

December 26, 2012

## Township municipal authority passes 2013 budget

*Flat service fee of \$52 to be retained*

BY LINDA HARKCOM

Mt. Pleasant Township Municipal Authority recently passed its 2013 operating budget. The \$508,605 budget is what Chairman Jerome Yasher called a "zero zero budget" with the estimated receipts equal to the estimated expenditures.

"I'm happy to announce we can keep the flat service fee of \$52 per month for all of 2013," Yasher said. "We will not have a full 12 months of billing yet, so it is going to be a very tight budget."

Several residents had questions and complaints related to uncorrected damage from the installation of the new sewage system, some of whom have been waiting months to have problems rectified.

Project engineer Douglas Regola told residents that The West Field Group, the bonding company that took over when Savage Heavy Highway Corp. of Wheeling, W.Va., walked off the job in September 2011, is respon-

sible for the repairs.

"When the bonding company asks for final payment, they will get a punch list of items they have to complete," said Les Mlakar, the authority's solicitor. "We will hold back money from the final payment equal to what it will take to fix each of those items."

Regola reported that the bonding company has hired a crew to survey the entire system and create a record of where everything in the new sewage system is located.

"They may be waiting for this to be completed before they submit their final bill," he said.

Steve Balog of Norvelt had several questions regarding the grinder pump installed on his property as part of the new system.

Balog was told that maintenance of the grinder pump is the responsibility of the authority.

He asked if he could get a letter stating that for future property owners, and Mlakar said he would provide one.

Balog expressed concerns about what would happen

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in the event of a power outage, including how much the grinder pump could hold and whether a generator could be hooked up to the unit.

Mlakar told him the authority would contact the manufacturer to get answers to his questions.

Balog asked what would happen if a small toy or wash cloth accidentally went down the toilet. He was told that the grinder should be able

to handle a small toy but not a piece of cloth. If a cloth were to get into the system, he was told he should contact the authority immediately so the pump could be checked to be sure it would not burn up.

Balog said he had to buy additional wiring to hook up the grinder pump to his home. Initially, he said he was told it was not reimbursable.

Yasher asked to speak to the board as a customer. He, like many others on the board

and in the community, has a grinder pump installed on his property. He said he also had to pay for electrical wire to have the pump connected to his home.

"Everyone else who tapped in only had to pay the cost to tap in and connect, but all of us with grinder pumps had to pay extra and it's just not right," Yasher told the rest of the board.

Linda Harkcom is a freelance writer.