

**Water/Sewer Committee
Water-Sewer Committee Meeting
Government Services Center 131 Main St Vergas
9:00 AM on Tuesday, November 25, 2025**

- 1. Call to order**
- 2. Additions and Deletions**
- 3. Minutes**
November 5, 2025
- 4. Ordinance Review**
- 5. Sewer Line Jetting and Televising Policy**
- 6. Lead and Copper**
- 7. Projects**
 - A. Sewer Projects
 1. Pumps
 2. Smoke Testing
 - B. Water Projects
- 8. 2026 Budgets**
 - A. Sewer Budget
 - B. Water Budget
- 9. Adjournment**

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3. Minutes

November 5, 2025

Files Attached

- 11.5.25 Water and Sewer Minutes.pdf

Water Sewer Committee Meeting

The Vergas Water/Sewer Committee met at the Vergas Government Services Center on
Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 9:00 AM.

| 2025 | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Dwight Lundgren, Mayor | N/A | N/A | P | P | P | N/A | | | | | P | |
| Bruce Albright, Liaison | | | | | | | | | | | P | |
| Dean Haarstick, Liaison | N/A | N/A | P | P | P | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | P | |
| Julie Lammers, Clerk-Treasurer | N/A | N/A | P | P | P | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | P | |
| Mike DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent | N/A | N/A | P | P | P | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | P | |

P: Present. A: Absent N/A: No meeting

Also present: Engineer Blaine Green with Widseth.

Call to Order

Lammers called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Additions and Deletions

None.

Minutes

Motion by Albright, seconded by Haarstick to approve the minutes from May 21, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance Review

Lammers presented ordinances from Frazee, Detroit Lakes, and Audubon that were provided by the city attorney for reference. Albright acknowledged he had not thoroughly reviewed all the materials yet. Lammers explained that she brought copies of the 2010 ordinance, the proposed 2024 ordinance, and the changes that had been made by the water committee. She noted the differences between the documents needed to be analyzed. Discussion ensued regarding the timeline for ordinance adoption. Lammers explained that if there is no Planning Commission meeting in December, the ordinances would go to Planning Commission in January and to the Council in February. After a public hearing and two readings, the ordinances would become effective in April. Albright noted there was a lot of material to review, including ordinances from multiple cities and previous changes. He emphasized the importance of thoroughly examining differences between the ordinances and ensuring they are applicable to Vergas today. The committee discussed issues with water service charges at 123 Main St E. The situation involved his curb stop, which wasn't being used but was still being billed. The resident attended the October council meeting requesting that he not pay the past charges of approximately \$1,050 and that he not be required to pay the \$30.50 monthly service charge going forward. He also raised concerns about the city's water line running through his property without an easement. After extensive discussion about the implications of making exceptions and potential impacts on other property owners, the committee decided to table the ordinance review and make a recommendation at the December council meeting. Motion by Albright, seconded by Haarstick, to table the ordinance review and bring a recommendation to the December council meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Lammers agreed to inform the resident of 123 Main St E of this decision so he wouldn't unnecessarily attend the upcoming meeting.

Leaves in storm sewers

DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent, raised concerns about residents blowing leaves into the streets rather than collecting them. He noted this was creating problems throughout the city, particularly on Pelican Avenue, Elm Street, and Third Street. The leaves were plugging up storm drains, causing issues with drainage when snow melts in the spring. DuFrane mentioned that while it's only certain individuals causing the problems, they likely don't realize the harm they're doing. The committee discussed how to address this issue, considering that the next newsletter wouldn't go out until December 1st, which might be too late. Albright offered to draft content for the newsletter regarding this issue. Albright explained that leaves in storm drains create water quality issues, as they can flush into waterways during rain events, potentially harming fish and wildlife. He shared an example from Fargo-Moorhead where a small rain event flushed debris from storm drains into the Red River, resulting in a massive fish kill.

Curb Stops

DuFrane explained issues with curb stops at several locations:

1. 219 Frazee Ave and 235 Frazee Ave: These curb stops behind Skal's building had been repeatedly hit, likely by delivery trucks. Due to the shallow depth of the water main in that area, the curb stops stick up about 6-8 inches above ground level, making them vulnerable to damage. DuFrane reported that they had recently attempted to shut off water to one of the properties but were uncertain if the curb stop functioned correctly.
2. 430 Pelican Ave: This address was identified as the third problematic curb stop location.

