting and paying for the service extension and connection to the existing plumbing. A connection fee will be developed and adopted by the Town Board as part of the Local Law for each utility approved by District voters. The cost for a private contractor to make the physical extension and plumbing connection is subject to the owner’s negotiation with the contractor.

5. **Q:** The proposed project design uses existing equipment that serve the existing Unionville Water and Sewer Districts, for which those District customers pay. Shouldn’t the Unionville District customers get a cost credit for the extra “wear and tear” the NYS Route 56 District customers will have on this equipment?

**A:** Planning for the NYS Route 56 Water and Sewer Districts includes upgrading the existing water supply wells and wastewater treatment equipment to accommodate the additional demand from the new NYS Route 56 District customers. There will be separate feeds, and/or pipes, to serve the new customers, isolating any impact to the Unionville District infrastructure to the maximum extent possible. NYS Town Law requires each District to be legally and financially responsible for its own infrastructure. In this situation, there will actually be some residual benefit to the Unionville District customers by virtue of the planned upgrades paid by the new customers. Since Unionville District customers will not be charged for this residual benefit, there is likewise no credit warranted or to be issued.

6. **Q:** The commissioners (of the Unionville Water and Sewer Districts) never got an invite to your meetings, to my knowledge because we are not a member of the NYS Route 56 Water and Sewer Districts you want to create, yet you want to use our facilities. Why is that?

**A:** In accordance with NYS Town Law, the Town Board has legal authority and direct responsibility for any and all Town water and sewer districts as administered through primarily the Town Supervisor and Town Attorney. Thus, the Town technically and legally has no District Commissioners.

7. **Q:** How is this going to effect our (Unionville) sewer and water rates? We are not metered right now and everything seems to be ok. Will we be metered because of you using our system?

**A:** The Town Board has no intent to change the Unionville sewer and water rates as a result of this project, and specifically the project be designed to avoid such need. The US Rural Development agency funding the NYS Route 56 Water and Sewer District projects requires only the properties within those two Districts be metered.

8. **Q:** Will there have to be an upgrade to our (Unionville) water and sewage plants to compensate for you (the new districts) using them and how will they be paid and by who?

**A:** There will be upgrades to both the existing water wells and wastewater treatment plant to meet the demand of the new Districts. The cost of the upgrades will be paid only by the NYS Route 56 Water and Sewer District property owners.

9. **Q:** Will we (Unionville Districts) be compensated for you (the proposed Districts) using our facilities? Suggestion, maybe helping us pay off the remaining years on our existing loan.

**A:** There is no compensation proposed for the Unionville District. Rather, there will actually be residual benefit to the Unionville Districts through increased efficiency and extended long-life of the core infrastructure equipment, the costs for which only NYS Route 56 Water and Sewer District property owners will pay.

10. **Q:** Could you give a rough timeline of how the process will proceed if passed, i.e. the time from engineering to start of construction. When would the first residential connection occur and from that point, how long to get to the last connection. Will people be able to utilize the districts during construction or will it get turned on all at one time?

**A:** The timeline will somewhat depend on whether the water district, sewer district, or both of them are approved. Based on vote(s) passing on January 19, 2021, we currently estimate the following schedule:

- Engineering Design: March – October 2021
- Agency Permitting: November – December 2021
- Bidding/Contract Award: January – February 2022
- Construction: March 2022 – May 2023

Contractors can approach private connections in different ways. Some will complete a portion of the main in the road, and then construct/activate private connections on that section before moving to the next segment, repeating the cycle. Others will complete the entire length of main in the road first, and then come back and complete all the private connections. Should the awarded contractor(s) go with the first option, connection could occur as early as noted below:

- First residential connection: Fall 2022
- Last residential connection: Spring 2023