

Surry County set to vote on turnover to HRSD



By Diana McFarland

Managing editor

SURRY — The estimated average monthly sewer bill for Surry County households under the Hampton Roads Sanitation District is expected to initially be \$56.85 — if the county and town of Surry agree to turn over their facilities to the regional authority.

The Surry Board of Supervisors is expected to consider the agreement with HRSD at its December meeting. The Surry

Town Council does not plan to put the issue on its agenda for December, said Mayor Will Gwaltney.

The proposed rate assumes households use 5,000 gallons per month, according to a letter to Surry Board of Supervisors Chairman John Seward from HRSD General Manager Ted Henifin.

The minimum bill would be \$34.11, based on the use of 3,000 gallons a month.

Currently, town of Surry residents pay \$47 a month for 4,000 gallons and \$11.75 per thousand over that amount — or \$58.75 for 5,000 gallons — about \$2 more than the proposed HRSD rate.

Surry County currently charges \$39 a month for up to 3,000 gallons and \$2.20 per thousands gallons over that amount — or \$43.40 a month — about \$13 less than the proposed HRSD rate. That rate hasn't changed since 2010.

However, if the proposed rate is approved by HRSD, that rate would be lower than other small communities in the region such as West Point, Urbanna and King William County.

While Surry County Circuit Court ordered that Surry County be included in HRSD's territory, the Surry Board of Supervisors and the Surry Town Council have yet to formally enter into an agreement to turn over their assets to the authority.

The court order includes Surry County and the towns of Surry and Dendron. The town of Claremont decided to opt out of the arrangement.

The town of Surry operates its own sewer system, but it has been plagued for years with regulatory violations.

Surry County also operates a system that includes the town of Dendron.

Proponents of HRSD cite inadequate existing facilities that are risking future economic and population growth.

And without HRSD, the 90-year old Edwards Virginia Smokehouse — and one of the county's larger employers — would be unable to rebuild after it was destroyed by fire in January.

Others are concerned that residents will be subject to future rate increases.

In his letter, Henifin provided a rate projection through 2022, and in that year would put the minimum monthly bill at \$45.53 a month — an increase of 33 percent in five years.

Residents who own private septic systems would not fall under HRSD's jurisdiction.

The HRSD Commission must approve the Surry rate and it must be publicly advertised and will not be scheduled until the service agreement has been negotiated, advised Henifin.

Details

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