The committee discussed options for addressing these issues. Property owners had reported seeing the curb stops hit at least four times. Potential solutions included putting cement pillars with yellow markers to protect the curb stops or digging deeper holes to lower the curb stops. Albright suggested sending letters to the property owners informing them of the non-functional curb stops and citing ordinance section 52.27, which states that the property owner is responsible for the curb stop and valve. Motion by Albright, seconded by Haarstick, to send notification letters to the property owners at 219 Frazee Ave, 235 Frazee Ave, and 430 Pelican Ave informing them of the non-functional curb stops and their responsibility to repair them. The motion passed unanimously.

Lead and Copper

Engineer Blaine Green provided an update on the lead service line inventory. He reported that MBA (their contractor) had moved up their site visit date and completed about half of the remaining unknown service lines, leaving approximately 29-30 properties still needing verification. DuFrane expressed frustration that the inventory wasn't completed as promised, noting that when he accompanied the contractor previously, they had been able to verify 25 properties in just a couple of hours. Blaine explained the challenges in completing the inventory, including difficulty accessing properties and the strict requirements from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). He noted that out of all the properties inspected, only one galvanized line was found, with no lead lines identified.

The committee discussed options for completing the remaining inventory, including:

1. Having city staff complete the remaining checks.
2. Sending letters to remaining property owners.
3. Making phone calls to schedule appointments.

Lammers offered to have the Deputy Clerk call the remaining property owners, and Blaine agreed to send the survey materials to Lammers. Blaine also offered to update the GIS system with the results at no charge if city staff could complete the remaining inspections.

Haarstick and DuFrane left the meeting on a rescue call.

Projects

Due to the absence of committee members who were called to a rescue operation, the discussion of projects was brief. Lammers noted she had received a quote for the installation of a new 4-inch base elbow bracket and riser on the main lift station for \$11,600, not including freight or the vac truck required for installation. However, without DuFrane present to provide details, the committee decided to move this item to the December meeting agenda.

2026 Budgets

Sewer Budget

Lammers reported that the sewer fund was currently \$51,000 in deficit, with approximately \$40,000 in revenue expected in the remaining two months of the year. The fund would likely end the year with a negative balance due to unexpected pump repairs. The committee noted \$49,000 had been spent on repairs when only \$3,000 had been budgeted.

Water Budget

The water budget was in better condition, currently showing a \$12,000 positive balance. Lammers noted that the previous year had ended with a \$3,238 deficit, but this year was looking better. However, she expressed difficulty in preparing future budgets without knowing what projects would be needed and their associated costs.

Albright mentioned that DuFrane had previously discussed the need to replace lift station pumps that were 32 years old and being damaged by sanitary wipes. The committee also discussed the need for a fence around the water treatment plant, which was included in the budget with a potential \$10,000 grant.

After reviewing the financial situation, Albright suggested keeping water rates the same but increasing sewer rates to match water rates (\$31.50 base rate and \$4.50 per 1,000 gallons) to address the deficit and prepare for future infrastructure needs.

The committee agreed to revisit the budget discussion at the next meeting when more members would be present.

The committee agreed to schedule the next meeting for Tuesday, November 25, 2025, at 9:00 AM.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:56 AM.

**Water/Sewer Committee
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4. Ordinance Review

Files Attached

- Mn State Statutes 444.075 Waterworks Systems; Storm, Sanitary Sewer Systems.pdf

444.075 WATERWORKS SYSTEMS; STORM, SANITARY SEWER SYSTEMS.

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** The definitions in this subdivision apply in this section.

- (a) "Municipality" means a home rule charter or statutory city or a town.
- (b) "Governing body" means the town board with respect to towns.
- (c) "Waterworks" means waterworks systems, including mains, valves, hydrants, service connections, wells, pumps, reservoirs, tanks, treatment plants, and other appurtenances of a waterworks system.
- (d) "Sanitary sewer" means sanitary sewer systems, including sewage treatment works, disposal systems, and other facilities for disposing of sewage, industrial waste, or other wastes.
- (e) "Storm sewer" means storm sewer systems, including mains, holding areas and ponds, and other appurtenances and related facilities for the collection and disposal of stormwater.
- (f) "Facilities" means and includes waterworks, sanitary sewer and storm sewer systems, or any portion or portions thereof.

