



Jim Sofranko, Supervisor  
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August 11, 2022

Dear Olive Property Owner,

On June 14, 2022, the Olive Town Board ("Town Board") voted to proceed with the formation of a Sewer District for the Hamlet of Shokan. The Town Board also scheduled a referendum (public vote) for **Saturday September 24, 2022 (voting to take place 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM at the American Legion Hall, 26 Mountain Road, Shokan)**. On that day, the property owners within the proposed Shokan Sewer District ("District") will be given the opportunity to vote on whether to form the District. The purpose of this letter is to ensure that each property owner has information regarding the proposed Shokan Sewer District prior to the public vote on September 24, 2022.

**Question:** Why establish a Sewer District?

**Response:** The Town of Olive, the Coalition of Watershed Towns, and the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) all pushed to get the Town of Olive funding for a sewer district in Shokan. The Shokan Sewer Project has been in the works for many years. In 2012, New York State Health Department ordered the City of New York to review a possible project as part of the approvals necessary for the City's water supply. In 2017, State Health rejected the City's conclusion that no system was needed. State Health recognized that CWC's Septic Program simply wasn't adequate to maintain functioning septic systems in Shokan. The soils are too poor and most lots are too small. As a result, some replacement septic systems have a limited life span. To date, only 18% of septic systems replaced with CWC grants in Shokan are even conventional septic systems that do not have a raised bed. For this reason, the Hamlet of Shokan was added to the list of priority communities identified as being eligible for, and in need of a community sewer system. No local funds will be spent on the design, permitting and construction of the project which will be funded through a block grant from the City of New York that is administered by CWC. For more information about the proposed district and community sewer system, please visit the Shokan Sewer District page on the Town's website (<https://townofolive.org/>), click on "Shokan Sewer District" at the top of the page.

The Town of Olive has been and remains supportive of the Shokan Sewer Project through multiple administrations. The project will allow businesses on Route 28 to not only remain but grow without regulation by NYCDEP of their septic systems. It will allow homes to add bedrooms without being limited by whether or not a compliant septic system can be built. Since the new plant will treat Boiceville sewage as well, properties along Route 28 between Boiceville and Shokan could also connect to the sewer line, at their expense. Finally, the Shokan Sewer Project will permanently resolve failing commercial and residential septic systems in the

hamlet of Shokan.

**Question:** Why do we need to have a referendum?

**Response:** After reviewing all the documentation and conducting a public hearing, the Town Board unanimously voted that the formation of the Sewer District is in the best interest of the community. The Town Board also decided that the property owners within the proposed sewer district should be provided an opportunity to vote on whether to form the district. The current owners of the property (as identified in the assessment roll) are the individuals that are eligible to vote on the referendum. The current assessment roll indicates that you are one of the individuals eligible to vote on the referendum.

**Question:** What does this mean for my septic system?

**Response:** Once the District is formed, all existing improved property within the District that generates sewage and has access to a public sewer will be obligated to connect to the sewer system within the time period defined by the Town Board. If a property owner does not want to connect to the sewer system, that property owner could seek an exemption from the Town Board. Once the connection has been made to the public sewer, any cesspool, septic tank, and similar wastewater disposal facility will have to be cleaned of septage by a licensed septage hauler and finally filled with clean sand, gravel or dirt or removed from the property if necessary. The installation of the lateral, the connection of the lateral to the existing building sewer and the decommissioning of the existing septic system is all 100% paid for by the project.

**Question:** Who makes decisions for the Sewer District?

**Response:** The Sewer District is an improvement district just like a water district or a lighting district. As with all improvement districts, the Town Board is the governing body.

**Question:** Who is entitled to vote on the referendum?

**Response:** Each property owner in the proposed district will be entitled to one vote. The following is a summary of the general rules for who is eligible to vote in the referendum:

- Only property owners located within the proposed sewer district can vote on the referendum.
- A person that owns more than one parcel is only entitled to one vote.
- If you own property located in the proposed sewer district as a tenant by the entirety (i.e., husband and wife), tenant in common or joint tenant, each person on the deed is entitled to vote.
- Partnerships, corporations, not-for-profit corporations, trusts and limited liability companies owning property are only entitled to a single vote. In order for the partnership, corporation, trust, not-for-profit corporation or limited liability company to vote, the person designated to vote by that entity must bring to the polling place a document that states that the name of the person who has been designated to vote on behalf of the entity; that document must be signed by a person with authority to make the designation (i.e., corporate officer, Trustee, Chairman of the Board of Directors and the actual Board of Directors). The following example will be accepted in case a form is needed:

\_\_\_\_\_ has been designated by the Board of Directors of  
\_\_\_\_\_ Corporation [or Trustee of the \_\_\_\_\_ Trust]

to vote on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ Corporation [or Trust] on the proposition that is scheduled for September 24, 2022 whether to create the Shokan Sewer District.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Forms will also be made available on the Shokan Sewer District page on the Town's website (<https://townofolive.org/>).

**Question: What should I bring with me on the day of the referendum?**

Property owners should bring identification to the polling place to verify they are the property owner listed on the most recent tax assessment roll. Property owners whose name does not appear on the most recent tax assessment roll may vote at the referendum if proof of ownership is provided (i.e., a recent deed, or a will that has been probated and recorded).

**Question: Are absentee ballots allowed?**

**Response:** The vote is being scheduled on a Saturday to maximize participation. Absentee ballots are allowed, however, an application for an absentee ballot must be completed prior to receiving the actual absentee ballot. Both the absentee ballot application and the absentee ballot can be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office. The application must be received by the Town Clerk by September 17, 2022 (seven [7] days before the referendum) if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the referendum if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter. Absentee ballots must be received no later than 5 P.M. on the day of the referendum (September 24, 2022).

Shokan property owners whose assessment roll address is outside the Shokan zip code are being provided with an absentee ballot application via this mailing for their convenience and are advised to submit completed applications as soon as possible. Applications should be completed and mailed to the Town at the following address:

Town Clerk  
Town of Olive  
PO Box 96  
West Shokan, NY 12494

or faxed to: Town Clerk at (845) 657-2016. Upon receipt of your application, the Town will provide you with the necessary documentation and instructions.

**Question: Where can I get more information about the Shokan Sewer District and Referendum?**

For more information, please visit the Shokan Sewer District page on the Town's website (<https://townofolive.org/>), click on "Shokan Sewer District" at the top of the page.

You may also contact:

John Mathieson – Catskill Watershed Corporation  
845-586-1400

Jim Sofranko – Olive Supervisor  
845-657-8118 x 4

Nick Warner from Lamont Engineers is available Wednesdays from 9am – 3pm at the Town Meeting Hall, 50 Bostock Road, Shokan, to discuss any engineering concerns you may have.

Please contact Nick to make an appointment at: [nwarner@lamontengineers.com](mailto:nwarner@lamontengineers.com) or 518-234-4028x 104.

The Town of Olive wants to ensure you have the information necessary to make an informed decision on the District. If the property owners turn down the project, it may be very long time before this opportunity becomes available again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Sofranko", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Jim Sofranko**  
***Town Supervisor***