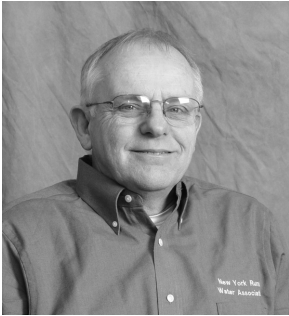


Pieces of Pie



Apples, sugar, cinnamon and bake in the oven and you have a perfect apple... well, if only it was that easy. The old saying is too many cooks spoil the pot. In some instances that may be true, however, one size does not fit all. In this case, the pie is always in the bake mode. Never done until everyone agrees it is

done. After everyone agrees it's done and you dole out the pieces, but who gets a piece and how big. Everyone gets an equal portion, same size. How many pieces, that depends on who wants and most important who needs a piece.

Stop; hold it, back-up, what's this all about. A dessert menu in this magazine. Well, kind of. The pie is your system and the number of pieces can vary depending on the issue, and also the pieces can be divided equally but different, depending.

Stop, whoa, from the top. One pie, how many pieces? That depends, are you confused yet, if not, read on. As I say at the training sessions, the following contains educational information, proceed at your own risk.

Pieces of the pie can be defined as finance, administration, management, operations, and sometimes the big pieces have to be divided further, depending.

Who is this guy depending and how did he get involved. Depending is always there, he just takes different pieces depending upon his needs. Wants and needs have two different but like meanings. Do you really want something or do you really need something. Sometimes it's both. I am writing this and I am confused. So we must sort this out in language we understand. Think about it, finance is the council or board, administration could be the mayor, or village manager or clerk. Sometimes these folks could also serve as management. Sometimes the operator has two pieces of the pie, as he acts as manager and operator. Of course the operator also can be the assistant, the mechanic, the laborer, and all round Mr. Goodtime, depending.

Many pies, many pieces, or is this getting too complicated. I try to adhere to the kiss principle wherever possible, but we all too often make things harder than need be. So keep it simple. Keep the pie pieces small and more manageable. The council's piece is to obtain the necessary funding for management and operations. This accomplished by setting rates and collecting revenue for services. This also means reviewing and adjusting those rates so income stays ahead of expense. Mr. Board Member before you run and hide under the bed, rate increases are not a bad thing. The trick is

to do a small increase every year or so, so the impact is not a big bite from the user's budget. In the past few months, the cost of fuel has increased dramatically and is having a definite budget impact on everybody. The cost of everything goes up. The longer you wait to increase rates, the more the negative impact.

Administration and management usually comes through or from the village office. Their piece of the pie can vary from day to day, depending. If things are same old, same old, pretty much routine, just keep on truckin'. However nothing stays the same, so adjustments must be made, someone has to draft and then implement a plan. Draft and implement can be several pieces of pie, however who do you think gets to carry out this plan. "Mr. Operator", did you think you were being left out? Get your fork and napkin, for now it's your turn for pie. Again, it is equal pieces and remember not to bite off more than you can chew. Everyone should view the pie as a whole and then decide how many pieces they can manage, but don't let your eyes be bigger than your stomach. Include all pie holders in the process.

Sometimes the board doesn't ask the operator and/or manager for his expertise and sometimes the operator doesn't think his voice is heard. If a piece of equipment needs to be replaced, the operator should do the shopping, obtain prices, and then pass on to the administrator, the what and why it is needed and how much it costs. Today the internet is a quick way to shop and obtain price quotes. While you are letting your mouse do the shopping, Mr. Operator is keeping Mr. Administrator advised of what's going on. Sometimes, "it's broke and we need a new one", needs a little more information. If somebody asks, what for and how to, then your information is lacking some key ingredients. Just like a pie, if you forget something, the taste isn't there. This is where the manager or administrator makes his value known. Your piece of the pie is to sell the board on the reasons why this piece of equipment is necessary and vital to the operation. Sometimes convincing the guy who signs the check is the really hard sell.

If your system takes the pie approach, keeping in mind that all pieces are equal and all pieces should be consulted and kept aware of what's going on, then the decision making can be easy. Most decisions are delayed by a lack of information, bad preparation, or not getting enough of the pie pieces involved. Sometimes we forget that communication is two, three or four ways. To make it work, you need input from all the pie pieces. Remember to listen, ask questions from all involved and then an informed decision can be reached. I hear quite often, "the board doesn't listen to me". Try talking with

them and not at them and perhaps that could make a difference. Mr. Board Member, the most knowledgeable person in the system is the person who operates the system every day. One of your most valuable resources is just a phone call away. The hard part of communication is the first word. Sometimes to break the ice try saying “ I need your help, because you are a piece of the pie and your input is valued”.

Nuff said: See ya: Mike 💧

