

UTILITIES COMMITTEE MINUTES
AUGUST 9, 2021

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

Administration: *Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director; Chris Hartung, Police Chief; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Chris Stempowski, Fire Chief*

Call to Order: Emily Skahen, Vice Chairwoman, RESOLVED THAT this Utilities Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

TOPIC ONE: **VOL Sanitary Sewer Laterals**

C. Howard said per council's request they prepared cost estimates for repairing the existing laterals on Rowland Road and Cummings Road. The cost estimate is \$204,012.00. This will be replacing the lateral up to the right of way and placing a cleanout like they had talked about.

B. Brady asked the engineer if he knew what the homeowner's cost would be if they have to replace the rest of it. C. Howard said he did not know until they have the camera done because at some of the homes the lateral is under the driveway – it varies and each lot is different, so it is not fair to put a cost to it at this time. He did not even want to guess at the cost at this time. He said these laterals are pretty short and the homes are not that far back from the right of way, but he does not want to guess because some may be in good condition and some others may not be. B. Brady thought the cheapest way to do it is when the city is doing their section. C. Howard agreed. B. Brady asked the finance director if they would do this as an assessment. A. Hendricks said for the homeowner's portion this is what she would imagine they would need to do.

Homer Taft of 3972 Edgewater Drive disagreed with the conclusion that Cummings was agreed to at the last meeting. He hopes from past conversations, that Councilwoman Brady's recollection might be the same as his where there this was discussion that they could not make a final decision until testing was done and it wasn't specifically at Aldrich and Rowland. As he understands it – it still isn't, but they run another 100' west along the Rowland stub that comes into Aldrich, and they still have a substantial quantity of clear water running all the time at that point into the sanitary from unknown sources. Furthermore, he thought doing this at Cummings is contraindicated to the engineering and the principal reason for this is that at Cummings the sanitary sewer is deeper and 15". Before that it is 10". He thinks the engineers should tell council that the problem is going to come

from the pressure into the head-end. The head-end is Rowland, Aldrich, Harcourt, and Woodridge. In fact, this is where all of the sanitary sewer overflow is. He mentioned he has reviewed all of the reports that have been done, and this is where all of the sanitary sewer overflow is with the exception of Lansing, which is a unique situation because it is in a depression at the very end of the system. The pressure that is occurring and the houses that are affected are all 100% west of Fairfax. This is where they are being shut out of using their sewers. This is where they have sanitary sewage going – not just into the ditches, but into the streets and into people’s yards. This is where he thinks the city needs to start looking – not at Cummings. It has been stated that Cummings is the greatest – this is not true! Actually, Aldrich has the greatest overflow both in terms of gallons per minute and in terms of percentage of expected, so actually Aldrich is the worst and Rowland is the highest in percentage simply because it is way over what nine homes could have. He thinks the city needs to start looking at the head-end. He would submit to council that probably about \$400,000 would solve the city’s entire problem with what was spent at Woodridge, Harcourt, Aldrich, and Rowland. He said it is his own interest to some extent living at the end of Aldrich. He said Aldrich is a street by agreement with the EPA to replace the water line. It is also a major street the city may have to reconstruct at some point, so this one they may need to take some special looks at. He would say at the very least that Rowland, Woodridge, and Harcourt need to be done first because where there is a small sewer is where the pressure is built up and that is where it is coming out. If the city could first find out what is really going on at Aldrich and why there is extra water that they cannot account for – this would be the most responsible thing to do because there is something that is going on where there is a lot of water coming down that nobody can find the reason for. It is coming down even when it is not raining – when it is bone-dry out. You need to find this out first with all due respect and he would hope the engineer would have information on this. In case anyone doubted what he has said about engineering – he brought the sewer map that Mr. Valerius and Mr. Howard provided him.

C. Howard said they had the flow meters set up in eight locations and they looked at those locations based on what was actually the numbers of home tying into it. Based on the flow metering those two streets had the highest increases based on the calculated flow that should be coming from homes, so this is why these two streets were picked as the highest.

B. Brady said the reality is that all the flooding is at the far west end. It doesn’t flood at Cummings. C. Howard said the reality is all the streets because they have a lot of I/I. B. Brady said the overflow into the streets happens at the west end. She said Homer is right about this. C. Howard said if they are going off the flow readings, these are based on the calculated flows of what should be getting into it based on the actual flow metering that was done over four months. B. Brady said before they spend \$204,000, they should finish the studies they started and before expecting residents to spend the kind of money they will be asked to spend.

C. Howard addressed the old YMCA and noted there was a lateral along the extension between Rowland and Aldrich. There was cleanout that was put in because the camera could only go 100' or so. They put another cleanout in and ran another 100', so they are trying to investigate if the old YMCA has a bathroom that ties into the back of this. It gets to a point that if there is no connection in the back then they can just plug it because there is nothing over there that should be draining into it. B. Brady said she was more worried about the water from the roof at the YMCA than she is about a bathroom. Those downspouts go somewhere. C. Howard stated the downspouts in the front were dye-tested years ago and in the back, there is no downspout that ties into anything. B. Brady said there is no water in the ditch on Aldrich and the YMCA is draining somewhere.

S. Holovacs said he feels bad about this because council did direct the administration and C. Howard to do the engineering to go out to bid. He remembers them telling council that the two streets were Cummings and Rowland. He would like to put this on for a first reading and then they can put this back on committee to continue discussions. He said they asked the administration to spend money and now they are here questioning it. It's like they are doing a park or a parking lot and then they stop after they get the engineering and want to change it. He asked council to continue going forward if they want. They can make a motion to put it on for a first reading and prepare legislation. G. Fisher clarified these are just engineering cost estimates and the administration has not gone out to bid, so they cannot prepare legislation to award a contract. So, council just needs to make a motion to authorize the administration to go out to bid. S. Holovacs agreed and said he got a little head of the game.

S. Holovacs MOVED; M. Stark seconded to go out to bid. Discussion: B. Brady said they are going to go out to bid for the city's portion of the job, which is estimated at \$204,000, but they have no idea about the citizen's portion until they actually doing the job. C. Howard said this is correct because they will not know because they cannot lateral launch up the private laterals because the pipe size changes from a 6" to a 4" and the camera cannot get up there, so once they put the cleanout in, they will be able to lateral launch up into the private property. They can finagle so that they can have another contractor there doing the camera work, while a contractor is working, but they will not have the idea of the length or where the lateral runs until they know. B. Brady said the residents will not know their costs until the project is in progress. C. Howard said correct as there is no other way to do it. B. Brady said, "Ouch!" She said this would be individual assessments. M. Stark said she will support them going out to bid because she agrees they have done their homework and they have got the flow metering reports and they have chosen these streets – not by pulling two streets out of the air – they have chosen these streets because this what the research has shown, and they have done a number of different streets with these flow meters and council asked the engineer to move them around and he brought council the numbers, and this is why they

chose them, so she will definitely support this because this is what his research has shown. S. Holovacs said all four members present would need to vote. G. Fisher suggested waiting until council has a full council at the next meeting. S. Holovacs said they can table this until Brian Holmes arrives, or they can do this at the next council meeting. He said they do not have to do the project once the numbers come in. C. Howard said council has 60 days to approve or deny the contracts. He said this is a pilot program and the city has a lot of violations, and they need to start somewhere because they have talked about it. S. Holovacs and M. Stark withdrew their motions to go out to bid and to table this motion to the next council meeting. M. Stark mentioned they need to move forward because they have talked about this for years and they need to do something.

E. Skahen adjourned the meeting upon no further discussion.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. at the Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio.

Transcribed by: Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk
