

PUBLIC MEETING Seeley Sewer District – APRIL 18, 2006

The Public Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Bill Carey. Also present: Commissioner Jean Curtiss and Commissioner Barbara Evans.

Commissioner Bill Carey: Good evening, welcome to this public hearing with the Missoula County Board of County Commissioners. My name is Bill Carey; I'm currently chair of the board. With us tonight is Commissioner Jean Curtiss, Commissioner Barbara Evans and staff members Season Hollaway and Patty Rector. We are taping this and so everything will be on the record. We're here for consideration for setting assessments for the Seeley Lake Sewer District for the 2007 tax bill cycle. Glenn is going to give you a brief overview of how we came to this point and then after that we'll open it up for questions, comments or concerns that you may have.

Glenn Morin: Chair of Seeley Lake Sewer District. I want to thank the Commissioners for coming up and be with us tonight and thank you all for coming. I have a little bit of a background here and some information that will update you on the sewer situation. I also want to introduce our sewer board members; Bob Skiles, Dave Whitesite, Tom Morris, Bob Harlock who is not here tonight and Ralph Kloser is our manager. The Commissioners are the ones we run the assessment program through and they do the collecting for the Seeley Lake Sewer District. Again, we are back here to update you on the need for this assessment. We are a voluntary board voted in by the community. Back in 98-99 and 2000, the need for a sewer system question kept coming up from the community. We had several people coming to us wondering when we were going to do some work toward the sewer and we kind of kept holding them off, but that didn't suffice. So the sewer board had a survey at the elementary school during a regular vote day and found out that more than just 10 people wanted or needed a sewer system. The results were: 50% of those surveyed wanted a sewer system in Seeley Lake and 69% were willing to pay a small fee for the testing, operation and grant money and also grant writing. This is temporary fee, only temporary until we have enough information to take the community for a vote. Back in early 94-95, the sewer district applied for a grant to have the Butte School of Mines do a ground water study, which was done in 96-97. We received a grant and they did the study which gave us a great deal of information to work with. They also found some degradation in the groundwater at the time of the study and the suggested that we continue to do groundwater studies, but at the time we didn't have the money to do so. The community then came to us and asked us what we needed to and how they could get more information about a sewer system. The Board then talked to the Missoula County Commissioners to find out how we should proceed. We then got a preliminary engineering report, so the Seeley Lake community and the business people collected a little over \$28,000, which gave us money for matching and we got a grant from TCEP in the amount of \$15,000 which we put toward the engineering report. There was also money from this grant for operations and the water testing. The Board is still learning, but it takes a lot of money to get more money. After selecting an engineering firm to do the prelim. report, the report is a summary of recommendations, problems, purpose, regulatory requirements, current situations and further projections, different alternatives for wastewater systems, public views on alternatives, a preliminary design, cost and projected user rates. Some of the problems that we have are about 77 lots that are undersized in the District; these lots are under a half acre lot, which the Health Department says they can't build a house unless they have half an acre. These are unbuildable lots. There are about 110 of these lots outside of the District for subdivision that will be coming up. There are also about 100 lots out by the airport, but they are in an area that is in need of some attention. We still have elevated nitrates and fecal chloroform in the groundwater. The projected user rates depends mainly on grant money, at this time we have received \$700,000 in 2005 from STAG, \$1 million also from STAG in 2006 and from DNRC \$500,000 for a total of \$2.2 million in grants promised to Seeley Lake for the sewer project. We are working with rural development, USDA; this project grant depends on upcoming survey. This is a very important grant and many other grant agencies will base their giving on this survey. We still have some surveys for people to complete; we do not have enough results. The survey just gives us more information on the income of the community, it does not mean we will proceed with the sewer; we just need a better price on our monthly project. So, we will be making more calls and mailing surveys out to residents. We gave out a budget when you came in; if you have questions I'll have Ralph go into that a little more later. Grant information is also included on this. We are asking for \$6.00 a month, which

is \$72 per year, from each lot in the District to meet our budget and keep getting money for this project. This is not set in stone; we will still need to vote on the Seeley Lake Sewer District to begin the sewer project. But we need to keep going to see what the overall cost will be to each user of the system. We have already lowered the projected user rate from \$55-\$66 to \$28-\$35 dollars when we worked with the grant people in Helena two years ago. We are going to need a lot of your help to continue work on this project. I'll now open up for questions.

Joan Baker: Seeley District resident. I guess my whole thing is...I know this has to go for a vote before all of the people in the District; why aren't we taking a vote first? Before we continue with all of these studies that will probably go on for years.

Glenn Morin: It's kind of like the chicken and the egg; we have to find out how much this project is going to cost first. In order to do that, we have to go through all this preliminary work to get grant money. We can't go into this deal thinking we're guaranteed this grant money and then if we don't get it, we have to raise the cost to the individual cost from \$28 to \$65 and that just won't go over well. That's why we have to do all of this preliminary work and the Board has to continue working with the engineer, we're working with the Missoula County Planning Board which is going to help us with other grants that we need to get. That's why this whole fee needs to keep being implemented, for information. Another question?

Wayne Walters: I'm in the District. According to the last meeting we had here, why are we even having this meeting when it was held over by popular vote? When the County Commissioners overrode the popular vote at the last meeting.

Glenn Morin: That was the County Commissioners at that time, I don't know if you want to comment or I can share. They suggested that we continue to go through with the study because there is a lot of work that has to be done. They know what the process is to be able to get the grant money to figure out what it's going to cost each user.

Diane Brach: First I want to say, in 2003 when you first had this meeting, this area was packed and a vote was taken and it was all overridden. The County Commissioners had their minds made up before they even finished the meeting that we were going to get a sewer district. The sewer district had been previously formed. It didn't matter what the voters in the district had to say. Then last year, actually 2003, it was going to be a one time assessment of \$72 a year. The letter that we got said there would be not maintenance or operational costs until the sewer was in operation. There is no sewer in operation; we are still paying \$72 a year. Granted, it has to be approved annually. I hope it's not approved, I don't see any accounting for the money that we have paid in taxes as to what you've spent it on.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: So, we could probably have Ralph come speak to that.

Diane Brach: And I did not understand where you had a \$60 a year going down to \$55 a year per \$28 a monthly charge....for what?

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: I think, Glenn, isn't that when you were referring to the estimates as to what it would cost to pay for the sewer system to be built?

Glenn Morin: First time I went to Helena and talked with the grant people over there, they wanted to tell us to be prepared to pay \$55-\$65 and we showed them how much people were paying for water and what their income was. They then said we can go for the lower amount of \$28-\$35.

Diane Brach: Well, I still don't get that. I understand we paid \$72 for the first year because legislature would be matching the funds. Or we'd lose those matching funds. I don't understand what this coming down to \$28 is.

Glenn Morin: Okay. The \$72 was set as a one time fee because they said we could only go for the one year and if we have to renew it, we have to come back and ask again for another one time fee. We're still learning a lot getting in to this and finding out this is stuff that doesn't happen over night. It's taken two

years to get \$2.2 million and we need probably another year to get at least enough money to start the first project, estimated at \$4.7 million. If we can get that money, which is promised to us, then we can come to the voters and say how much it's going to cost them a month to have the sewer system put in Seeley Lake.

Diane Brach: Who's promised you this money?

Glenn Morin: STAG, TCEP, DNRC and whoever we can possibly get money from.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: The STAG money is federal money, the DNRC/TCEP is state money.

Diane Brach: But even though we have no sewer system available, we're still paying \$72 a year?

Glenn Morin: Yes, this is the assessment for the sewer systems to stay operating. That's what the budget on the back of your handout shows. The cost that it is costing us.

Diane Brach: We were assured that we would have no maintenance or operational fees until there was a system and that has not happened.

Glenn Morin: Okay. No that wasn't stated.

Diane Brach: In those notes of 2003, in a letter from the Seeley Lake Sewer District that there would be no operation or maintenance costs until the service is available to them, that's a quote.

Glenn Morin: Right, there is not maintenance, none of that is here. This is just the operation of the District.

Diane Brach: Okay, that's operational.

Glenn Morin: I also believe that it's stated for water testing. So we're not doing any maintenance or anything like that. This is just the project expense for running the sewer district.

Diane Brach: What's the sewer district doing?

Glenn Morin: Well, I guess I'm not getting my point across.

Diane Brach: No, I guess not.

Ralph Kloser: We are working toward grants. That's why you have the handout, here are the things that have been done and the last part is things we're headed towards. They're trying to raise money through the grant process so they can come to you and say 'here's what it would cost to have a facility'...then you would have a vote of yea or nay. But, you can't do this and work with engineer and grant writers without some expense. That's what this is; it's expense to get the information that's on these sheets.

Diane Brach: I don't agree with that.

Ralph Kloser: Agree or disagree, that's what it is. That's the reality.

Commissioner Bill Carey: Another question or comment?

Bill Bogardus: I live in the sewer district. My question to the Board is: how much money are you going to spend before it goes to a vote? And how much have you already spent?

Glenn Morin: All that we're charging is the \$72 a year for the assessment.

Bill Bogardus: No, Glenn, I asked how much you've spent and how much you're going to spend over the next two years of this....because this is, in the design study.

