



4th Annual Forum Presented to the Public

This past May, the Hicksville Water District hosted its 4th Annual Forum for residents, civic leaders, elected officials and other interested individuals. Water Commissioners Karl Schweitzer, Nicholas Brigandi and Richard Humann presented the program, along with District Superintendent William Schuckmann and consulting engineer John Molloy, P.E. The meeting has been summarized and presented in this special edition of the district's periodic newsletter.



Hicksville Water Commissioners Richard Humann (left), Karl Schweitzer (right) and Nicholas Brigandi (fourth from left); Superintendent William Schuckmann (fourth from right) and engineering consultant John Molloy (second from right) welcomed interested guests at the water utility's annual forum. Pictured left to right: Bethpage Water Commissioner John Sullivan; Oyster Bay Water Commissioner Richard Niznik; Oyster Bay Town Councilwoman Rose Marie Walker and Nassau Legislator Edward Mangano.

Special Districts & Consolidation

Commissioner Schweitzer presented the views of the Board of Water Commissioners regarding efforts by state and county officials to consolidate special districts in Nassau.

Although we too are sensitive to the property tax burden felt by residents, the water supply in Hicksville should not be treated as a political football by elected officials as they attempt to sort through the many layers of government to resolve the tax issue. While we share their concerns, eliminating special districts will not provide tax relief or any reduction at all. An equal number of wells would still be needed to meet consumer demand and many areas, including Hicksville, would still face the same environmental challenges they face today. Additionally, multi-million-dollar treatment facilities would still be needed and ultimately funded through water rates and taxes. Consolidation would not lower cost; at best it would only equalize cost — at the price of losing local control of the water supply.

Hicksville supplies the best water around and they do it for costs lower than the rest of the nation. Every gallon pumped is done with the electric rates that are nearly the highest around.

Over the last 18 months, politicians in varying layers of government have scrutinized the current alignment of all special districts, while mistakenly lumping "true" special districts, water and fire, with those created and run by local villages, townships and Nassau County. In fact, the real story behind the history of our parks, lighting, garbage and other such districts, each of which is itemized on our property tax bills, reveals that they were created specifically to have the public believe that taxes were remaining stable, while they were actually skyrocketing.

In breaking down a typical annual Hicksville residential property tax bill of \$6,100, the school district accounts for 63%, the county portion makes up 19% and the town 13%. Yet, just 3% (\$206) is designated to fire protection and

2% (\$147) for an abundant supply of clean drinking water — clearly not the cause of high property taxes.

Lately, it appears that while the political bandwagon is going by, everyone needs to jump on. This past January, Governor Eliot Spitzer appointed a special commission to explore consolidation of special districts in New York, failing to include an individual with knowledge of the public water districts. A study released by NY State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli lumped together statistics gathered about special districts, without a true comparison of water and fire. Another special report, issued under false pretense by Nassau Comptroller Howard Weitzman, used data collected from audits his office performed on sanitation districts, which have absolutely nothing to do with

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Plan for the Protection of Our Drinking Water

It takes tremendous foresight and a vast knowledge of the public drinking water industry, as well as an understanding of issues pertaining to it, to develop a long-term plan. But this is essential to ensure that residents continue to receive a plentiful supply of high quality water for the purposes of drinking and fire protection for many years to come.

"Improvements to the infrastructure of a public water supply cannot be made overnight; in most cases they require months or sometimes years of planning, ample time for government approvals and capital to cover expenses," explained Hicksville

Water Commissioner and Board Chairman Nicholas Brigandi. "For these reasons, master planning is a concept used by a vast number of municipalities as an effective tool to plan for the future."

With that in mind, Hicksville water officials have been working with the district's engineers to develop a 15-year master plan. It specifically makes recommendations for maintaining, upgrading and expanding the utility's facilities with respect to: system capacity, water quality and treatment, and future demand. At the same time, particular attention is being paid to existing and proposed federal, state and county regulations.



The following provides an overview of some of the more significant projects being evaluated by the Board of Commissioners that may be placed on the drawing boards in Hicksville. These were reviewed by the water district's consulting engineer John Molloy P.E. of H2M Consulting Engineers, during the water district's 4th Annual Public Forum, which was held this past May.

Plant 3 (Jerusalem Avenue)

This plant had been held in reserve for several years due to water quality issues. The district decided to drill a test-well in 2005 that penetrated further into the aquifer than the depth of the off-line well. When water pumped from the deeper level was of good quality, the district engineers recommended adding a new well to the site, blending the water from both the new and existing wells and providing treatment to meet strict quality standards. Bringing this site back on line will improve the pressure and supply at the southern end of the district.

Estimated at approximately \$3.6 million, the proposed improvements for Plant No. 3 include: new well construction; site work; demolition of the existing well-vault and pump station; building construction; Granular Activated Carbon for VOC treatment; mechanical, piping and

HVAC; electrical construction and an emergency generator.

Plant 7 (Miller Road)

Well No. 7-1 was originally constructed in 1958 at a depth of 605 feet. There have been no traces of VOC contamination to date, however, over the past three years, nitrates have been detected at this well at concentrations ranging from 8.0 to 8.4 parts per million (ppm).

The district recently drilled a test-well 700 feet below grade, the deepest portion of the Magothy Aquifer, to determine if higher water quality could be obtained. Additionally, geologic information will be gathered that can then be used to design a permanent new well, if one is constructed. Depending upon the quality of the water obtained by the test-well, the plant may be upgraded accordingly, so the district can continue to have reliable use of the pump station. Construction costs are estimated to be \$2.7 million.

Plant 8 (Dean Street)

The general chemistry of the water quality from this well is very good, however, the well does exhibit increased nitrate concentrations, in addition to the presence of VOC contamination for which it is treated. Once the raw water from the well is treated through a packed tower aeration system called air-stripping, any VOC's that may be present are removed so they are no longer detected.

