



CORPORATION OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF SCHREIBER
CAO/CLERK

Hon. Patty Hajdu,
705 Red River Road, Suite 3
Thunder Bay, ON
P7B 1J3

July 18, 2024

Re: Schreiber's Wastewater Treatment Plant

Dear Hon. Patty Hajdu,

I am writing to you today to request a meeting in person regarding our Wastewater Treatment Plant along with Mayor Mullins and Cllr. Bourgeault. The Schreiber Wastewater Treatment Plant was initially built in 1974 with only one Clarifier. In 1989 a second Clarifier was built in addition to some plant components, such as a chlorine contact chamber. The plants served the community well until recently when regulations changed. The practice of chlorinating effluent at wastewater plants has been around since the early 1900's. However, around 1999, new regulations came into effect that require wastewater plants to dechlorinate before discharging wastewater back into the environment.

The Practice of dechlorinating was a financial burden most communities were not able to bear. It became acceptable to implement temporary measures to dechlorinate effluent discharge at a reasonable cost. Unfortunately, Wastewater plants in many communities have adopted this temporary fix as a normal practice. Recently communities have been made aware that this temporary fix will no longer be tolerated, and permanent treatment practices must be adopted by 2026. Inspections of wastewater plants will again become the focus for inspectors starting this year for the first time in a decade.

In 2022, the Schreiber Town Council of the day started the process of UV disinfection. The Township hired EXP Services Inc, to prepare a design brief for the installation of the UV disinfection and the projected annual cost of operating the system. With a deadline for a permanent solution fast approaching in 2026, the Township has turned their focus to a permanent solution using chemicals to dechlorinate. This "Chemical in a Box" can be designed and installed for approximately **one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00)** with an annual operating budget of **twenty-seven thousand dollars (\$27,000.00)**. The UV solution is approximately **five million dollars (\$5,000,000.00)** to install with an annual operating budget of **ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00)**. This initial installation cost of both is beyond reach for the Township so the lessor of the two (2) options is our only choice despite a higher annual operating cost. The Township is still working on finding the money for this project.

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In 2021, the plant underwent an electrical inspection and the classification of the plant changed to a class 4. This means that all the electrical components in the plant must be changed to explosion proof components. This change was necessary due to the moist environment and gases produced by the process. Since the cost was astronomical for the Township, a decision was made to do the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) upgrade in 4 phases.

The first phase was completed in 2022 for **one hundred eighty-one thousand five hundred dollars (\$181,500.00)**. In 2023, the prices for all the parts were almost double because of COVID. As a result, phase 2 price tag exceeded what was budgeted in 2023, so nothing was done.

In 2024, the ESA inspector requested a meeting with the Township of Schreiber to discuss the outstanding issues with the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The ESA has been more than patient with the Township as the normal practice is **30 days** to comply. We are required to have the Wastewater plant brought up to a Class 4 standard by the end of 2024. This endeavor will cost the Township approximately **one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00)**. The Township is using the OTF money to cover this expense and borrowing the balance until the 2025 allocation is received.

As you can see in the attached spreadsheet, the electrical issue at the plant continues to present urgent situations from "dirty power" and corroded components. Electrical components continue to fail such as breakers, pumps, motors, receptacles, lights, heaters, the list is endless. These urgent repairs continue to put strains on the reserve funds.

Due to the age of the plant, the breakdowns are not only associated with the electrical issues. We have experienced breakdowns in the air distribution system, where confined entries are required to patch pipes under the plant. Currently we are experiencing a breakdown with clarifier 1. There seems to be a concrete failure on the wall separating the clarifier and the digester. This breakdown is preventing the sludge from being bagged properly. The clarifier will need to be pumped down and a concrete specialist brought in to examine the wall to see if repair is possible. We are unclear at this point about the cost of repair, but we anticipate somewhere around **one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00)**. We are currently investigating this urgent matter.

With mechanical breakdowns, electrical issues, and structural failures, the process of treating wastewater cannot be maintained. Sludge cannot get bagged due to the excess water from the structural failure. The lack of air in the process while we wait for the new blower and VFD to be installed. The Non-Compliance incidents that we have had to report have put Schreiber on the short list to be among the first inspections. The repairs and regulations that we are aware of will most certainly put a financial strain on the Township that a small resident tax base will never be able to sustain. The Non-Compliance reports have totaled **thirteen (13)** just since **March of 2024**.

