

UTILITIES COMMITTEE MINUTES

OF NOVEMBER 19, 2018

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

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

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

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

---

**TOPIC ONE:    Update of Televising Harcourt – Disconnection of Storm Sewers**

S. Holovacs reminded council that last month the city engineer provided them with a map of all the addresses on Harcourt of where they found problems inside and outside of the right of way.

C. Howard explained that based on the televising of the Harcourt Road sanitary laterals there were eight properties that had root balls in the lateral within the right of way. There were six properties with joint separations in the right of way and two properties with joint separations outside of the right of way, and then two properties with root balls outside of the right of way. Of the 40, they have 18 that have issues whether they are inside or outside of the right of way. Based on the ordinance it's a matter of moving forward with repairing these and forcing the property owners to repair theirs outside the right of way. If the city does this, then they need to put cleanouts in within the right of way for the sections the city is fixing. He said this would be the standard moving forward, so how does council want to proceed.

B. Brady said when the city lined Edgewater and the side streets in VOL the idea was to stop the overflows, so the residents paid \$1,200 to have their sewers lined and it didn't stop the overflows, and now the city is going back to them and will expect them to pay to repair the laterals. Before they do anything, she needs somebody to tell her this will fix the problem because it's not fair to charge the residents again. C. Howard clarified that when the VOL project was done the city was under facts and findings because of the overflow at the pump station, so the city had to eliminate the overflow and at the same time look at the existing condition of the main line sanitary sewer. It was more cost effective to reline it and then do point repairs based on the video inspection. The issue at the time was the laterals and there was no movement on the lateral situation because the city felt they were already assessing the property owners for that portion of the main line and the laterals were left alone, so this is the next step because there is an I&I issue there. B. Brady said if it's not going to solve the I&I problem – there is an overflow at Lansing and the pump station didn't fix what they were under orders to fix. All they did was move the overflow from Showse Park to Lansing. They have toilet paper pouring out of the street at Lansing every time there is a major storm event –

Lansing can't handle the water that is there. She said they assessed the residents \$1,200 and now they are charging them \$4 a month for the rest of the city's I&I and now the city is going to come back and tell them to pay more money; somebody better make sure that if they do this, that they're going to fix this problem!

F. Loucka said he was under the impression they picked Harcourt for a reason and its baby steps to pick away at I&I; to find if there are any issues. He said there are 18 properties that have issues that are both the city's and the resident's responsibility. He asked council what they are going to do to correct these I&I issues on Harcourt. He understands this won't solve the whole issue of VOL.

S. Holovacs said there are 14 issues the city must address out of the 18 in total on Harcourt, so this is 78% of the city problem in the right of way, and 12% is the residents. He said this is a start of a pilot program and feels they need to put in a clean out because it's the easiest way to get to the roots. The city needs to step forward and do this and it doesn't have to be every street in VOL – they can take one in Ward Three or Ward Five; any street they want. If the city doesn't start doing something, then they will have the same problem in VOL where the water is being pushed to another place. If they sit back and complain and do nothing, then they will continue to hear about the same problem. In his opinion, the city needs to move forward in doing something.

B. Brady said the city did dye test the YMCA and all she is asking is that they don't have raw sewage in their streets. This is a step she agrees with, but it won't solve the problems in the street. She asked if the service department can isolate the problem.

S. Holovacs said the administration needs to get pricing on addressing the city issues and council needs to figure out how to tell the residents to fix their problem too. C. Howard said they would need to grind the root balls out and the pipe probably needs to be replaced, so it's not as simple as just getting Rotor Rooter in. They can get prices from different contractors.

T. Valerius said it's not feasible for the city distribution crew to do this work and it's easier to hire a company to do all the work.

S. Holovacs asked council if they agreed to authorizing the administration to obtain pricing for the city's section of the right of way. F. Loucka agreed because this is a pilot program and they need to take baby steps in fixing a long-term problem, but they need to start somewhere. In the meantime, they could get an idea of what the residents costs will be to address their issues.

T. Valerius said they already have a price of \$6,000 to televise 40 homes on one street, so now they can determine how much they can spend each year.

M. Stark asked if the administration can price out what the resident's costs will be at the same time. She thought maybe it would be cheaper to do the whole street with one contractor. S. Holovacs thought this was a great idea.

**M. Stark MOVED**; F. Loucka seconded to authorize the administration to obtain prices for addressing the problems on Harcourt and to break the costs out separately for both the city's portion and the resident's portion. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

*Disconnection of Storm Sewers:*

T. Valerius explained that several years ago they performed smoke testing in VOL and a lot of the issues homeowners had with their storm laterals were taken care of and a lot weren't because they didn't have an ordinance to stand by the enforcement aspect. When he started with the city as Building Inspector he not only checked all the sump pumps in the Elberta Beach area, but also in the VOL area. He looked at what homes had crawl spaces or basements and the homeowners were sent letters when they found they were discharging into the sanitary. The residents were made to discharge either on the lawns or into the storm sewer. He said they started inspecting downspouts last summer and the building inspector sent letters out. Prior to sending letters out they looked at 610 homes in the VOL area and out of those 610 homes it was determined that 205 of them appeared to have downspouts that they were not able to determine where they were discharging to, so they were sent letters. They have since done inspections and 47 of those have been determined to be okay – they discharge either on the ground or into a storm drain. They still must test 49 of them and they will coordinate this with the distribution department, so they can dye the downspouts. They had 12 letters returned and the rest of them they haven't heard responses yet, so they are in the process of sending out a second letter to these residents.

Also, he noted that Aldrich was a concern of Councilwoman Brady regarding where the storm water of the YMCA discharges. He had a crew out last week and they dye tested the furthest south catch basin and unloaded a full vac truck of water in there and all the dye was in the closed storm sewer all the way to the north side of Rowland where it opens into open ditches. There were manholes along the way they checked, and they found no dye in the manholes, so that tells them that all the Stormwater goes through that enclosed storm sewer in front of the YMCA and doesn't veer off anywhere else, and it all goes to the ditches out to Edgewater, and out to the outfall by Fairfax. B. Brady said this was a good elimination.

B. Brady said she has attended Water and Wastewater shows and they all say the worse point of infiltration in the sanitary system is at the connection where the lateral hits the main and several people told her they should never do a lining unless you put a top hat at that point, so when the city does this work in the right of way can they make sure they add this at that point where the connection is. C. Howard explained that what they are talking about is when you do a relining project you want to do a top hat into the lateral and he said these were done in VOL. He said they had talked before about the fact when somebody comes in and builds a new house that they do a new lateral connection. If the city is not there to monitor and inspect it when it's done, a lot of time the contractors will hammer it and they will crack the pipe. They don't care about the integrity of the main line as they just want to get their lateral connected. He said if nobody watches them they can do more damage to the main line which creates a lot of I&I. S. Holovacs asked the administration if this is something they inspect and T. Valerius said yes and they have been very diligent in doing this.

On a side note unrelated to this topic, M. Stark asked the engineer if he had any news on Lake Haven and C. Howard said he has heard nothing from ODNR.

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

*The next meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.*

*Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk*

---