Glenn Morin: \$30,000 was spent for the preliminary engineering report. There is \$2000 a year being spent on water testing.

Bill Bogardus: I see that in the budget, but there's more money that's allotted to be spent than this budget, correct?

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: Is the confusion over where the STAG money and all of that has gone?

Bill Bogardus: Yes.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: You're just holding that, right?

Glenn Morin: Yes. The STAG money and the DNRC, that's held aside. We can't touch that, except for the preliminary site selection.

Bill Bogardus: How much is that?

Glenn Morin: That could be 100 or 150.

Bill Bogardus: Okay, we're going to spend roughly \$200,000 of public money without public input, basically.

Glenn Morin: Yes. You're right.

Bill Bogardus: I think it needs to go to vote before you spend that kind of money.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: The only thing that will happen though, before it goes to a vote is to have all the studies done so they know what the cost to build a sewer system will be. They have a phased plan, so it'll be the first phase. Then these federal and state monies could go toward that, if the people vote.

Bill Bogardus: But they're going to spend upwards of \$200,000 before it even goes to a vote on something that we don't even pass. I'm not saying I'm for or against it, but I believe the community should have the input of going ahead to spend this \$150,000 before it's spent, so that it is not wasted. And I have another point, you have a deficit of \$18,000 in this budget and I don't think the Seeley Lake Sewer District should be run on a deficit.

Glenn Morin: That is a deficit that will have to be taken a year after we're done with this because when assessment came in, it came in a few months too late.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: The first year that we approved this, the DOR didn't get it on the tax bill, so the County fronted the money, so you're just paying back what was approved. You're paying a year late.

Bill Bogardus: What I'm saying is that we should ask for a higher assessment to get it to truly pay the expenses that have been incurred. I feel that this is an inadequate assessment because we want to make it more palatable to the tax payer. That's just how I see it. I feel that it needs to go to a public vote before this kind of money is spent.

Commissioner Barbara Evans: So tell me what you think ought to be the ballot, the question Does Seeley Lake want a sewer? Or does Seeley Lake want a sewer at X dollars a year? Or, what would you have on the ballot if there isn't a financial figure attached to it?

Bill Bogardus: If Seeley Lake's willing to pay to have the sewer go ahead. Because this is not just a one time assessment as some of the others have said before. This is going to be an ongoing thing and it needs to be...we don't need to have the Commissioners come up every year for this. It needs to be funded and if we're going to go ahead with it, it needs to be funded right. And it's not in an assessment in

a bill to every lot owner, monthly or yearly or quarterly. I don't think an assessment every year is the way to fund this system.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: You do understand that this is to fund the study, not to fund the system. The assessment we're doing.

Bill Bogardus: Well, it's to fund the operating expenses is what it's for.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: It's to fund the district....

Bill Bogardus: The operating expenses of the District.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: Yes. But not of the system because we don't have a system.

Glenn Morin: If we don't spend any money, we can't get any money. Every other community has had to do the same. They've had to do the preliminary engineering report and then they had to the preliminary site study before they could get into the system. They had to have a site plan to be able to be used.

Bill Bogardus: I understand you have to spend money to make money, but I'm saying it needs to go to the tax payers before the money's spent. There should be an accountability there.

Commissioner Barbara Evans: Let me explain it as I see it and I'm going to put the caveat up front that I may have it wrong, but I think in my mind Seeley Lake probably should have a sewer, because I still think you drink water out of the lake. Well, if there are septic systems that can be affecting your drinking water, I wouldn't want that to be the case for you folks. But in order to get enough money to help you build a sewer system, and I'm making this up just based on my experience, we have to have numbers to take to Congress to say 'we need to help those people and we've done the preliminary studies to find out how much it's going to cost and it's going to cost X million dollars'. If we have nothing to show that we know the cost, they're not going to be in a position to help us. I understand how frustrating it is to spend money on studies, it's frustrating to all of us, but I don't think you'll get any money to help if we don't have sound numbers to take to Congress or the State or to whoever. So that's why they're studying it, to come up with these numbers and it's been my experience that the congressional folks have been extremely helpful to Missoula County as a whole. I've been up here time and again with Max (Baccus) when he's been showing the things that he's brought to this community, so I think he's going to be receptive to help you guys, but he's gotta have numbers to take to the committees he works with.

Diane Brach: inaudible – off of the mic.

Commissioner Barbara Evans: Well, see I don't know that, all I know is that is apparently what you paid for with the money is that correct?

Glenn Morin: Yes.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: Mrs. Brach, we need you up here on the microphone.

Commissioner Barbara Evans: Mrs. Brach said the study had been done by the school of mines, can you address that Glenn.