Subd. 1a. **Authorization.** Any municipality may build, construct, reconstruct, repair, enlarge, improve, or in any other manner obtain facilities, and maintain and operate the facilities inside or outside its corporate limits, and acquire by gift, purchase, lease, condemnation, or otherwise any and all land and easements required for that purpose. The authority hereby granted is in addition to all other powers with reference to the facilities otherwise granted by the laws of this state or by the charter of any municipality. The authority regarding storm sewers granted to municipalities which have territory within a watershed which has adopted a watershed plan pursuant to section 103B.231 shall be exercised, with respect to facilities acquired following the adoption of the watershed plan, only for facilities which are not inconsistent with the watershed plan. The authority regarding storm sewers granted to municipalities which have adopted local water management plans pursuant to section 103B.235 shall be exercised, with respect to facilities acquired following the adoption of a local plan, only for facilities which are not inconsistent with the local plan. Counties shall have the same authority granted to municipalities by this subdivision except for areas of the county organized into cities and areas of the county incorporated within a sanitary district established by special act of the legislature.

Subd. 2. **Financing.** For the purpose of paying the cost of building, constructing, reconstructing, repairing, enlarging, improving, or in other manner obtaining the facilities or any portion of them, and of obtaining and complying with permits required by law, a municipality or county may issue and sell its general obligations, which may be made payable primarily from taxes or from special assessments to be levied to pay the cost of the facilities or from net revenues derived from facilities service charges or from other nontax revenues pledged for their payment under charter or other statutory authority, or from two or more of the sources; or it may issue special obligations, payable solely from taxes or special assessments or from revenues, or from two or more of the sources. Real estate tax revenues should be used only, and then on a temporary basis, to pay general or special obligations when the other revenues are insufficient to meet the obligations. All obligations shall be issued and sold in accordance with chapter 475. When special assessments are pledged for the payment of the obligations, they shall be authorized and issued in accordance with the provisions of chapter 429, or of the city's charter if it authorizes these obligations and the governing body determines to proceed under the charter. When net revenues are pledged to the payment of the obligations, together with or apart from taxes and special assessments, the pledge shall be made in accordance with the provisions of subdivision 3.

Subd. 2a. **Collection of charges by watershed districts.** (a) With respect to watershed districts, charges established under section 103D.729 for the purpose of projects under section 103D.730 may be billed and collected in a manner the district shall determine, including certification to the counties with territory within the district for collection by the counties. A county may bill and collect the charges in a manner the county board shall determine or as described in paragraph (b).

(b) On or before October 15 in each year, the district or county board may certify to the county auditor all unpaid outstanding charges, and a description of the lands against which the charges arose. The county auditor shall extend the charges with interest not to exceed the interest rate provided for in section 279.03, subdivision 1, upon the tax rolls of the county for the taxes of the year in which the charge is filed. For each year ending October 15 the charge with interest shall be carried into the tax becoming due and payable in January of the following year, and shall be enforced and collected in the manner provided for the enforcement and collection of real property taxes. The charges, if not paid, shall become delinquent and subject to the same penalties and the same rate of interest as real property taxes.

(c) Any individual may appeal the charges under section 103D.535.

Subd. 3. **Charges; net revenues.** (a) To pay for the construction, reconstruction, repair, enlargement, improvement, or other obtainment, the maintenance, operation and use of the facilities, and of obtaining and complying with permits required by law, the governing body of a municipality or county may impose just and equitable charges for the use and for the availability of the facilities and for connections with them and make contracts for the charges as provided in this section. The charges may be imposed with respect to facilities made available by agreement with other municipalities, counties or private corporations or individuals, as well as those owned and operated by the municipality or county itself.

(b) Notwithstanding local charter restrictions, charges made for service rendered shall be as nearly as possible proportionate to the cost of furnishing the service.

Subd. 3a. **Sanitary sewer charges.** Sanitary sewer charges may be fixed:

- (1) on the basis of water consumed; or
- (2) by reference to a reasonable classification of the types of premises to which service is furnished; or
- (3) by reference to the quantity, pollution qualities and difficulty of disposal of sewage produced; or
- (4) on any other equitable basis including any combination of equitable bases referred to in clauses (1) to (3), but specifically excluding use of the basis referred to in subdivision 3b, clause (1); and otherwise without limit.

