

Phase V Sewer Project Update Meeting Notes

Wednesday, April 10, 2019 7:00 p.m.

Mayor James Graven and City Engineer, Don Sheehy of Chagrin Valley Engineering (CVE), welcomed attendees and provided the following updates on the status of the sewer project as of April 10, 2019:

- The remainder of the project will be bid to contractors in late April 2019.
- A contract will be awarded in May 2019.
- Work will begin in June 2019. The work schedule is subject to weather conditions.
- Additional money has been obtained by the City of Olmsted Falls through a grant from the NEORSF that will help to lower the individual property owner assessment from \$12,700 to approximately \$10,100 or a reduction of approximately \$2,600. Additionally, each property owner may be eligible for a reimbursement grant of up to \$1,500 for costs associated with connection to sewer from the home.
- The City will work with individual property owners to coordinate the exact location for the sewer connection based on plumbing, access and other considerations that are unique to each home/structure.
- Assessments will not be finalized or begin to be billed until the entire project is complete, which will not be until 2020.
- The final assessed cost will be provided in a letter to each property owner. Payments will be spread out over 20 years at approximately \$75 per month.
- The sewer project work schedule will make for a busy and intense summer and fall in the project area.
- Once the sewers are in place, the streets will be temporarily paved. This is critical since the dirt will settle and it will be necessary to allow enough time for settling before final paving. The streets will be repaved in the spring of 2020.

The following is a recap of questions that were raised by residents in attendance with answers provided by Mayor James Graven and the City Engineer, Don Sheehy.

Q. How is it determined where the home/structure is connected to the sewer line?

A. Once the contractors for the project have been chosen, packets with a detailed drawing of the property and information to help homeowners understand tie-in locations and considerations will be mailed to each property owner. If the property owner wants to change the point of connection, that can be arranged by working directly with engineers. Detailed instructions for the process, and making changes will be included in the packet. Information will include:

Detailed schedule of each aspect of the project

Contractor name

Emergency contact phone numbers

Contact for Chagrin Valley Engineering

Q. Are there any programs available to help homeowners finance their connections?

A. The \$1,500 reimbursement grant for tie-in costs was applied for and granted so that homeowners could get an additional break on costs. The City will establish procedures for homeowners to apply for the reimbursement, but they must first have the work completed and ensure they save their receipts to submit for refund. Each owner is eligible for up to \$1,500 in reimbursement. This reimbursement is available only to Olmsted Falls residents.

Q. What is the length of time that the homeowner has to connect to the sewer?

A. After the sewers are tested, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health will send homeowners a notice that tie-in can begin. The Board of Health typically allows about 120 days from receipt of the notice to meet the tie-in requirement. There is a limited amount of time that homeowners can apply for the \$1,500 reimbursement after tie-in. That timeframe will be clearly specified in the information provided to each homeowner.

Q. Can homeowner's tie-in early? When is the expected tie-in period?

A. If the sewer is completed, petitions to tie-in early will be considered on a case-by-case basis if there is an extenuating circumstance such as a catastrophic failure of a septic tank. Please contact Don Sheehy to determine eligibility for early tie-in. Tie-in doesn't take place until after the entire project is completed.

Q. Can a homeowner choose their own contractor for tie-in and closing of septic?

A. Residents can choose their own contractor. CVE will provide a list of recommended contractors.

Q. What is the process to decommission a septic system?

A. Property owners must apply for a “Household Sewage System Abandonment Permit” from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. The proper abandonment of a sewage system includes completely pumping and collapsing all tanks. The tank bottom and as many sides as possible should be broken up to allow for the dissipation of any water that may enter the area around the system after abandonment. It is not necessary to physically remove the tanks from the ground. The remnants of the collapsed tanks can be allowed to remain underground. It is recommended that a gallon of household chlorine bleach or a bag of agricultural lime be dispersed throughout the remnants of all collapsed components prior to backfilling. All septic tanks, holding tanks, dosing tanks, diversion devices, and sampling chambers should be properly abandoned or removed. After collapsing all of the tanks, the original grade of the property should be restored by filling the excavation to the ground surface with native soil and then compacting the soil as much as possible. The area directly over the excavation may need to be slightly mounded with soil initially to allow for future settling. Mounding the soil will help prevent water from collecting in this area of the property and will encourage surface water to properly drain away.

Follow this link for more information: <http://www.ccbh.net/sewage-system-abandonment/>

Q. Can a homeowner do the work of tie-in and septic system decommissioning themselves?

A. A contractor list is available from the City Service Dept. They have an established list of qualified contractors to choose from among. If a property owner is licensed and bonded and can obtain the proper permits to conduct the work, then it is permissible to complete the work without a contractor.

Q. Is there a complete set of plans for the sewer project that can be viewed?

A. Plans can be viewed at the City’s Service Dept. at 9234 Columbia Road behind the fire station.

Q. What are the repayment options on the assessment?

A. Property owners can either pay their entire portion of the assessment in one lump sum without interest within 30-45 days of receiving final assessment or they can spread payments out over 20 years. There isn't an option to "pay off" the balance early to avoid interest unless it is done within 30-45 days. If a property owner wanted to pay the balance before the end of 20 years, they would still be required to pay the interest on the full amount. This is because the City finances the project through a municipal bond, which incurs a favorable interest rate and so is required to pay interest for the 20-year bond term. The assessment does not follow the property owner. It stays with the property, so the new owner would be responsible for paying the balance of the assessment.

Q. Why are residents responsible for paying for the cost of repaving the roads?

A. The County has provided funds to help cover the costs of repaving the roads for a significant portion of the total project, but it is the municipality's responsibility to cover the costs of the remainder of road repaving according to Ohio law.

