

Working with Professionals

- The more specifically you can **define your needs**, the more likely you are to get what you need.
- *You* – the community drives the process
- *Evaluation Criteria for Assessing Engineering Firms*
handout
 - Engineers
 - Consultants
 - Regulators
 - Community Planner
 - Economic Development Advocate
 - City Administrator
 - Educator/Researcher

Bias and 'self interests'

- “Many professionals may be biased toward particular technologies, so they may not seriously consider options they are unfamiliar with or simply don’t like”. *

*Assessing Wastewater Options for Small Communities - National Environmental Training Center

- Everyone has some bias and vested interest in the outcome of a project -
Professionals & Residents!



Typical Scenario

Communities often hire an engineer that have “a central collection and treatment system is better” mentality

Not always cost effective

Often doesn't fit community character

Better choice: community evaluate their situation, go through process to select and hire an engineer, evaluate choices; community selects and implements best choice for the community's situation

Be Aware of Potential Bias

■ **Examples:**

- **City administrator - see the city grow**
- **Resident with fixed income –ability to pay**
- **engineer – what they can design/build - profit**
- **Township officials -minimize tax base loss**
- **Economic growth-accommodate potential growth**
- **Educators- ????**

Citizens of communities that succeed ...

- Clearly understand their current situation *before* they start looking for solutions
- Know that only they can make the best decisions for their community
- Take responsibility for and ownership of the problem
- Have or develop members with strong leadership abilities
- Have a clearly defined vision and mission, and set appropriate goals

Citizens of communities that succeed ...

- Take the time and energy to identify and examine all options before making decisions
- Gather information from as many sources as possible before taking action
- Keep all affected parties involved and informed all along the way
- Identify criteria for making decisions and use all identified criteria.

Communities do not succeed ...

- When a small group makes the decisions and expects everyone to agree – and pay the bill
- When the community lets engineers, consultants or funding sources dictate their choices
- Result in chaos, bickering among neighbors, elected officials getting “un-elected,” and a loss of sense of community.