

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

**HENDERSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**MEETING DATE:** July 15, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Etowah Sewer System Fund

**PRESENTER:** Marcus Jones, P. E.  
County Engineer

**ATTACHMENT:** Yes  
1. Presentation

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

During the Board's May 4, 2026, meeting, WithersRavenel, LLC (WR) and staff presented the Board with six options for the replacement of the Etowah wastewater treatment plant.

WR and staff will review the options with the Board. WR and staff will also review the status of the Asset Inventory Assessment project.

The Board is requested to select an option and direct staff to proceed. After the Board has selected an option, staff will negotiate a design agreement with WR for Board approval. Also, staff will continue to investigate sources of the remaining funding necessary for construction.

**BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:**

The board is requested to select an option number from the engineering report and authorize the County Engineer to negotiate an agreement with WithersRavenel to design the option.

**Suggested Motion:**

*I move the Board select option number [insert option] from the engineering report and authorize the County Engineer to negotiate an agreement with WithersRavenel to design the option.*

# Treatment Plant Options

Etowah Sewer System

July 15, 2026

# Points from previous meetings:

- During the June 17, 2026, meeting, the Board narrowed the options down to the following two:
  - Option 2: New treatment plant at current location
  - Option 6: Replace with regional pump station connected to Hendersonville
- Recommendations:
  - WithersRavenel: Option 2 due to lowest present value cost
  - Advisory Committee (4/28/26): Option 6 due to fundability and lowest maintenance cost (i.e., least impact to future rates)
  - County Engineer: Option 6 due to fundability and lowest maintenance cost

# Points from previous meetings, continued:

- Hendersonville Council has approved a connection to their system from an Etowah Regional Pump Station. Staff will be able to report on details and cost of a connection with information from a Hendersonville meeting the week of July 6.
- NCDEQ is the most likely funding source for the \$20+ million funding needed. A direct allocation from the General Assembly is also an option.
- From the NCDEQ's publication "Priority Rating System Guidance and Form for Division of Water Infrastructure Construction Funding Programs," project applications with regionalization receive 3 points. Projects applications that eliminate discharges receive 5 points. There are a total of 100 points available for an application.

# Staff Feedback

1. The expansion of the sewer system is from the collection pipes. If the County controls the collection system, it controls growth of the sewer system, provided the capacity is available at the treatment plant.
2. Capital costs will have to come from grants and/or an allocation from the General Assembly. Therefore, the maintenance costs are what will impact the customer rates.
3. WithersRavenel (Project Engineering & Administration Cost) proposals for the two options are as follows:
  - a) Option 2 (plant): \$4,712,000
  - b) Option 6 (pump station): \$3,825,000

# Staff Feedback

4. Costs and projects associated with the improvements needed to the collection system are **independent** to the high-priority need to address the treatment plant.
5. **Important:** Project completion time is critically important. The County is responsible for addressing the failing plant as quickly as possible. We did not create the problem but are responsible for the timeline since acquiring the system.

# Next Steps

1. Board select an option as soon as possible based on the information available to date and the planned process for future steps.
2. Negotiate an agreement with WithersRavenel for access, design, permitting, and bid assistance.
3. During approximate 12 months of design, continue efforts to obtain remaining funding for project.
4. For the regional pump station option, negotiate a connection agreement with Hendersonville. If unsuccessful, we can switch to Option 2.

# Board Discussion and Questions

Alt. No.	Description	Capital Cost	Annual O&M Costs	Present Total Worth
2	Full Replacement and Expansion of the WWTP at the Existing Site	\$25.1M	\$2.3M	\$30.6M
3	Full Replacement and Expansion of the WWTP at a New Site	\$23.4M	\$2.3M	\$28.7M
4	Regionalization MSD - Option 1	\$58.1M	\$1.1M	\$60.3M
5	Regionalization with MSD- Option 2	\$32.5M	\$1.5M	\$35.8M
6	Regionalization with Hendersonville	\$30.7M	\$1.4M	\$34.1M