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
“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.