Glenn Morin: Yes, the school did the study, but it was only a partial study, but it was really helpful to the engineers when they did the preliminary report. It worked hand in hand, but it wasn't enough to do the whole study that we need to find out all we need to know.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: Didn't the School of Mines study show more the need and this one is going beyond that....how would you design it, how would you build it and what would it cost?

Glenn Morin: They found need; they found the type of water and soil we have. They found degradation in the water and they suggested to the district that we need to continue with the studies and monitoring of the wells. Which we are doing, along with the rest of the project.

Commissioner Barbara Evans: Mrs. Brach wants to know what the results of your monitoring are.

Glenn Morin: I'll have to call on Vince Chapel; he's been monitoring the wells for the past three years. He's been drawing the water and sending the samples in. He has the study results.

Vince Chapel: Runs the water district, I'm also in the sewer district and I support it. For the last three years, since 2003, I've been doing groundwater monitoring from wells in town and the lake, around the lake as well as the water testing that I do for the water district. In the five and a half years that I've been here, the water quality is dropping consistently every year. So the need for a sewer system is growing. The groundwater in the center of community is severely affected by septic pollution and something needs to be done. As far as the testing, we have been consistently testing for... when we first started out we tested for phosphates, chlorides, chloroform bacteria, nitrates, nitrites and as of right now what we're continuing to test for on a quarterly basis is the nitrate, nitrites, chlorides and the total chloroforms and fecal chloroforms that might be in the ground water and/or in the lake. Consistently on most every test that we've completed, we found fecal chloroforms and total chloroforms in the water and in the groundwater around town. So, right there it points to contamination, undrinkable, unsafe water. The nitrates are a big thing that point toward septic pollution in the groundwater and/or lake water. It has gone up consistently over the past two years and is getting higher and higher as more development happens in town. The more development, the more users, the more water being consumed on a monthly basis, it's just impacting the groundwater around town. It's a good thing we do have the water system here in town, however our water comes out of the north end of the lake, so we don't get the direct impact in our water that the people in town do. But, we are still seeing effects of pollution in the draw water that we draw in and treat on a daily basis. I support the sewer system, I support what the district is trying to do, I also support the idea that we need public help, public comment. Everything we can do as a community to put this together....

(Inaudible question)

Vince Chapel: I do testing for the water district at the north end of the lake, we also...

Commissioner Barbara Evans: Excuse me, could you give me your name?

Ron Bowman: I live in Seeley Lake, I live in Double Arrow. I don't know if that's part of Seeley Lake but some people say it is. My question is: are you doing testing up on the north end of lake?

Vince Chapel: We test the water at the north end of the lake where the water plant is. I also test the water at the center of town on the lake, down by the dock area down in the bay and I test on the river leaving the lake.

Ron Bowman: So you're testing in the lake itself, is that right?

Vince Chapel: Yes.

Ron Bowman: Some of those numbers are degrading, correct?

Vince Chapel: Yes.

Ron Bowman: Seeing more nitrates, nitrites, even the chloroform, those numbers are going up?

Vince Chapel: Yes and fecals.

Ron Bowman: How about the north end? What are you testing for there? Nitrates, nitrites?

Vince Chapel: On the north end we're testing for....we have a whole list of tests. Everything from volatile organics, inorganic chemicals, synthetic organics, fecals....everything.

Ron Bowman: And you've seen those going up in numbers at the north end?

Vince Chapel: At the north end where we pull out, it's not climbing as significantly as it is down at this end, but it is going up every year just a slight amount. I don't have those test results in front of me.

Ron Bowman: I'm just wondering, 1%, 2%?

Vince Chapel: I can't give you that percentage off the top of my head.

Ron Bowman: Okay. You don't have to be....

Vince Chapel: If I had my water testing with me, I'd give you that percentage.

Ron Bowman: You don't have to be a rocket scientist to go down to the south end and look by Wendy's and see all the plant life we have there. Talking to Fish, Wildlife and Parks we basically got a liquid fertilizer system going on down there.

Vince Chapel: I'll give you the nitrate, nitrite numbers right now in the center of town and on my wells in town. The nitrate, nitrite levels are running between a 5 and a 7.5. At the north end of the lake where I pull my water out, I think last summer when I tested those we were running about a 3.

Ron Bowman: Parts per million?

Vince Chapel: Parts per million, milligrams per liter, yes.

Ron Bowman: Okay.

Vince Chapel: So, about...what I'm seeing in my plant is about half of what we see in the center of town from the effect of the sewer system.

Ron Bowman: Then I have to come back and say I'm very discouraged by those numbers. I know at the south end of town, looking at the plant life there and what's going in there, I know it's bad and it's getting worse. If you're at half that level, I'm very concerned.

Vince Chapel: Right now the state limit is 10 milligrams/liter.