Subd. 3b. **Storm sewer charges.** Storm sewer charges may be fixed:

- (1) by reference to the square footage of the property charged, adjusted for a reasonable calculation of the stormwater runoff; or
- (2) by reference to a reasonable classification of the types of premises to which service is furnished; or
- (3) by reference to the quantity, pollution qualities, and difficulty of disposal of stormwater runoff produced; or
- (4) on any other equitable basis, including any combination of equitable bases referred to in clauses (1) to (3), but specifically excluding use of the basis referred to in subdivision 3a, clause (1); and otherwise without limit.

Subd. 3c. Minimum charges. (a) Minimum charges for the availability of water or sewer service may be imposed for all premises abutting on streets or other places where municipal or county water mains or sewers are located, whether or not connected to them.

(b) Minimum charges or user charges collected for waterworks, sanitary sewers, or storm sewers must be used only to pay for items for which charges are authorized in subdivision 3.

Subd. 3d. Facilities' connection charges. Charges for connections to the facilities may in the discretion of the governing body be fixed by reference to the portion of the cost of connection which has been paid by assessment of the premises to be connected, in comparison with other premises, as well as the cost of making or supervising the connection.

Subd. 3e. Who may be charged; unpaid charges. The governing body may make the charges a charge against the owner, lessee, occupant or all of them and may provide and covenant for certifying unpaid charges to the county auditor with taxes against the property served for collection as other taxes are collected.

Subd. 3f. Tax levies for public charges. The governing body may fix and levy taxes for the payment of reasonable charges to the municipality or county itself for the use and availability of the facilities for fire protection, for maintaining sanitary conditions, and for proper stormwater drainage in and for public buildings, parks, streets, and other public places.

Subd. 3g. Reasonableness of charges. In determining the reasonableness of the charges to be imposed, the governing body may give consideration to all costs of the establishment, operation, maintenance, depreciation and necessary replacements of the system, and of improvements, enlargements and extensions necessary to serve adequately the territory of the municipality or county including the principal and interest to become due on obligations issued or to be issued and the costs of obtaining and complying with permits required by law.

Subd. 3h. When charges are not unreasonable. When net revenues have been appropriated to the payment of the cost of the establishment, or of any specified replacement, improvement, enlargement or extension, or to pay the principal and interest due on obligations to be issued for such purpose, no charges imposed to produce net revenues adequate for the purpose shall be deemed unreasonable by virtue of the fact that the project to be financed has not been commenced or completed, if proceedings for it are taken with reasonable dispatch and the project, when completed, may be expected to make service available to the premises charged which will have a value reasonably commensurate with the charges.

Subd. 3i. Collections first for current costs. All charges, when collected, and all moneys received from the sale of any facilities or equipment or any by-products, shall be placed in a separate fund, and used first to pay the normal, reasonable and current costs of operating and maintaining the facilities.

Subd. 3j. Excess net revenues may be used for debt. The net revenues received in excess of the costs may be pledged by resolutions of the governing body, or may be used though not so pledged, for the payment of principal and interest on obligations issued as provided in subdivision 2, or to pay the portion of the principal and interest as may be directed in the resolutions, and net revenues derived from any facilities of the types listed in subdivision 1a, whether or not financed by the issuance of the obligations, may be pledged or used to pay obligations issued for other facilities of the same types.

Subd. 3k. Covenants to secure debt payments. In resolutions authorizing the issuance of either general or special obligations and pledging net revenues to them, the governing body may make covenants for the protection of holders of the obligations and taxpayers of the municipality or county as it deems necessary, including, but without limitation, a covenant that the municipality or county will impose and collect charges

of the nature authorized by this section at the times and in the amounts required to produce, together with any taxes or special assessments designated as a primary source of payment of the obligations, net revenues adequate to pay all principal and interest when due on the obligations and to create and maintain reserves securing the payments as may be provided in the resolutions.

Subd. 31. Enforceability of covenant. When a covenant is made it shall be enforceable by appropriate action on the part of any holder of the obligations or any taxpayer of the municipality or county in a court of competent jurisdiction, and the obligations shall be deemed to be payable wholly from the income of the system whose revenues are so pledged, within the meaning of sections 475.51 and 475.58.

