

# Lewiston Town Board session continues with I&I issues, residents' questions

## Town receives \$21.270 million tentative budget for 2025

**PART II BY TERRY DUFFY**  
Editor-in-Chief

The Town of Lewiston board heard more from residents impacted by flooding and inflow/infiltration maintenance issues at its Sept. 23 regular meeting.

Once again, frustrated residents – primarily from the Morgan Farms neighborhood – had questions for Supervisor Steve Broderick, Water Pollution Control Center Administrator Jeff Ritter and town officials. Included were questions on the town's offer of backflow preventer units to affected property owners, and the units' practicality, cost and alternatives. Also, questions arose on sewer maintenance and improvements at the Pletcher Road sewage treatment facility.

Resident Amy Alduino, a member of the Neighborhood Association for Sewer Trouble Eradication (NASTE), said her North Seventh Street residence and her parents' home in the village both experienced costly flooding damage this year. She called the town's backflow preventer option a short-term solution to a long-standing problem.

"I am part of the group of citizens that is working on flooding and sewage backups. One (response) was money put toward backflow preventers. While that sounds like a good idea, people aren't getting them – including my mother, who spent \$20,000 on damage in the basement," she said. "(They) aren't getting them. Because, (once it's installed), the backflow preventer is closed for 24 to 48 hours. So, you can't use (the sewer system). You can't shower, you can't flush, you can't do a lot of things.

"So, you've created an interior sewage issue while you're trying to keep the exterior sewage out. It doesn't work for a lot of our residents."

Alduino questioned the town's budgeting of \$100,000 on the backflow preventers and suggested other alternatives – one being a request for the Highway Department to replace storm sewer grates residents said are above grade on roadways and disrupting the drainage flow. Another was for overall better storm sewer cleaning and general sewer clearing in the neighborhood.

"We'd like to make sure you were thinking about the fact that, (in) January, April and June of this year, we had a lot of people who were impacted by floodwater or sewage backups. We're hoping that you can look into them and that we can start working together (on this)," Alduino said.

Resident Beth Ann Elias, another NASTE member, said her property incurred \$8,000 in damages from flooding. She also asked what the town's response was toward any kind of reimbursement for damage costs: "I know I asked this before and got a flat-out 'No' (from the town). That the residents should take responsibility for the ongoing flooding and sewage problems."

Elias said others in Morgan Farms and above the hill have experienced costly damage and are contending with insurance claims and deductibles: "I know you're

putting money from one account to fund the backflow preventers, which I doubt a lot of people are going to be going for. ... Maybe some of that money could be used (to help people out)?"

"I have seen and talked to people that are at their wits end (on this). I just cannot let this go. These poor folks, they're not able to sustain these damages. ... I would like to see something given to folks that have damage costs."

Mark Elias asked if Lewiston had any plans for a moratorium on building new subdivisions so it could get a better handle on the issue. Broderick said he was "not prepared to do a moratorium."

Councilwoman Sara Waechter also said no.

She recently toured the town's Water Pollution Control Center. The 1970s-era plant serves the tricomunities of Lewiston (town and village), Town of Porter, Village of Youngstown and Ransomville, which fund its operations.

"After touring the wastewater treatment plant, we have capability, from what I understand, to actually double what we currently have as far as residents and houses in the Town of Lewiston. So, our system can handle that type of influx; so, no," Waechter said.

Councilman Rob Morreale said town departments have been working to address the problem, with the purchase of a "half-million-dollar sewer truck" to clean sewer lines and storm sewers; a video camera to examine the interiors of lines; ongoing ditch cleaning by the Highway Department; and new drainage pipes recently installed in the Morgan Farms neighborhood.

"I'm not ready to put a moratorium (on this)," he said. "We have meetings regularly, with sewer, highway, the building inspector, the town engineer. ... We're not just sitting here kicking the can down the road."

Councilman John Jacoby said he was not convinced a moratorium would solve the problem: "Our sewer facility can handle far more than it's handling now; (a moratorium) is not a solution that would help."

Ritter said the town has been working to correct a collapsed line with new piping installed on Morgan Drive toward the river.

"Ninety percent of the water from Morgan comes out that drain," he noted. "Nobody knew it was that because they did it 11 years ago and it failed."

Ritter said the town also cleaned out a 12-inch pipe in a catch basin in Morgan Farms that was half-clogged with paving debris.

Resident Margie Stromback asked Ritter specifically about A-clamps and their purpose with the backflow preventers: "Can you clarify what an A-clamp is and why people might need it?"

Ritter said A-clamps are installed at the bottom of the clean-out vents to sewers – those small PVP pipes typically seen on private properties leading to the sewer main line. "What that does is that it goes down (to) the sewer lateral that takes your sewage out to main line. When you have ground that freezes and thaws, it grabs a hold of that pipe. Eventu-

ally, it will pull it out of the sewer lateral." Thus, the need for the A-clamp.

"(When) it starts to rain, your whole yard (empties) into the sewer system. ... What an A-clamp does, is we can dig down there (to correct the separation). Where that connection is made, this is a metal clamp, it clamps onto the vent stack and the sewer lateral, so it cannot be pulled out" and prevent stormwater flows into the main sewer.

Ritter said numerous properties in Lewiston have a lateral separation problem: "There are certain neighborhoods above the hill that have some bad situations on private property that we fixed up there." He noted the town was going "to take a stab" on fixing these in 2025 under the \$100,000 budgeted.

### Around the town

In other news from the session: •Finance Director Jacqueline Agnello submitted the town's tentative budget summary for 2025. Totalling \$21,270,433, the plan reflects a \$1,207,406 spending increase over last year.

Broken down under appropriations, the numbers show \$14,421,761 in spending, with \$677,193 to be raised by taxes. It includes Lewiston general, \$3,390,091, with \$482,500 raised by taxes; Lewiston general/outside village, \$4,057,289; DB highway drainage-town outside village, \$4,516,212, with \$194,693 raised by taxes; and SS1 Water Pollution Control

Center, \$2,458,169.

Under special districts, there is \$6,848,672 in spending, with \$3,902,021 to be raised by taxes. That includes S10 French Landing drainage, \$5,350, with \$5,350 raised by taxes; SF fire protection, \$1,692,237, with \$1,506,169 raised by taxes; SL Lewiston Heights gas, \$12,000, with \$12,000 raised by taxes; SR refuse-Lewiston O/S village, \$448,695, with \$425,695 raised by taxes; SS2 Lewiston MSIA, \$1,706,359, with \$223,624 raised by taxes; SS3 Lewiston south sewer IA, \$169,487, with \$78,444 raised by taxes; and SW1 Lewiston water improvement, \$2,814,544, with \$973,546 raised by taxes.

The plan includes the 2025 schedule of salaries for elected town officials. The numbers include highway superintendent, \$80,565; town clerk, \$70,208; and town supervisor, \$48,108. This includes a salary waiver of \$13,108 for Broderick, who currently only accepts an annual salary of \$35,000 under the state retirement system.

Also, two town justices at \$31,453 each; and four council

members at \$15,906 each.

The budget is available online for review at [www.townoflewiston.us/town-budget](http://www.townoflewiston.us/town-budget).

•The town approved the appointment of Amy Smith as interim town clerk, effective Oct. 7, at the current salary schedule.

In his remarks, Broderick said, "At our last work session on Sept. 9, we received a letter of resignation from our Town Clerk Donna Garfinkel, after 34 ½ years for the Town of Lewiston. I would personally like to take this opportunity to thank Donna for her years of hard work for the residents of Lewiston. There is no question about Donna's work ethic. I wish her the best and wish her and Neil good health and a happy retirement."

The board also approved the naming of Natalie Soffritti as confidential secretary to the town supervisor at a rate of \$25.50 per hour, effective Oct. 7.

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