Ron Bowman: Oh yeah? Thank you.

Commissioner Barbara Evans: I want to tell a story. In Missoula on the south end of town is the Linda Vista area. About ten years ago, maybe longer, there were nitrites and nitrates in the water and the state health department had determined that either it was going to get fixed and those folks were going to be on the sewer or they were going to have to stop flushing. Now, we were able to hold off on that order from the state because....it took about three times to go through Linda Vista and ask them if they would agree to it, I think it was an SID, and if they did there was federal money to help cut the costs to them. I think three times they said no. Ultimately we had to do it anyway and then the cost to each home was close to \$10,000. So, it really was....and now they're on the sewer and now they can drink their water. I don't want to be in a position to tell you people 'we're going to do it whether you like it or not,' that's not my style. But, it is our responsibility to look after the health of the community, you're part of our county, and I've seen what happens when you don't have a sewer. The growth continues, and we can't stop it just because we feel like it, the law doesn't give us the authority to do that. So, the growth will continue, the degradation of your water will continue and someday someone's going to get sick. We don't want to see that, so we're kind of charged with the responsibility of making a decision that might not be popular,

but one that can help protect the public safety and public health. So that's the place we're in. Mrs. Brach?

Diane Brach: I've lived on the south side of Missoula. I was forced to put in a sewer. I paid my monthly fee before I even had it. I paid my \$10-\$15,000 to get it in and then the assessment. My concern, personally, is not that Seeley doesn't need a sewer...my concern is Boy Scout Road.

Commissioner Barbara Evans: We all want to fix Boy Scout Road.

Diane Brach: Those of us that are on Boy Scout Road, we have filters so we can drink the water.

Commissioner Barbara Evans: I'm thinking of the surface of the road. I'm not thinking of the drinking water. I did ask Greg about this road the other day and we would love to get to that. He's got it in the plan, if he can get to it, but money, cost...I'm talking about fixing, and I don't know whether that means paving, grading...I don't know what it means, all I know is that it needs work. So we know that, I'm sorry.

Diane Brach: Just fix it (laughing). So, back to the sewer. Everyone, I do believe, on Boy Scout Road has protested this. I agree the Town of Seeley Lake needs a sewer system. Those of us who have been, for whatever reason, included in the sewer district and I don't want to be, are being forced to take on these charges. How do we fix that? Like I said, our water, we are not....our sewer's not going into the lake. I don't know what your tests on the very south of the lake are, if you're taking it out of the north end, you should come to the south end. Anyway, with our home filter systems and whatever....

Glenn Morin: If we do that and we have people that are in the district and they don't want to be and they're polluting the water just as much as everyone else in town. Maybe they are or maybe they're not....

Diane Brach: I don't see where you're proving that we've polluted the water.

Glenn Morin: But you're sitting right on the lake and whatever you're doing there, you're polluting right along with the rest of us.

Diane Brach: I don't see where your testing is proving that we're polluting on the south end of the lake.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: I think that Mr. Chapel just said the south end of the lake is way worse than the north end.

Diane Brach: Based on where? Where is your testing taking place?

Vince Chapel: The testing that we've done is right at Lindy's Dock in the bay. Down in the bay area and down at the river view bridge, the water leaving the lake. That's directly influenced by the groundwater that comes through Boy Scout Road, River View and out of the lake.

Diane Brach: I don't agree with that, do you?

Vince Chapel: Part of the PER, the engineers did a study on the water flow in the aquifers in the area and how that impacts, or how that flows through the aquifers and out into the lake. If you folks want to look at that, the PER is in the library here at the high school. It shows directly how those aquifers and how the water flows. If you look at that you can see the high density of town and where it comes through town and how it affects the lake. That shows where the flow of the water is coming.

Cy Baker: I live on the south shore of Seeley Lake. I'm in the sewer district. This study you're referring to, is that the one that was done by the School of Mines?

Vince Chapel: It's the PER that was just done by Entranco, the engineers that were hired by the sewer district.

Cy Baker: They have done their own individual study?

Vince Chapel: They used the School of Mines and they did their own study. They used the School of Mines study to help with their own study and reflect back and forth between the two.