With the nitrate concentrations at Plant 8 trended upward over the past few years, nitrate treatment is proposed to maintain the long-term viability. In conjunction with a new larger clearwell at the plant, the nitrate treatment process will include; an ion exchange filtering system and associated regeneration equipment; mechanical piping; a masonry building construction; and site-work. The estimated construction costs are \$3.1 million.

Plant 11 (Plainview Road)

In November 2006, this well was impacted by tetrachloroethylene (PCE) contamination at a high concentration of 11 parts per bil-

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Superintendent Bill Schuckmann

The following is a synopsis of a report by Superintendent Schuckmann during the water district's 4th Annual Public Forum, which has been updated for this publication.

Plant 1 Water Tower Rehabilitation

Hicksville Water has completed a \$1.7 million project to rehabilitate its 1.25-million-gallon elevated steel water storage tank on Bethpage Road. With the structure's 14-year-old coating system needing replacement, activity included sandblasting, steel grinding and the use of a full-containment or draping system. Additionally, various repairs were made to the steel as well as the water tower's concrete base, vent screen and existing electrical conduits. Prior to undergoing these capital improvements, the tank was last refurbished in 1992.

Interconnection Improvements at a Savings

In the event of an emergency, a series of valves are in place at the interconnections to neighboring water utilities that enable Long Island's public suppliers to flow water to each other. Improvements have been made to the valves that connect Hicksville to both the Bethpage and Plainview Water Districts. With seven additional interconnections to the remaining boarding suppliers in need of upgrading, Hicksville Water entered into a cooperative municipal agreement with those utilities, the Jericho and Westbury Water Districts, as well as the Town of Hempstead's Bowling

Plan for Our Drinking Water

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lion (ppb). The well has been removed from service until treatment can be implemented. Meanwhile, the district continues to investigate the source of the contamination.

A VOC treatment system at Plant No. 11 will include: new air-stripping treatment system, treatment building and clearwell; miscellaneous improvements to the building and site; the addition of an emergency generator; mechanical piping and booster pumping system; and electrical power and control systems. Estimated construction costs are \$3.5 million.

Green and Levittown Water Districts. By sharing the costs of the project, each supplier netted a considerable savings, which was more than \$400,000 for Hicksville.

Leak Detection Program

When a leak occurs in pipes below the surface of the earth, it's often difficult to discover the leak as well as its exact location. For this reason, a leak detection program is a necessary component to the successful management of a public water distribution system and a helpful tool for providing the accurate position of leaking water pipes within a supply system. This way, subsequent repairs can be made so water and energy can ultimately be conserved. Water lost along the distribution system, after treatment and pressurization, but before delivery to customers, results in lost revenue and wasted energy.

The water district, which conducted its last leak detection survey in 1992, is moving forward to complete a more current survey before the start of the next summer season, typically a period of heavy pumping to meet the high public demand for water.

Emergency Consumer Notifications

Although Hicksville Water created a mutual-aid agreement with neighboring water suppliers to assist with hand-delivering an urgent public notification, if necessary, the process would require an enormous amount of time and effort. With first-class mail an even slower option, water officials explored ways to speed up the utility's public notification process.

Soon, the district will introduce a phone/internet "Reverse 911" notification system that, in event of an emergency, will provide instant notifications to consumers, via a telephone call. Additionally, there are provisions in the system, which is web-based, for e-mail notifications and multiple notifications through the use of cell phones. An inter-municipal agreement with the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management is currently being developed.

Sprinkling Regulations

Watering is restricted to odd / even days according to your house number.

Absolutely no sprinkling is permitted between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

4th Annual Forum

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water districts, to make recommendations for improving all special districts.

In March of 2006, the County Comptroller's office began an extensive audit of three water districts, including Hicksville. Four months later, the audit team departed Hicksville without a single recommendation or finding. Although the county stated that it would hold a closing conference before the audit was finalized, there has been no dialogue between the comptroller's office and water district officials.

Finally, *Newsday* has assigned a reporter to join the rhetoric by launching a Freedom Of Information Law (FOIL) request to begin a yearlong investigation of

water districts to develop an exposé seemingly similar to what was done to area fire districts.

For years, many communities similar to Hicksville have benefited from maintaining local control of their water utility, as consumers have received an abundant supply of potable water and elected representatives, who reside in the community, have strived to keep costs down. Employees of local water districts, who typically live within the community and are responsive 24/7, have provided unparalleled service to address water-related needs and concerns of residents and the commercial entities they serve.

Currently, every dollar paid for water use and for water taxes is returned to consumers in the form of capital improvements and to the

operation and maintenance of the local water district. It does not go into a general county or town fund where it can be diverted to support a budget shortfall or other non-water related programs.

When you consider the critical needs addressed by water service, tap water will always provide tremendous value at a bargain price, but you cannot put a price on hometown service and local control. So, as we arrive at this crisis, our political leaders should adopt a plan that reduces property taxes by focusing on the services that do not affect public health protection. If consolidation of water districts is forced upon us, the reliability of water service will likely erode over time. We need to fix what is broken and support what works!

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YOUR HICKSVILLE WATER DISTRICT

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Board Meetings

Second and Fourth Tuesday of the month at 5 p.m.
at the district office, unless otherwise announced.

Business Hours

8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Weekdays

Superintendent

William E. Schuckmann

Account Clerk

Doreen Brunning

Commissioners

Nicholas J. Brigandi, **Chairman**
Richard Humann, **Treasurer**
Karl M. Schweitzer, **Secretary**

24 Hour Emergency Number
(516) 931-0184

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American Water Works Association
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