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The bagging system at the wastewater plant is the original installed in 1974. The system has been obsoleting for many years now, so parts are no longer available. When breakdowns occur, custom parts are made by an out-of-town welding shop. This translates into long down times while parts are manufactured. The system does not work well anymore so it requires constant manpower to ensure it continues to bag. This puts an incredible strain on staffing already faced with shortages. The bagging system needs to be upgraded as soon as possible since this process contributes to the Non-Compliance issues. This new system is also going to cost the Township another **million dollars (\$1,000,000.00)** plus.

As you can see on page 5 of this correspondence the Township has endured **one point five million dollars (\$1,518,061.34)** in unexpected repairs over the last **five and a half (5.5) years**. Aging infrastructure and little assistance are hemorrhaging small Municipalities all over the Province. It is imperative that the Provincial and Federal Governments step up to financially relieve the heavy burdens on small Municipalities.

We are reaching out to you today to discuss such EMERGENT issues and how the Provincial and Federal Governments are going to step up to plate and provide much needed financial assistance to assist with their mandated Regulations. To cover these essential upgrades small Municipalities will need to tax their residents to death to cover such costs.

I look forward to hearing back from you with a time for a scheduled meeting to discuss options available to small Municipalities with such emergent issues as I have described above.

Kind Regards,



Rhonda Smith
CAO/Clerk for the Township of Schreiber

CC: Mayor Mullins
Cllr. Bourgeault
Cllr. McGrath
Cllr. Mauro
Cllr. Bryson
Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister
Hon. Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure

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Unexpected Costs at the Wastewater Treatment Plant Since 2019

Year	Description	Cost
2019	Compressor Repair	\$84.75
	Bagging System Repair	\$290.51
	Bagging Building Heater Repair	\$1,695.00
	Sludge Motor Repair	\$901.18
	Bagging System Repair	\$2,009.25
	Bagging System Clamps Repair	\$1,007.42
	Clarifier Building Heater Repair	\$3,983.25
	Trash Pump	\$2,280.80
	Clarifier Heater Repair	\$1,192.09
	Clarifier Parts	\$15,036.15
	DE chlorination Feasibility Study	\$24,663.82
	Light Repair in the Clarifier Building	\$6,780.00
	2019 Total	\$59,924.22
2020	Bagger Heater Repair	\$565.28
	Clarifier Building Electrical Repairs	\$1,062.12
	Bagging System Electrical Repairs	\$1,062.12
	Chlorinator Parts	\$4,844.53
	Plant Electrical Inspection	\$23,938.00
	2020 Total	\$31,472.05
2021	Sludge Trailer Axle Repair	\$1,063.33
	Sludge Trailer Parts	\$2,594.48
	Water Heater Replacement (electrical surge)	\$519.79
	Light Repairs	\$1,595.71
	DeChlor Metering Pump	\$942.92
	Digester Decant Pump	\$3,587.55
	Building Classification as per ESA	\$6,614.40
	Electrical Assessment as per ESA	\$23,330.00
	2021 Total	\$40,248.18

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Unexpected Costs at the Wastewater Treatment Plant Since 2019

Year	Description	Cost
2022	DeChlor Project Study Final Invoice	\$33,249.43
	ESA Electrical Upgrade	\$18,189.09
	Clarifier Blower Line Repair	\$18,640.64
	ESA Upgrades Phase 1	\$181,440.33
	Receptacle Emergency Repair	\$2,017.92
	Sludge Pump Replacement	\$2,236.80
	VFD Failure - Dirty Power (troubleshooting)	\$1,414.88
	2022 Total	\$257,189.09
2023	Bagger Building Heater Repairs	\$395.50
	Bagger Building Heater Repairs	\$442.59
	Light Repair Garage Washrooms	\$1,209.91
	Emergency Blower Motor Install	\$6,130.21
	2023 Total	\$8,178.21
2024	ESA Upgrades - Mandatory	\$990,822.00
	VFD Cabinet Blower	\$114,560.00
	Emergency Repair Lights and Heater Clarifier 2	\$14,430.80
	Bagger Building Heater Repair	\$1,236.79
	2024 Total as of July 6th	\$1,121,049.59
	5.5 yr. Total	\$1,518,061.34