Cy Baker: Okay. I'd like to go back a little ways here and I don't want to confuse the issue here. But originally, it wasn't the Seeley Lake Sewer District that had the School of Mines do the study; it was the state legislature appropriating money to do the study because there were some individuals in Seeley Lake that wanted to build condos on the lake. Bob Scott was running the Sewer District at that time. This goes back quite a ways. That was the reason we petitioned the County of Missoula, the Commissioners to create a Sewer District, so we would have the right (the individuals that lived in the district) to vote on a sewer, whether it was established or not. On board were the Forest Service and everyone else. This was a big promotion. Everyone else dropped out. There's a handful of people that are holding the bag for this. There was a study done here at the school when we were voting, that vote was taken by everyone in the district, not just in the sewer district, but all the voters. They voted to put a fee; such has been established right now, that the people in the district would pay. Well, they're immune to it because most of them live out of the district. Now, we live on the south shore of Seeley Lake and when this district was first created, by the School of Mines, we had a town meeting. Some of us were asked to pay the people from the School of Mines for their water study. I was one of the individuals; they promised us that they would give us the results of this test. I'm still waiting for the results. I called them a year later and they said they'd get it right to me, I never got it.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: I think the district was formed about 13 years ago?

Glenn Morin: I would say you're going further back because when I was on the board that was in 1995-96 that we got the grant for the Butte School of Mines study.

Cy Baker: The state legislature gave the School of Mines the grant for that study NOT the sewer board. I was an original member on that sewer board. That's not correct.

Glenn Morin: Well, we got the grant, but the School of Mines did the study.

Cy Baker: The School of Mines did the study before there was a sewer board created in Seeley Lake.

Glenn Morin: No. No, in 96-97 the Butte School of Mines did the study and that was the money that we got for it.

Cy Baker: I was on the sewer board then, Mr. Morris was on the board. Herb Geisler was on the board. Jean Herndon was on the sewer board. Do you have the minutes for all those meetings, Glenn?

Glenn Morin: I don't know if we do or not.

Cy Baker: All I'm saying is this thing has been totally misrepresented from the get go.

Glenn Morin: Let me have Tom give a little history on that.

Cy Baker: Let me just finish here and I'll let this get on. I agree with everyone here, I think we need a sewer district. The groundwater in town is bad. Around the lake, is not being contaminated unless my figures have been wrong all these years by the town. It's overuse on the lake. The use on the lake has probably tripled.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: You're talking about boats and other uses?

Cy Baker: Boats, wave runners...just activity on the lake. It's busy. So, naturally the water's going to be degraded. But, I think we ought to have the truth here, what's going on. What the engineers are doing

here and what's being done. They keep referring to this study that's been done by the School of Mines and where is the engineer study? You're paying them a great deal of money, where's there study?

Glenn Morin: I have it at my shop.

Cy Baker: You've got it?

Glenn Morin: I do have the study from the Butte School of Mines and it's also in the PER and it's in the one at the library here at the high school.

Cy Baker: Do you have the man hours and all of everything?

Glenn Morin: Everything is there that was done on the study.

Cy Baker: That's nice to know, this is the first time I've heard anyone say that. They're always referring to the Montana Tech study, well the Montana Tech study was done by one person and one student and they put a barrel out in front of my place on Boy Scout Road. They took a little tap and groundwater out of the house that was their study. I live on the lake and I watched them.

Glenn Morin: That must have been before the School of Mines study.

Cy Baker: Politics work in strange ways, but they couldn't build the condos because they didn't have the sewer system. But if we put a system in, then we can have the condos, right?

Commissioner Barbara Evans: It sounds to me like there may have been more than one study and I'm going to put that in quotes by the School of Mines. There may have been more than one.

Tom Morris: I live in the sewer district and I have been on this sewer board, both elected and not appointed, since its inception in April 1992. That's the year that we opened the official sewer district that exists as it is today. There was, previous to that, and ad hoc committee that served as a sewer board and helped raise funds and circulate petitions in order to form the existing sewer district. I served on that since day one with Herb Geisler and he was our chairman. The purpose of the sewer district when it was formed is very clearly stated in the bylaws and I can't quote it verbatim, but the purpose is to study the need for a sewer system and the cost in Seeley Lake. That has been our purpose since the inception. Also, to not install something that we didn't need. 14 years we've been working on making sure whatever we do is what's best for the community of Seeley Lake. The district was voted upon by all voting members that are now inside the district, except for the additions that were just annexed in last year. I think that's an answer to one of the questions that was asked earlier... 'why don't we have a vote on how much we spend?' This district was formed by you, the people that live in the district. If you didn't live here then, I guess you didn't get the vote, but you had a vote at the time. We were formed then and authorized to serve you in seeking out the need. That's what the money is being spent on, that's all the money's being spent on and it's only been the last three years that we've asked for money. One of the questions asked about what the costs to the district are. By law, we're required to have a secretary and a manager. For many years, we had volunteers do it, but the deeper we get the less glamorous this job is. Nobody wants to volunteer. I guarantee you we're not paying our manager very much. I do thank you and I appreciate those of you who have come tonight to voice your opinion. I am one of the people who don't want a system that we don't need. But I do believe that we need to continue until we find something that will be cost effective for our community or not. That's what we're asking you for with this assessment.

