



City of Ashtabula

Ashtabula City Council

Public Works / Public Utilities / Cable / Schools Committee Meeting

Monday, April 25, 2022 at 5:00 PM

Council Chambers

4717 Main Avenue

Minutes

Opening of Committee Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting of the Ashtabula City Council Public Works/ Public Utilities/ Cable/ Schools Committee was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Committee Chair Crawford.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair: Ward 2 Councilor Calvin Crawford, Vice Chair: Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Member: Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills

Absent: none

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, Clerk of Council Stacy Senskey

Water Pollution Control Department: Superintendant Craig Pierce, Assistant Superintendant Mark Varzella

Sunshine Law Certification

A quorum was established as defined by Ashtabula City Council Rules of Order. The meeting met the requirements of the Ohio Sunshine Laws Open Meetings Act.

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors

City Manager's Report

Mr. Timonere reported on behalf of Public Works. The staff has been patching roads. The asphalt plant should be open so the City can purchase the hot mix. It is less expensive than the cold patch mix. Paint machines are ready for staff to start striping the roads. This year, the City switched paint suppliers and already has the paint on hand. They are working with Ashtabula County to paint some of the larger stretches on the main roads. Because it is new asphalt, the striping on Lake Avenue is almost gone. The Lake Avenue contract has not been closed and the quotes from the company to repaint as part of the project costs. There is also some curbing left on the project as well. Leaf bag pick-up started in April. The street sweeper has been out several times. Trucks are transitioning from winter to spring duties. Weedkiller prices have increased, causing a search for different, more economical mixes. Staff assignments have been issued for tending the City parks. The part-time jobs are still open. The three plow trucks were purchased and should be received by December 2022. It takes an additional eight weeks to outfit the trucks. Quotes for outfitting the trucks have been between \$80,000.00 and \$120,000.00 per truck. The new truck for Parks & Recreation is on City premises.

The Arts Center wants to repaint the murals on the three crosswalks on Main Avenue. Last year, the City painted a black base and designed it with color over top.

Water Pollution Control Report

Presentation - Mark Verzella, Assistant Superintendent

When problems are identified at the stations, they cause significant costs and loss of time to WPC staff and Sanitation staff.

Public Works Committee Presentation Overview

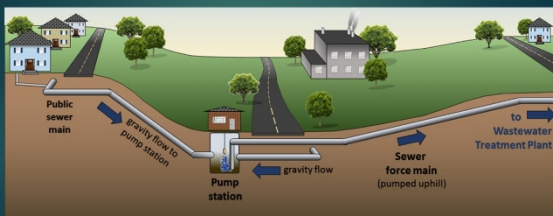
- ❑ What Drains to the Sewers
- ❑ How Sewers Function
- ❑ Responsibility
- ❑ Current Problems
- ❑ Problem Locations
- ❑ Recommended Solutions
- ❑ Long Term Impact

What Drains to the Sewers

- ❑ Bathrooms
 - ❑ Toilet
 - ❑ Sink
 - ❑ Shower
- ❑ Kitchen sinks
- ❑ Dishwasher
- ❑ Clothes Washing Machine

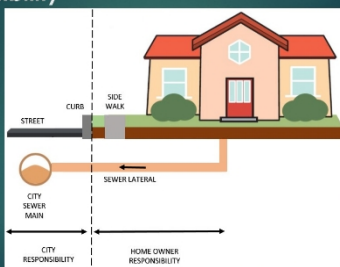
Mr. Verzella explained that anything that goes down a drain in a resident's house winds up in the City sewers. A very small percentage is actually solids.

How Sewers Function



Residential lines flow downhill and connect to the public sewer's main line and then continues to flow to a pump station. The pump stations have between two and four submersible pumps. Level indicators regulate pump activity. The Water Pollution Control plant staff is responsible for maintaining the pump stations. Public Works maintains the lines of the sewer system.

Responsibility



According to Ashtabula City's Codified Ordinances Chapter 933.04 Control of Sewers, the City owns the road right-of-way, from curb to curb. Outside of the curb is the homeowner's responsibility as far as

maintenance and repair. Mr. Timonere explained the homeowner is responsible for any breaks in the lines from the curb to the house. A break in the line from the curb to the City's lateral line under the street is the City's responsibility. The Codified Ordinances state the homeowner is also responsible for ensuring the entire line, from the house to the main line, is free and clear of obstruction. If a homeowner has a backup and something is in the drain, it is up to the homeowner to remove any blockage along the entire length of the lateral line. The City of Ashtabula is one of a handful of municipalities or private owners of sanitary systems that repairs the breaks in the line from the curb to the City's portion of the lateral line. It is a significant cost to the City of Ashtabula to repair breaks in the line and Mr. Timonere has discussed eliminating the City's responsibility to repair with the Councilors in the past. The majority of breaks and obstructions in the lines occur because of tree roots and old separated tiles.

Problems Due to Items Being Flushed??

One of the biggest issues is the flushable wipes people use. They are called flushable, but they are not biodegradable and, when combined with tree roots, result in major backups. WPC staff can test the lines and residents are free to contact them. Mr. Verzella identified the major problems of each station and he plans to educate the homeowners in each area to change their flushing and disposal practices. When problems are identified at the stations, they cause significant costs for the City and loss of time for WPC staff and Sanitation staff.

826 Bar Rake Station

Problems

- Oil and Grease
- Flushable Wipes and Other Materials

Results

- Increased Maintenance Costs Cleaning Rake and Compactor
- Increased Cost for Disposal
- Increase Utility Expense for Equipment Operation
- Potential Backups In Sewer System



Tivision Pump Station

Problems

- Oil and Grease
- Flushable Wipes and Other Materials

Results

- Increased Maintenance Costs Cleaning Pumps
- Damaged Equipment - \$5k per pump
- Sewage Backups In main line sewers and laterals



Laurel Court Pump Station

Problems

- Oil and Grease

Results

- Increased Maintenance Costs Cleaning Pumps
- Obstructed piping and causing float control failures
- Sewage Backups in main line sewers and laterals



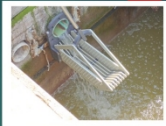
Pump Station and Bar Rake Callouts

- Mobilization—After hour callouts or stop current job to respond during daytime hours.
- Multiple Trucks—Pickup, Crane
- Multiple Employees
- Bypass Pumping at Pump Station to maintain flow and visually observe lifting point for the pump
- Installation of replacement components—cutter head, impeller, new pump.



Recommended Solutions

- Installation of Additional Removal Equipment
- Educating the Public on Sewers and the role they play in protecting our infrastructure:
 - Informative Flyers
 - Plant Tours
 - Information on Sewer Bills



Part of the pretreatment program is to reduce Mercury in the water. Old thermometers should never be broken or thrown in the trash or down the drain.

Mr. Pierce and Mr. Verzella are working with the Ashtabula City Health Department, Health Commissioner, Christine Hill, to purchase electric thermometers to trade with City residents for their old mercury thermometers. WPC staff can then properly dispose of the mercury thermometers.

Long Term Impact

- Increased manpower and equipment to handle issues and repairs.
- More sewer backups and potential property damage.
- Increased clearing frequencies of sewer mains to prevent backups and remove materials.
- Increased cost to residential and commercial customers through rate increases.

**** Keeping items out of the sewers keeps costs down and saves everyone money ****



Contact Information

☐ **Superintendent**
Craig Pierce cpierce@cityofashtabula.com

☐ **Asst. Superintendent / Director of Pretreatment**
Mark Verzella mverzella@cityofashtabula.com

☐ **Sewer Plant**
303 Woodland Ave.
Phone (440) 964-3030

☐ **Report a Sewer or Storm Drain Back-up**
<https://www.cityofashtabula.com/public-works>
If you experience a sewer back-up, or see a storm drain back-up causing flooding in the roadway, please call the Department of Public Works at (440) 993-7036. If it is after 3:00 p.m., please call the Police non-emergency number at (440) 992-7172 so our employees can be dispatched to help.

It is uncertain how the new hotel will impact the pump station on Goodwill Drive. Pump stations are odorous by nature; the City has researched a misting system but found it expensive. The fish cleaning area also exhibits similar odors when fish offal is not disposed of properly.

New Business

Ashtabula Area City Schools - Cinco De Mayo

Celebrating students and families of Mexican descent on Wednesday, May 4, 2022

Ms. Holman announced the Ashtabula Area City Schools is celebrating Cinco de Mayo a day early on Wednesday, May 4, 2022. Held at Lakeside High School, there will be Latin Jazz music from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm, and dinner, games, recognition, and awards from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. This event is being held to celebrate the diversity of students and families and residents of the City are welcome to attend.

Mr. Pierce announced Jose Reynoso achieved certification as a Wastewater Class 1 Operator and is proud of how hard he worked. Mr. Timonere said

Mr. Reynoso accomplished the achievement faster than any previous staff member. It's hard to find applicants for the Class 1 positions so the job description has been modified to allow employees time to achieve certification. Mr. Timonere encourages job seekers to look into the positions because classes are available and, once hired, there is room for advancement up to Class 4. Mr. Pierce is a Class 4 Operator, and Mr. Verzella is working to obtain his Class 4 license. There are only 260 Class 4 Operators in the entire state of Ohio. Mr. Timonere referenced OTCO (Operator Training Committee of Ohio, Inc.) which has training courses and programs teaching GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping, which is a new state requirement.

Aqua notified the City that they are replacing a portion of the main line on West 13th Street towards Kent State. West 13th is part of the 2022 paving project, Mr. Timonere requested they complete certain repairs before paving commences.

The Councilors got a survey from the Ohio Gas Association. Ms. Mills asked about the City's Emergency Response Plan. The City of Ashtabula has an EOP (Emergency Operations Plan) identifying the chain of command for different types of emergencies.

The City has a check valve program for residents who experience drain backups. The resident pays the costs, and the City reimburses up to \$1000 for the check valves. Mr. Timonere expressed the importance of hiring a plumber who knows how to install check valves. The check valve prevents sewage back up but does not prevent storm sewer back up. Material gets caught in them over time and routine maintenance is advised.

The back up issues from some owners of the new construction on Bridge Street have been resolved.

Next Meeting

Monday, May 23, 2022 - 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 05:53 PM by Mr. Crawford.

Attested By:

Clerk of Council, Stacy H. Senskey