

UTILITIES COMMITTEE MINUTES

OF MARCH 26, 2018

Municipal Council of the City of Vermilion
Municipal Complex, 685 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio 44089

In Attendance: **Vermilion City Council:**
Steve Herron, President of Council; Monica Stark, Council at Large; John Gabriel, Ward One; Frank Loucka, Ward Two; Steve Holoavacs, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; Brian Holmes, Ward Five.

Administration:
Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director

Call to Order: Steve Holoavacs, Chairman, RESOLVED THAT this Utilities Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

TOPIC ONE: Infiltration – Vermilion on the Lake

S. Holoavacs reminded council at their last committee meeting they had asked the service director to pick a street and do some televising of the laterals to solve the problem with infiltration.

T. Valerius said he received quotes and the best quote came in at \$6,000 to do 40 laterals. This is for a lateral launch system where they put it in the main and will launch up to the lateral and camera it. The company will also supply the city with CD's and flash drives. He also spoke with the law director and asked him to review Chapter 1042.05, which refers to stormwater infiltration. The law director stated the ordinance could be used to enforce the issue, but it's really not that specific because it doesn't talk about laterals. Therefore, T. Valerius will present draft legislation for the committee meeting on April 9 that would clarify the responsibility of the homeowner if their laterals have any issues. This way the city can easily enforce it.

B. Brady said it seems it would be simple to just pop some manholes to see where the water is starting. The problem is in an isolated area and they don't know where the water is coming from. If it's laterals then this is great, but they are jumping to that conclusion. Right now they have a lot of water at the west end of the street (high-end) and before they spend money it makes more sense for the distribution crew to pop the manholes when they are surcharging. T. Valerius said as he had mentioned earlier, the building inspector did go around to pretty much all the streets in VOL and made note of all the downspouts that went into the ground. In the spring, the building department will be sending out letters to all of those homeowners who have downspouts going into the ground and will either dye them; or maybe they do go into a drain right into the ditch, but they will investigate this to try and eliminate all the downspouts. They looked at this in the past at the same time they did sump pump inspections.

Homer Taft of 3972 Edgewater said he is one of the victims of this and he would like to get a better definition of 'infiltration'. He's not an engineer, but he has spent a lifetime in property and real estate development. The soils are basically clay and when there is a hard rain they get a plug up and it stays for the period of the rain, and maybe an hour later. In his experience this isn't enough time for very much water to get through the clay to the laterals. He believes most of the water is coming from roof water and possibly drains in either basements or driveways and it diminishes significantly. He doesn't know if anybody has ever measured how quickly the flow ramps up and how quickly the flow ramps down, but an hour after the rain stops there isn't material coming into their homes anymore. There isn't material coming out of the manholes in the street, so when they talk about infiltration, are they talking about including stormwater that's put directly into the sanitary system, or talking simply something from groundwater. What evidence do they have or what study has the city done to determine it isn't other causes.

S. Hologvacs said the only time they have this overflow problem is after it rains. In the past they put in flow detectors for sewers. He said after an hour it may be through the system, but it's the multiple of roofs, gutters, sump pumps, etc. The infiltration of stormwater into the sanitary sewer is overtaxed and at that point it goes to the low spot and it comes out; it will find its weak spot. C. Howard said one of the concerns in the past was a lot of the laterals were crossing ditches and some of those laterals had probably separated. So what happens is you get a big rainfall and the least resistance is the sanitary lateral that separated, so you're getting stormwater in that sanitary lateral that's adding to the system. This may be the first step in figuring out which laterals are separated or have issues that will eliminate the stormwater getting into the system. There is a correlation to stormwater getting in; it's a matter of where they are getting in.

S. Hologvacs made a recommendation to hold on what they are doing until they bring the legislation forward to see what they can do because if they legally can't do anything, then why do they want to spend the money televising the lines. The members of council said this process moving forward seemed reasonable. S. Herron asked if the law director will be drafting the legislation. T. Valerius said he was going to add some wording to the ordinance and will present it to the law director for his thoughts. This will be on the April 9, 2018, Legislative meeting for review. S. Herron said they need to be fair and thoughtful to the homeowners.