Joan Baker: You said that there were additional places that were annexed into this area? Could you show us or tell us where? And how many lots are there? Originally there was something like 480 some, now how many?

Glenn Morin: From Pop's to the...to Gateway. They've all annexed in, just the people on the east side of the highway and it's only how far their lots go in to their. They're the only ones who have annexed in.

Joan Baker: Most of those lots, in my recollection, are empty.

Glenn Morin: Yes. There are several in between there that are empty and then Missoula Electric substation and then Valley Market and then the Wilderness Gateway motel.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: Is the health center in there as well?

Glenn Morin: Yes.

Joan Baker: I would just like to make a point...Glenn, I do appreciate you and all of the other board members for doing what you're doing, but I still feel we need a vote of the people before we go so much further. We're getting deeper and deeper in and we're still wondering 'where are we?'

Glenn Morin: That's been a question of the board for a long time. We've wanted to do it, but then we ask what are we voting on? Are we voting on \$50/month or are we voting on \$28/month? I can't tell you that. That is the life of this whole thing here.

Joan Baker: Once more, none of the people on the lake...there's only about six of us that live year round on the lake. We have taken our water out of the lake from the day we moved in. For the first five to eight years we didn't even have a filter system. Now we have about \$5000 in our filter system, but we drank the water out of the lake. We did not get city water, because the City didn't give it to us.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: But it sounds to me that you must be concerned about the water coming out of the lake if you bought filter systems?

Joan Baker: I'm still here and I've been drinking it raw for years!

Diane Brach: Of course we have chosen to take our water out of the lake, because we don't have a choice and we will filter it. But on the annexation, how did those people get in and some of us cannot get out?

Glenn Morin: The ones that were out of the district, they can annex in if they want, but they have to be right next....there can't be any jumping. They have to be a person next to the district and if the guy on the other side wants in, but the neighbor next to the district doesn't, he can't get in until they decided to be annexed. It has to be a chain reaction.

Diane Brach: Okay, how can we get out?

Glenn Morin: I don't think that's.....the district was formed in real troubled areas and I guess I'm not ready to let you out of there.

Laura Mariani: How many people are going to pay the yearly fee?

Ralph Kloser: 446.

Laura Mariani: So it's 446 times 72 or whatever it is? Thanks.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: So that comes to \$31,112 a year that would go to the district.

Jean Laufenear: We have a place on the lake, we don't live it in year round, but we have been there since 1951. You couldn't pay me to drink the water from the lake, even if it was filtered. The one gentleman talked about the growth in the water...we can't even swim; there's so much growth in the water. It used to be beautiful, clear to the bottom, I know it's polluted.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: One thing I think maybe, Glenn, you can answer is: When you were giving your presentation, a couple people asked about the survey, could you go into that a little more? The

income survey that's need for CDBG (Community Development Block Grant money), this money we can apply for, but in order to do that, you have to show that a certain percentage of the folks in the community are in need in financial help, or that adding the assessment would be hard on them income wise. I think some people said they didn't get a survey and they'd like to take one.

Glenn Morin: I actually brought some of the surveys with me here tonight.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: Because the survey is about income of the community, it could really help us to get additional money from a different source besides the ones that have been noted.

Commissioner Barbara Evans: And the higher percentage of folks who are in that category, the better the chance of getting the funding.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: For example, in East Missoula, I think we had 13 funding sources for that sewer system, but those folks hardly paid anything because of the low income qualifications there.

Glenn Morin: We know that in Seeley Lake the income is pretty low and that would greatly help us out if we could get all those surveys back in.

Diane Brach: I fail to see the significance of taking a total during an election, when it included in and out of the district. (Inaudible) whether we needed a sewer.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: I don't understand what you're saying, Diane.

Diane Brach: When the poll was made at the election as to whether or not we needed a sewer district, it was for anybody. I fail to see the significance, why wasn't it just in sewer district?

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: Do you know whether they justified who was....when they took the poll at the election, did they ask voters if they were in or out of the district when they took the survey?

Glenn Morin: You're talking about the one that the Sewer District took, the pile right there? Yes, they had right on there whether you were in the district or not. I have that box over there that is full of everyone who did it, I have the results right here with me. Several people have signed their names, they know who they are and we have it all right here tonight. Back to the questions on the grants that we need the survey for, financial strategy, working out with the engineer, the calendar grant needed, district income survey needed for rural development RD grant, community development block grants (CDBG) and the economy development administration (EDA). That's what we need the survey for, to get the money.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: They could also use help getting people to take the survey, if any of you want to take that that would be great.

