

Water Sewer Committee Meeting

The Vergas Water/Sewer Committee met at the Vergas City Office on Friday, October 6, 2023 at 9:00 am with the following present: Natalie Fischer, Dean Haarstick, Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane and Clerk- Treasurer Julie Lammers.

Billing System

Lammers provided concerns with our current utility billing system and our lack of ability to have payments made ACH. After reviewing companies that offer utility billing systems Lammers recommends Munibilling. Kara Matthews provided on google meet presentation showing the utility programs benefits to our customers and employees. The committee recommends to the City Council to purchase the Munibilling System to replace the current UBMAX system.

SCADA

Discussed purchasing a SCADA system for both the water plant and lift stations. Having a SCADA system is beneficial as employees would no longer need to work every weekend. 24 hours a day our utilities employees would get an alert if the system needed attention. This system would help with reports needed for the State of MN. The city could add scales to also allow for chemicals needing attention at a later date. The committee recommends to the council to purchase the water system for \$17,000 and the lift station system for \$4,525.00 with a \$45.00 per month cellular service fee. With this system employees would no longer need to work 7 days a week reading meters at the water /sewer plants. This would be a savings of 208 hours or approximately \$10,400.00 a year. The SCADA system would be purchased as a capital outlay item causing the cost to be depreciated over the next 10 years of the water/sewer budgets.

Budget-goal setting

2024 Water and Sewer Rates

Proposed raising the current \$28.00 water base rate to \$28.50 and keeping the water usage rate at \$4.25 per 1,000 gallons.

Proposed raising the current \$28.00 sewer base rate to \$28.50 and keeping the sewer usage rate at \$2.75 per 1,000 gallons.

This would pay for the new utility system monthly charge. If customers have their utility bill emailed to them and they use ACH the city can reduce mailing utilities employee time, paper and envelopes and postage. The committee recommends the City Council raise the rates to \$28.50 base rate on water and sewer and offer the customers a \$1.00 refund monthly if they sign up for emailed bills and pay by ACH.

Wrench

DuFrane requested the city purchase a wrench to open hydrants to avoid back strain and workers compensation claims. DuFrane requested the city apply for an OSHA Workplace safety grant. Lammers explained the grants are issued quarterly and limited to \$10,000.00. Lammers has applied for the \$10,000.00 for government service center safety needs for the current quarter and the city will not be eligible to apply for another grant until January 1, 2025. The committee recommend to City Council the water and sewer fund purchase wrench for \$2,600.00.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 am.

Julie Lammers, CMC
City Clerk-Treasurer
City of Vergas

Follow up actions:

Write policy for backflow meters.

DuFrane to provide backflow prevention ordinance.

DuFrane will get quotes for videoing the city and additional jetting.

Recommendations to Council:

Purchase Munibilling System to replace UBMax for utility billing (implementation \$1,300.00, Training \$1,040.00 and subscription and merchant service \$235.00 monthly)

Purchase SCADA Wed insight from Sweeney for both Water System (\$17,000.00) and Lift Stations (\$4,525.00)

Purchase Wrench for opening hydrants (\$2,600)

Raise water and sewer rates

Refund customers \$1.00 if they sign up for emailed bills and ACH payments.