

**City of Vergas
Water-Sewer Committee Meeting**

Mike DuFrane and Natalie Fischer met with Joe Jenson from Minnesota Rural Water to inspect the city manholes, lift stations and ponds for grease buildup and discuss recommendations based on the findings. The meeting took place on Monday, May 22, 2023 at 10:30 am.

Inspection Results:

1. Manhole Inspection: Grease buildup was very evident in the manholes located on Railway Avenue and by Skal Bar & Grill. There was no grease buildup in the manhole located on highway #17 in front of Cenex. Joe Jenson explained that the only time that grease would be evident on top of the water in the manhole would be when there is grease backed up. Joe also explained that 90% of the problem would be solved if the restaurant owners had grease traps installed. He stated that it is unusual for these types of businesses not to have grease traps.
2. Lift Station Inspection: The lift station across from Long Lake Park was also inspected. There was a lot of grease in the lift station; Joe was surprised at the amount of grease in the station (he estimated there to be 6 to 8" on the walls). Mike DuFrane stated that they are pumped twice per year.
3. Pond Inspection: The pond had a thick edging of grease along one end of the pond that Joe estimated to be covering approximately 10 to 15% of the pond. He stated that when it gets to 25% the pond would most likely turn over and black out – and would shut down. If this happens it would cost the city hundreds of thousands of dollars. He explained that nature naturally treats the natural waste, and it goes back to earth. It cannot happen with the grease, so we have to purchase 'bugs' that help breakdown the grease.

Recommendations:

- Joe stated that the 'smoking gun' is the lack of grease traps at the restaurants. He stated that if we required grease traps it would address 90% of the issues. He recommended that the city be proactive and require that this be done in the Fall. He stated it is a 'win/ win' for the business owners and the citizens/ city of Vergas. If we wait until it gets too bad it will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Also, it will save the business owners from backups in their buildings. In the meantime, he recommended that Mike DuFrane purchase more 'bugs' that help address the issue short term. Joe also recommended that we continue to educate homeowners on the subject; explaining that grease should be cooled after cooking and thrown into the trash; not down the drain.
- Joe stated that he would attend a future Council meeting and help explain and educate the council and business owners on the issue and the need for us to be proactive.

Recommendation/ Action Items for City Council

- Invite Joe Jenson and restaurant owners to a future council meeting to discuss current grease situation and his recommendations for grease traps (have Joe educate the council and businesses on current state issues). Request council to make the decision for moving forward after the education session. (Note that Joe has a conflict for June so will attend the July meeting if invited).

Recorder
Natalie Fischer