Laura Mariani: Just because you're not in the district right now, they could change it and make you be in the district, so I think that everyone here in Seeley Lake whether they're in Double Arrow or wherever, they should be able to take the survey and get their input, so if down the road you decide to add everyone at least everyone had a chance to express their input.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: They can't force you to be in, people have petitioned to be in.

Laura Mariani: Okay, maybe someone that lives somewhere else decides to be annexed in, but I think everyone should have a say since we're all one small community. We should have a chance to look at the data and have a chance to decide for themselves. You may get a bigger area down the road, ya know?

Glenn Morin: There are a lot of things I would change, but we have to work with what we've got.

Ron Bowman: Could we make the district larger? We have 446, plus four more or something like that...is that the number we have in the district? Could we make it bigger? I'm not in the district, should Double Arrow be in it? So we have a larger area around Seeley that's in the district, spread the costs a little further.

Glenn Morin: It's a problem because the district is a certain size and you just can't expand it, you can only go one lot at a time to make it bigger. Right now we're stuck with the district that we have and that's where it's at.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: Unless people annex in.

Glenn Morin: Yes and it would be one lot at a time.

Joel Morrison: I live on Seeley Lake and I've drank that water from the lake ever since I've been here. In the 70's on the other side of the state, once a town in an area the health department wanted to condemn them. They went ahead and did everything and the people found the cost was unprohibitive, it cost them a lot of money. So that's when those communities and others found out what happened, that's basically how this program started. Get the people involved at the very beginning, make sure you have all the proper surveys because if the health department condemns the whole area then we have no say on what was tested or how it's tested or a darn thing. And you think you're mad now, you should've seen the people back then. So I don't know if I've cleared up the muddy water or not, however as you move people into the area the way they are now, it inevitable. Either we can be part of helping develop the system or they'll do it and not worry about the cost or our input. Hopefully these fees now will save us more fees in the future. But there's not guarantee on that with the political system we have nowadays, it changes all the time, but if it was back to the original days when they had planned it, it was a good plan. Everyone knew what was happening. The other way, you didn't get that choice. About this lake, really I've understood...there bentonite in the bottom of that lake. They used to make clay things out of it, so basically they're really shouldn't be any water coming up from underneath it if that's the case. We used to line reservoirs with about six or seven inches of bentonite and it would not leak, only if a cow or something stepped deep enough beneath the water to get it going through it. So I don't know about...we did have a spring once upon a time right out from their place there and that would've flushed the water away a lot better. I do know one thing, once you get a lot of weeds in the water, there's going to be bacteria in there, but some of them our bodies will take care. Some of them, maybe not...the fecal deal they probably won't deal with. But most of the plants, I think you could probably get used to unless there's a poisonous plant.

Diane Brach: I am just wondering, this meeting was held in September last year for 2006, why are we doing it so early this year?

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: Because we were so late last year and we didn't want to do that again. It has to be heard a certain number of days before an election, before we do the tax bills and last year we were really pushing the limit. That's why it was held in town and not up here.

Diane Brach: Okay, so the last vote was for one year rather than six months like this might be.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss and Glenn Morin: Yes.

Ralph Kloser: I do the administrative work for the Seeley Lake Sewer District. I think it should be noted that the sewer board meets the third Thursday of every month in the Pyramid Lumber Conference Room. It's an open meeting, anyone can come. They meet at 5:00. It's also posted in the Pathfinder each month, so if any of you want to come to a meeting, please feel free.

Commissioner Bill Carey: What's the wish of the Commissioners?

Commissioner Barbara Evans moved to approve the \$72.00 per lot assessment for the total listed for my reasons said earlier. Commissioner Jean Curtiss seconded. The motion carried on a vote of 3-0.

Commissioner Barbara Evans: I hope you understand this isn't done with any desire to harm any of you, it's done because I really think this is something you need.

Commissioner Jean Curtiss: I think Mr. Morris actually stated very well that the purpose of this district has always been to study, see if there's a need for a sewer, what it would cost and not install something that's not needed. I think your Board has done all of this stuff voluntarily for eleven or so years, but you get to a point where if you're going out and trying to find money to fund what might be needed in the end, you're going to have to have some money to do that. I think it's a good Board that has your interest in mind and this assessment will help them make sure the study tells everything that needs to be there.

Commissioner Bill Carey: For me, when the studies are showing the gradual, but steady degradation of the water, that's a public health issue. That's our responsibility to address that. I also think in order to make an informed vote on whether or not you want a sewer, you're going to need to know the cost. Otherwise, it would be like voting for a blank check to give to someone to just go ahead and do the sewer and we'll pay whatever it happens to total. We have to know numbers before making an intelligent decision on whether or not you support that.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Commissioners were in recess at 8:15 p.m.