B. Brady asked the administration in the meantime if they could pop a couple manholes when they have another heavy rain. She noted the Fairfax outfall runs all the time and questioned where it's coming from because it's not raining. T. Valerius said they have a dry weather inspection this summer and they will be checking every outfall. He said the ground is still saturated.

TOPIC TWO: Adams Street Water Line (Cost Estimates)

C. Howard stated he sent council a copy of the OPWC application that was submitted last year. The cost is \$636,000 and the grant covered \$175,000. He said it's up to council on whether they will proceed with this project. He hasn't prepared a proposal until he knows council plans to move forward with the project.

J. Gabriel asked what the plan is money wise. A. Hendricks said the suggestion is the money can come from the water fund. S. Holovacs said the previous members of council had also discussed the replacement of water lines in 2017, and he wanted to know where they stood with this because they have grant for Adams Street. S. Herron said they had a plan, but they didn't know how they were going to fund it and now they don't have a whole lot of money. S. Holovacs thought the administration was supposed to get back to Council after checking on loans. F. Loucka said this was supposed to be Phase One of a long-term 25 year Water Main Line Replacement Project because of the serious deterioration of the system. He said they were supposed to hear back from the former finance director regarding taking a huge loan out to start off this project. B. Brady said council received loan payments from the finance director and their decisions were based on the size of the loan payments. S. Holovacs agreed the money will come from the water fund, but they can't do it out of pocket as it will need to be borrowed. A. Hendricks understood but said this is all news to her. Mayor Forthofer recalled it was \$2.5 million that the previous finance director had said they could tolerate to borrow. S. Holovacs asked the finance director to see what the city could do. A. Hendricks said if anyone on council had copies of what was done that would be a good start for her. G. Fisher said she would submit all the documentation and minutes to her.

J. Gabriel said they have another water fund based repair that's pretty hefty as well, so if they are going to borrow then he thinks they have a little time to discuss the big ticket items and address them all and come up with a game plan. Mayor Forthofer thought it was going to be a low interest loan for the Water Line Replacement Project. B. Brady said council was told there were loans coming off that would help pay for part of this.

C. Howard said with the OPWC projects the city has until next year to spend the money, but when the applications were submitted there was a schedule submitted with it, so they will have to change this with the OPWC. For example, the Adams Street engineering is supposed to be done by April 30, 2018 and the bidding done by May 1, 2018. He said they can contact the OPWC and tell them the city needs to change the schedule. He said they still have a completion date of next June, but the OPWC Coordinator needs to understand the city is changing the schedule. S. Holovacs agreed the city should ask for an extension if council was in agreement until they figure out where the money is. If they don't have the money secured then they really can't start the process. C. Howard said the OPWC should know the design and bidding could be extended until next year. He doesn't want the OPWC to pull the funding because the city didn't meet their schedules. City Council was in agreement to him extending the schedule. C. Howard said he along with the service director would handle this because T. Valerius is the agent for the city.

TOPIC THREE: 1,000,000 Spheroid Water Tower – Inlet Pipe Replacement

C. Howard provided council with an inspection report performed by Dixon Engineering in 2017. The inspection verified there are some issues at the water tower (stem). There are some concerns with the thickness of the 16" wall pipe. Dixon Engineering provided

recommendations to the city on how to fix this. He provided council with budgetary costs and the total estimate is \$107,900.00 to fix the water tower.

F. Loucka said the letter from Dixon Engineering claimed the costs for this work is estimated at \$85,000, along with the subsequent construction estimate of \$95,000, which he asked if this included a contingency. C. Howard said yes and it includes the 80' of 16" STD wall pipe. T. Valerius said the city is mandated by the EPA to replace the existing expansion joint with a bellows type expansion joint.