Subd. 4. Levy assessments. The governing body of a municipality or county may also levy assessments against property within the municipal or county limits benefited by the facilities under the procedure authorized by law or charter with reference to other assessments for benefits of local improvements, may transfer and use for the purposes hereof surplus funds of the municipality or county not specifically dedicated to another purpose, and may levy taxes on property within the municipal or county limits for the purposes. A municipality or county may contract with any person, company or corporation for the purposes and under the restrictions set forth in subdivision 5. The contract shall be binding upon the parties to it for the full term agreed upon but in no event more than 30 years, and shall not be changed by either party without the consent of the other party.

Subd. 5. Connection with facilities; charges. A municipality or county may permit a person, company or corporation located and doing business inside or outside the municipal or county limits to connect with the facilities and make use of them upon terms and upon the payment of fees and charges as may be prescribed or contracted for by the municipality or county, and to contract with a person, company or corporation for the payment by the person, company or corporation of a part of the cost of construction, maintenance or use of the facilities and to receive from the person, company or corporation doing business inside or outside the municipal or county limits payment in cash or installments of the portion of the cost of the construction, maintenance or use as may be agreed upon or contracted for with the municipality or county and devote the money received to the purpose of the construction, maintenance or use. The proportionate cost of construction, maintenance or use of the facilities to be paid by the person, company, or corporation may be made payable in installments due at not greater than annual intervals for a period not to exceed 30 years. A person, company or corporation which may pay part of the cost of construction, maintenance or use of the facilities in the manner described, shall have the right to use the facilities for the disposal or treatment of sewage, industrial waste, or other wastes, by the municipality or county upon the payment of reasonable charges for the use of the facilities or the charges contracted for in case there is a contract as provided in this subdivision. A municipality or county may contract with another municipality or county for the joint or cooperative obtainment or use of such facilities without limitation of time.

Subd. 6. MS 1961 [Repealed, 1963 c 696 s 4]

History: 1949 c 394 s 1-4; 1951 c 366 s 1; 1953 c 195 s 1; 1955 c 296 s 1; 1957 c 608 s 1; 1959 c 294 s 1; 1963 c 696 s 1-3; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 702 s 23; 1983 c 183 s 1,2; 1985 c 169 s 15; 1Sp1985 c 16 art 2 s 12,13; 1Sp1989 c 1 art 5 s 31; art 17 s 8; 1990 c 391 art 8 s 45; 1996 c 471 art 8 s 18; 2004 c 141 s 1-4; 2008 c 331 s 8; 2018 c 114 s 1; 2022 c 55 art 1 s 180

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5. Sewer Line Jetting and Televising Policy

Files Attached

- Sewer_Line_Jetting_and_Televising_Policy Proposed.pdf

City of Vergas

Sewer Line Jetting and Televising Policy

Purpose

To maintain the integrity and functionality of the City's sanitary sewer system, this policy establishes a routine schedule for jetting and televising sewer lines to prevent blockages, identify defects, and support long-term infrastructure planning.

1. Jetting Policy

1.1 Routine Jetting Schedule

The City will implement a 4-year jetting cycle for all sanitary sewer lines.

Each year, approximately one-third (1/3) of the City's sewer system will be cleaned using high-pressure jetting equipment.

No jetting will be performed in the fourth year of the cycle, allowing equipment maintenance, evaluation, and planning.

1.2 Emergency Jetting

Jetting may also be performed outside the routine schedule in response to blockages, backups, or other operational needs.

1.3 Documentation

All jetting activities will be logged, including date, location, footage cleaned, and any observed issues.

2. Televising Policy

2.1 Routine Televising Schedule

The City will televise all sanitary sewer lines on a 10-year cycle to assess pipe condition and identify structural or maintenance issues.

2.2 Project-Based Televising

Televising will also be conducted prior to or during major capital improvement projects involving road reconstruction, utility replacement, or other infrastructure work that may impact the sewer system.

2.3 Documentation and Review

All televising footage will be archived and reviewed by Public Works or Engineering staff.

Findings will be used to prioritize repairs, replacements, and future maintenance.

3. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed every five years or as needed to reflect changes in technology, staffing, or system needs.

Adopted this day by the City Council of the City of Vergas

Julie Bruhn, Mayor

ATTEST:

Julie Lammers, City Clerk-Treasurer

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8. 2026 Budgets

- A. Sewer Budget
- B. Water Budget