

Water Sewer Committee meeting

The Vergas Water/Sewer committee met at the Vergas Event Center City Office on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at 6:30 pm with the following present: Natalie Fischer, Rebecca Hasse, and Julie Lammers.

Additions and Deletions

None.

Vergas Water and Sewer Ordinances

Discussed the following ordinances and proposed changes:

§ 52.06 CONNECTION TO SYSTEM REQUIRED; USE OF PRIVATE WELLS.

(A) Connection Mandatory. Except where municipal water is not available, it shall be unlawful to construct, reconstruct, or repair any private water system which is designed or intended to provide water for human consumption. Private wells, to provide water for other than human consumption, may be constructed, maintained and continued in use after connection is made to the water system; provided, there is no means of cross-connection between the private well and municipal water supply at any time. Hose bibbs that will enable the cross-connection of the two systems are prohibited on internal piping of the well system supply. Where both private and city systems are in use, outside hose bibbs shall not be installed on both systems

(B) Existing Dwelling Unit or Buildings. Each lot, piece or parcel of property in the City of Vergas, abutting on any street, avenue or alley in which a municipal water main is laid, and having an existing dwelling unit or any other buildings thereon, is required to be connected with the municipal water system of the City not later than November 1, 2010, or within three (3) months after a municipal water main is constructed provided the dwelling unit or building is served is within 200 feet of the edge of the street closest to the dwelling unit or building.

(C) New Dwelling Unit or Buildings. Each lot, piece or parcel of property in the City of Vergas, abutting on any street, avenue or alley in which a municipal water main is laid, and upon which a new dwelling unit or any other buildings is to be constructed, is required to be connected with the municipal water system of the City provided the dwelling unit or building served is within 200 feet of the edge of the street closest to the dwelling unit or building.

Committee recommends changing ordinance to make connection mandatory within the city unless a variance is granted.

Requested ordinance change to:

(A) Connection Mandatory. It shall be unlawful to construct, reconstruct, or repair any private water system which is designed or intended to provide water for human consumption. Private wells, to provide water for other than human consumption, may be constructed, maintained and continued in use after connection is made to the water system; provided, there is no means of cross-connection between the private well and municipal water supply at any time. Hose bibbs that will enable the cross-connection of the two systems are prohibited on internal piping of the well system supply. Where both private and city systems are in use, outside hose bibbs shall not be installed on both systems.

(B) Existing Dwelling Unit or Buildings. Each lot, piece or parcel of property in the City of Vergas, abutting on any street, avenue or alley in which a municipal water main is laid, and having an existing dwelling unit or any other buildings thereon, is required to be connected with the municipal water system of the City within three (3) months after a municipal water main is constructed.

(C) New Dwelling Unit or Buildings. Each lot, piece or parcel of property in the City of Vergas, abutting on any street, avenue or alley in which a municipal water main is laid, and upon which a new dwelling unit or any other buildings is to be constructed, is required to be connected with the municipal water system of the City.

§ 51.018 MANDATORY INSTALLATION OF SERVICE CONNECTION TO PUBLIC SEWER.

(A) *Existing Structures within 200 feet of Public Sewer.* The owners of all houses, buildings, or properties used for human occupancy, employment, recreation or other purposes from which wastewater is discharged, which are situated within the city and adjacent to any street, alley, or right-of-way in which there is now located, or may in the future be located, a public sanitary sewer of the city, shall be required at the owner's expense to install a suitable service connection to the public sewer in accordance with provisions of this ordinance within 365 days of the date the public sewer is operational; provided, the public sewer is within 200 feet of the structure generating the wastewater.

(B) *New structures.* All future buildings or structures that will generate wastewater, which are to be constructed on property adjacent to or within 200 feet of the public sewer, shall be required to immediately connect to the public sewer. If sewer connections are not made pursuant to this section, the city shall serve an official ten-day notice instructing the affected property owner to make the connection.

(C) *Structures Where Service Not Previously Available.* As the public sewer becomes available to a property serviced by a private wastewater disposal system, a direct connection shall be made to the public sewer within 365 days, in compliance with this chapter, and within 35 days thereafter any septic tanks, cesspools, and similar private wastewater disposal systems shall be cleaned of sludge. The bottom of any such private wastewater disposal system shall be broken to permit drainage, and the tank, pit, or vault shall be filled with suitable material. The public sewer system will be considered available when the property to be serviced is adjacent to the public sewer or when any structure on the property that generates wastewater is within 200 feet of the public sewer.

Committee recommends changing ordinance to make connection mandatory within the city unless a variance is granted.

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(B) *New structures.* All future buildings or structures that will generate wastewater shall be required to immediately connect to the public sewer. If sewer connections are not made pursuant to this section, the city shall serve an official ten-day notice instructing the affected property owner to make the connection.

(C) *Structures Where Service Not Previously Available.* As the public sewer becomes available to a property serviced by a private wastewater disposal system, a direct connection shall be made to the public sewer within 365 days, in compliance with this chapter, and within 35 days thereafter any septic tanks, cesspools, and similar private wastewater disposal systems shall be cleaned of sludge. The bottom of any such private wastewater disposal system shall be broken to permit drainage, and the tank, pit, or vault shall be filled with suitable material.

New Developments

Request from Lawrence Lake Acres is the following:

The developer would have zero down.

- A maximum of \$30k would be assessed to each parcel.
- The assessment would be deferred for up to 5 years or when developed, whichever occurs first.
- The city will cover 100% of the balance of the total water/sewer costs not covered by the assessment revenue.
- City would bond for 100% of the water/sewer costs.

There is a \$100,000 grant from Otter Tail County available for this project.

Discussed the City property tax amounts on property in Vergas.

Major concerns:

- What can city utility users afford? Need to make a fiscally responsible decision.
- Future development and cost to utility customers.
- Dangerous precedence for the future if we allow wells and septic systems. Not a good practice.
- Well Interference: When a pump draws water from a well, it causes the water level in the surrounding aquifer to go down. Sometimes the water level falls below the reach of other, shallower wells, and those wells go out of water. When that happens it is called a “well interference.”
- Contamination – City added water lines due to contamination of homeowner’s wells within the city limit in 1996. High nitrates which caused one member of our community to get Lou Gehrig’s Disease.
- Discussed funding a certain \$ amount depending on the number of connections:
 - Sample City Contribution to development
 - 0-5 homes = \$100,000
 - 6-10 homes = \$150,000
 - 11-15 homes = \$200,000
 - 16-20 homes = \$250,000
 - Every 5 home homes add \$50,000.
 - Discussed dividing cost of project
 - Between homeowners (special assessments), developer and City

Recommendation to divide connection cost for new developments to be paid in thirds if developer requests city assistance: projects will be divided 1/3 builder (assessment on parcel), 1/3 developers and 1/3 City.

City will not consider a second project with any developer until first project is paid in full by all parties.

Next water/sewer meeting for Tuesday, November 22, 2022 at 8 am.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Julie Lammers
City Clerk-Treasurer
City of Vergas