S. Holovacs asked how the city would pay for this project because he's aware the water fund is down. He asked the administration to come back to council with financing options. Mayor Forthofer thought this project was more urgent over the Adams Street Water Line repairs. A. Hendricks said there may be access to EPA funds. T. Valerius said changing the joint is EPA mandated, so this is a possibility. S. Holovacs said maybe there are multiple places to fund this project, but the finance director will need to do the research. S. Herron agreed this project needs to be a priority as it could be a critical problem with the EPA. J. Gabriel asked the finance director if there was any advantage or disadvantage to borrowing various projects into one package. A. Hendricks said it depends on if there are special rates available for different parts of it that would make it an effective way to go. She would like to have some evaluation on what the current debt service is and where the city can go from here. She received a message from bond counsel that said the city has \$2.7 million in notes that are maturing in August and she isn't sure they will have resources to pay those notes down, or if the city would be rolling them again. J. Gabriel said because of the oddness of their schedules, if they can get an extension of the Adams Street project and can get variable rates to combine this project and the water tower project together this would be a preference.

B. Holmes said the water tower leak didn't happen overnight and questioned if the city is supposed to be inspecting it or does the city hire Dixon Engineering to inspect it. Is this something they could have caught sooner? T. Valerius said there have been leaks in the past in the stem. The stem is wrapped in insulation and a metal jacket, so often times it can be difficult to spot. They exposed the leak and realized it needed to be fixed and then had Dixon Engineering come in to evaluate the stem. C. Howard said the tank is on a schedule for inspection in 2019. T. Valerius said it's inspected every five years. F. Loucka said the actual project construction is only a week, so they are not talking about a six month job.

S. Holovacs asked the finance director to report back to council on the options the city has for funding the Adams Street and Water Tower projects.

TOPIC FOUR: Wastewater Treatment Plant – Bar Screen Replacement

C. Howard reported he received a request from the Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent to replace the Bar Screen. The existing Bar Screen is the first line of defense to remove floating materials and coarse solids from the influent flow. The existing Bar Screen is over 35 years old and has a lot of mechanical issues that need constant repair. The screen has a bar spacing of ¾" and they recommend it be reduced to

¼” in order to capture more material on the screen and reduce the load on the primary filters and other equipment.

F. Loucka said the previous Superintendent recommended the same thing a year and a half ago as being the first thing he would want fixed.

S. Holovacs said the sewer fund is healthier and asked how they wanted to finance it. Therefore, he asked the finance director to get back on the funding with council.

TOPIC FIVE: Report on 2018 Water Loss/Water Main Breaks

T. Valerius addressed the 2018 main break locations, which is broken down by hours the distribution department works in repairing main breaks. Overtime hours to date are 53 and regular hours are 232 bringing it to a total of 285 hours worked on main breaks.

Mayor Forthofer said this was a monthly report that was requested from the Goal Setting meeting by council. He asked if they still wanted it monthly and council said a quarterly report would be fine.

T. Valerius said the 2018 Water Loss Report is a calculation showing the water loss. The quarterly average for a million gallons produced for 2018 is 32.191, and the million gallons billed is 27.324, which gives you a percentage accounted for of 85% and a 15% loss. They have a million gallon loss of 4.867.

B. Holmes asked how this compares to other communities. T. Valerius said since the last reporting they made an effort to find the big leaks. They had leak surveyors come in and they tackled small and big major leaks which were eliminated. They metered every city building, including the water and wastewater plant, so all city water is accounted for. Also, the utilities clerk looked at the high users list each month and found that if it came across that a homeowner had their meter changed and it used to read 8,000 units and the new one came in at zero, there is a difference of 8,000 units that the computer calculates for bill out, but did not calculate for overall consumption. That number would have been used against the city for water loss, so they changed this to get very accurate readings. This is something they will do monthly and get a quarterly average. He said the city's water loss isn't as bad as what they thought it was. Mayor Forthofer said last year council had thought they were around a 40 percent water loss, but now they know where it's going. M. Stark was impressed they were only losing this much. She said it does show in December of 2017 there was a 24% loss and in January and February they jumped down to 11% and wondered if there was anything different in these months to make a difference in those numbers. T. Valerius said it's due to main breaks in January.

Mayor Forthofer said he asked the Erie County Commissioners on what's an acceptable water loss and they said 12% is the acceptable standards.

S. Holovacs adjourned the meeting after no further discussion came before the committee.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk
