

Questions regarding the Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project Assessment

1. What is this assessment for?

When the Ohio EPA issued our current NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit the levels of nutrient pollution, primarily ammonia/nitrogen and phosphorus, were reduced by 60 %. It was determined that the only way to meet the requirements of the new discharge permit was to modify the WWTP with the addition of new processes that would be better suited to our situation. To do this, we acquired a low interest loan from the OWDA. The assessment is to pay the OWDA loan.

2. What components were changed and/or added to the wastewater plant to fix the compliance issue with the EPA?

After evaluating different treatment techniques and processes, it was determined that an orbal (oxidation ditch) design would be best suited to our needs. Along with the nitrogen removal requirement, we addressed phosphorous removal, improved sludge processing and upgraded the electrical system which includes the installation of backup power generation.

3. What is the total cost of the project?

The total cost of the project is \$7,385,871.63.

4. Did you apply for any grants to reduce the cost of the project?

We obtained grant money in the amount of \$330,000 that went towards a sludge press, a backup generator, and high efficiency pumps and motors.

5. Do I have to pay the full assessment amount of \$4,142.38 by August 27, 2021?

You have two options to pay the assessment. The first option you may choose is to pay the assessment amount of \$4,142.38 in full by the deadline date of August 27, 2021. The second option is to have it assessed to your property taxes and pay the assessment amount incrementally over a period of thirty (30) years.

6. Why did property owners only have until Aug 27, 2021 to pay in full?

The Preble County Auditor's office requires a final assessment listing from the LWA by September 13, 2021.

7. Can I make a partial payment towards the amount?

You cannot make a partial payment to the LWA for the assessment amount. You must choose one of the options listed above.

8. Do I have to take any action if I want to place the assessment on my property taxes?

If you choose to have the assessment amount placed on your property taxes, you do not have to act. The LWA will send the necessary information to the Preble County Auditor's office.

9. What is the amount that will be placed on my property taxes if I choose not to pay the assessment in full up front?

If you choose to have the assessment amount placed on your property taxes, the total amount placed on each semi-annual tax bill is approximately \$82.28. (\$164.56/year).

10. The letter I received from Lakengren Water regarding the assessment mentions an interest rate of 0.85% and a collection fee of 3%. Will my assessment amount change based on these percentages?

Both the interest rate and the collection fee charged by the Preble County Auditor are already factored into the amount being assessed to your parcel. Once the assessment amount is placed onto your parcel's tax bill, that amount will not change over the course of the next 30 years.

11. What is the 3% being charged by the county?

The Preble County Auditor charges a collection fee for collecting the assessment for Lakengren Water Authority. The collection fee was previously 5%. The LWA requested that the county reduce it to 3% and the county agreed.

12. Why did the interest rate change from 0.45% to 0.85%?

There is a portion of the OWDA loan that is 0% interest. The portion of the loan that was 0% changed, thus changing the interest amount.

13. Why did the amount of the assessment change from \$3,664.66 from the first letter I received to \$4,142.38 in the final assessment letter?

Property owners of multiple parcels were given until January 1, 2019 to combine their parcels onto one to avoid multiple assessments. This changed the ratio of parcels paying for the assessment, thus changing the amount per parcel.

14. $\$164.56/\text{yr.} \times 30 = \$4,936.80$, not \$4,142.38. Why the difference?

If you choose to pay the assessment in full up front you are not paying the interest rate or collection fee.

15. Were all property owners notified of this assessment?

A certified letter was mailed to all property owner's in October, 2018.

16. I was a property owner in 2018 and don't recall receiving a certified letter.

There were many letters attempted to be delivered to property owners that were not picked up at the post office. A list of those individuals was posted in the Register Herald to notify them that they had not picked up their certified letter. After a period of time, those letters were returned to our attorney's office.

17. What communication took place regarding the actual assessment, other than the October 2018 certified mail letter and the August 2021 letter regarding the final assessment?

A public meeting was held at the lodge on October 23, 2018. On October 31, 2018 a post was made on Lakengren Water Authority's Facebook page regarding the certified letters and encouraging property owners to visit our website, www.lakengrenh2o.org where they could find more information.

18. How are new property owners notified of this assessment?

When new property owners notify the LWA that they have bought a property an information letter is given to them regarding the assessment.

19. Was there anything on the LWA website regarding the assessment --- timing or otherwise?

Information was posted on the LWA website about the assessment at the time that both letters regarding the assessment went out to property owners.

20. Why a property tax assessment vs adding the amount of the assessment to the monthly water/sewer bills? It is a capital infrastructure project that all parcels benefit from, not only sewer users.

21. If I, or my heirs, sell the property before 30 years are up, what happens to the remainder of the assessment that is due?

If you choose to have the assessment placed on your property taxes, the assessment stays with the property should the property change hands.

22. If I pay the assessment in full, will I receive a refund if I sell my property before the 30 years is up?

If you choose to pay the assessment in full you will not receive a refund if you sell the property in the future.

23. Did the project come in on budget?

Yes, the project did come in on budget.

24. Why did the assessment not have to be voted on?

Lakengren Water Authority is a regional water and sewer district under Ohio Revised Code 6119 and does not require a vote from the property owners to place an assessment on the property taxes. We are a separate entity from the Lakengren Property Owner's Association.

25. Can I object to the assessment?

Property Owner's were given a time period within 28 days of the receipt of the first certified letter to object the assessment. No objections may be made since that time has passed.

26. Can I combine my lots to avoid multiple assessments?

Property owners were given until January 1, 2019 to combine parcels to avoid multiple assessments. Parcels combined after that deadline will not be able to avoid multiple assessments.

27. Was the \$10 sewer rate increase that went into effect January, 2019 for this project?

The \$10 sewer rate increase that went into effect for bills due January 15, 2019 was to help with increasing costs in the operation of the wastewater treatment plant and maintenance of existing infrastructure. It was not added to pay for this project.