

## RIVERHEAD TOWN

# Suffolk sued over sewers

Board says \$700G in treatment fees is overdue for 2018

BY JEAN-PAUL SALAMANCA

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Riverhead officials have agreed to sue Suffolk County over what they say is more than \$700,000 in sewer fees the county has failed to pay since last year.

The town board voted 5-0 at its May 22 meeting to hire Riverhead-based law firm Smith, Finkelstein, Lundberg, Isler and Yakoboski LLP to start legal proceedings against Suffolk County to recover sewer rents due from

the treatment of sewage generated at the County Center facility on Center Drive.

Riverhead in December set the total fees the county owed them for sewer treatment at the facility at \$720,311.44 for last year, which was due Feb. 1, and \$696,073.83 for this year, which would be paid with four installments of \$174,018.46 apiece. The first installment payment was due March 1. Town officials said the county has not sent any of those payments.

Riverhead Supervisor Laura Jens-Smith said the town had a contract for the past 20 years with the county to provide sewage treatment for the facility as a user outside of the town's sewer district. Since that contract expired more than a year ago, the town had

been negotiating with county officials for a new sewage treatment contract while setting what the town felt would be a "reasonable fee structure" for the county's sewer rates at their facility, Jens-Smith said.

Town officials believed they could not continue providing sewer service to the facility for another year without the county signing a new contract or making owed payments, she said.

"It's unfortunate we have to do this, but it's been a year that we've been providing a service without getting a signed contract with them," Jens-Smith said.

Deputy County Executive Peter Scully said the board's action was "puzzling because the county has been attempt-

ing to pay the sewer charges and the town has resisted those efforts."

"The town's use of outside counsel will cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal bills with absolutely no rhyme or reason," Scully said. "The only ones who will benefit from the town board's action are the attorneys."

County officials said the town was trying to force the county to pay for Riverhead's upgrade of its sewer plant, which cost about \$24 million and was built to comply with new EPA nitrogen discharge requirements.

Jens-Smith said the upgrade was a separate issue and not the basis for Riverhead's legal action.

## SUFFOLK'S LARGEST UNION OKs \$127.5M PACT

BY RICK BRAND

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Suffolk County's largest union, the 6,000-member Association of Municipal Employees, has approved a six-year, \$127.5 million contract, with 66.8 percent of members voting to ratify, according to unofficial returns.

Dan Levler, AME president, said we are "extremely happy" with the result, noting it was 12.4 percent higher than the 54.4 percent margin for the last contract when it was ratified in 2013.

"These results prove our union is unified and supportive of everything we did to make this happen," said Levler. "We attribute the higher number of yes votes . . . to members being happy with the significant raises, the longevity increases and, for the union, for the first time having control of its benefit fund."

The union released the vote percentages but not the actual numbers because the American Arbitration Association, the outside agency overseeing the election, must review the numbers before issuing formal certification, which is expected in the next week. Officials said the vote turnout was about 60 percent.

The new contract for the AME, which had been without a contract since Jan. 1, 2017, will raise salaries for white- and blue-collar workers by 12 percent through 2024, increase longevity pay by \$250 over the life of the agreement and provide \$775,000 in increases for the union benefit fund.

The pact also includes a provision under which Suffolk County will contribute \$150,000 to top union officials for potential loss of overtime and promotions because of their union work. The extra pay amounts to \$18,795 for each of the eight AME executive board members.

## MANORVILLE

# Town to remove illegally dumped material

BY CARL MACGOWAN

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Brookhaven Town officials said they would remove about 35,000 cubic yards of contaminated solid waste and fill that had been illegally dumped on four Manorville properties.

The decision comes after a state judge faulted the owners of the properties for failing to clean up the land.

Town officials said the ruling by state Supreme Court Justice George Nolan in Riverhead was among the most significant victories in Brookhaven's campaign to combat illegal dumping. Town officials said they hoped to start removing debris over the next several months.

"We're going to be cleaning up a lot of mess there," Supervisor Edward P. Romaine said in an interview. "We're having it tested now to see whether some of it can go to the landfill or whether some of it has to go some other way."

Nolan, in a ruling dated May 28, said defendants John W. Dosiak, Bennett S. Dosiak Jr. and JD Materials Trucking Inc. had ignored earlier court orders to remove the debris from four properties, including three on South Street in Manorville and another at the



A judge faulted property owners for not cleaning mounds of dumped debris, now covered with flora.

northeast and northwest corners of Wading River Road and the Long Island Expressway.

The dumpings included imported solid waste, construction and demolition debris, dirt and other materials, Nolan's decision said.

Nolan said Brookhaven could appoint someone to coordinate the cleanup and assess all costs to the Dosiaks and JD Materials Trucking. The town also may collect up to \$5,000 in fines per day and add costs to the Dosiaks' property tax bills if they do not pay for the cleanup, Nolan said.

Attempts to reach John Dosiak and Bennett Dosiak Jr.

by telephone were unsuccessful. Several phone numbers associated with the family are no longer in service. Calls placed to another phone number were not answered.

The relationship of John and Bennett Dosiak, who represented themselves in court, and their connection to the trucking company were unclear. The Dosiaks and the company share an address on South Street in Manorville.

Town Attorney Annette Eaderesto said Brookhaven officials will meet this week to begin planning the cleanup. Testing will be conducted to determine what contaminants may be included in the debris, she said.

"If the town didn't take action, eventually it would" affect nearby properties and groundwater, Eaderesto said. "Now it's in piles and we'll be able to remove it."

Brookhaven officials vowed to stem illegal dumping after a string of such incidents in recent years. The town is weighing fine increases to deter dumping, as well as purchasing infrared cameras to catch violators.

Romaine said the Dosiak case "sends a message that the town of Brookhaven is very concerned about contaminated material. . . . We are determined that people abide by the rules and not impact the environment."

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