Q. How many homes are affected by the sewer project?

A. Approximately 289 homes in the City boundary are part of the project.

Q. Will a schedule for the project phases be published?

A. An expected schedule with dates for each portion of the project will be shared. It will, however, be subject to change based on weather.

Q. How long will each segment of the project take?

A. On average, contractors will typically take one day in front of each house. Contractors will usually complete between 100-200 ft of sewer per day. They usually work four, 10-hour days per week to enable them to accomplish more each day and allow for the possibility of working on a Friday if the weather was poor earlier in the week.

Q. How many pump stations will there be for this last phase of the project and where will they be located?

A. There will be two stations: One on River Road north of Water Street and one on Cook Road.

Q. Will sidewalks be affected?

A. Yes, in some places, but they will be repaired.

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UPDATE 3/4/19: Residents affected by the final phase of the sewer project are invited to attend a public meeting that will be held on Wednesday, April 10, 2019 at the Donauschwabens German-American Cultural Center beginning at 7:00 pm. The address of our meeting location is 7370 Columbia Road.

UPDATE 11/13/18: In September, the City of Olmsted Falls was awarded a grant of \$1,090,500 by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District for the Phase V Sewer Project. The award represents two separate funds that will help reduce individual property owner assessments by approximately \$1,500 as well as additional money that will be available as reimbursement for property owners within the Phase V area only who need to close their septic systems. The money will only be available to residents within the current sewer upgrade area. As of November 2018, a program is being developed and will be announced in 2019 to provide further guidance. Until the Phase V project is near completion, the exact assessment and process will not be known. The City of Olmsted Falls will host a meeting in early 2019 to take questions and share information. Questions may be directed to the City Engineer, Don Sheehy at 440.439.1999.

Phase V Sewer Project Meeting
Wednesday, April 4, 2018
at Donauschwabern German-American Cultural Center

Mayor Graven welcomed residents and thanked them for being present. He apologized for not holding the meeting sooner, but the need to organize city business and manage the budget have taken an extraordinary amount of time. He also recognized that residents are eager for accurate information since the project will have financial and transportation impacts. He wants all residents to be informed and invited them to submit their comments during the meeting and as new questions arise.

Mayor Graven invited Don Sheehy of Chagrin Valley Engineering (CVE) to provide an update on the status of the project. Mr. Sheehy shared:

- The project will be complete by the end of 2019.
- Property owners will not receive a bill until after the work is completed.
- The city, in cooperation with CVE, continues to pursue more funding to reduce the assessment.
- The range for individual property assessments is currently at \$12,300 - \$12,700.
- Grants to reduce assessments have already brought that estimate down from \$25,000.
- The assessed amount will be payable over 20 years. Cost will be approximately \$60 per month.
- Twenty-years is the longest time frame allowable by law to pay the assessment.
- Assessments for all property owners are arrived at equitably to share costs among all in the service area.

Bid Package

	Bid Date	Project Area
2	May/June 2018	Pump Stations
3	May/June 2018	Cook, Inland, Clark, Mapleway (North of Myrtle), Myrtle
4	November 2018	Cranage, Columbia (N of Cook), River, Water, Main, Nobottom
5	May 2019	All Pavement Rehabilitation

In response to questions from residents, the following information was provided by Mr. Sheehy:

Q. Why do we only have an estimate and not an exact cost? Why can't the total cost be known right now?

A. CVE is obligated to follow a bid process based on unit prices, which means each aspect of the project must be bid separately to obtain the best price. Different units include different aspects of the project such as installation, road repair, etc. Not all bidders have expertise in all areas of the process, so each phase is separated to get the best work at the best cost. There are only a few companies that can handle a \$12 million project, so the project is broken into packets of work to get more competitive bids.

Q. Why is the cost now so different from the initial \$6,000 estimate given several years ago?

A. The last engineers made many mistakes in the bidding process and used unrealistic estimates that gave more hope that the cost would be lower than possible to complete all the work.

Q. Why are residents responsible for the cost of repairing the roads that are the property of the County?

A. Water and Elm Streets will have sewers going down the middle of the road and those roads will need complete replacement. The City's residents are responsible for covering the costs of our roads. At the same time, Cuyahoga County has contributed \$800,000 in grant funds to help cover the cost of repaving.

Q. Can individual property owners hire their own contractors to implode their septic systems and tie-in to the new sewer?

A. Yes, property owners are responsible for ensuring their old septic system is properly closed down. Mr. Sheehy will be happy to recommend three or four qualified contractors who are experienced and reputable to do the work. The City will also help property owners to secure low-interest loans, if needed, to cover the cost. Rick Novickis, Director of Environmental Health with Cuyahoga County Board of Health, was present and offered assistance from the Board by hosting a forum for residents who want more information about crushing their old septic systems and working with the Board of Health to make the process safe, efficient, and cost-effective. That forum will be organized next year and communicated in advance to property owners.

Q. Was there a water disruption to some residents already and will that be an ongoing issue for all streets involved?

A. Yes, there was a disruption on Elm Street due to structural problems with the old pipes that had leaks and breaks. Much of the infrastructure is very old and when construction crews are working, they could discover other issues that would need repair. So, while disruptions aren't anticipated, they could be encountered depending on the condition of the water lines.

Q. Will everyone be assessed?

A. All buildable lots within the project area will be assessed. Property owners have already received an estimate via mail.

Q. Apart from the estimated costs of sewers and cost to close septic systems, are there other costs involved?

A. All right of way costs are part of the construction, there are no additional costs to property owners.

Q. What is a pump station and where will it be located?

A. The pump stations will move sewage from pipes to the sanitary sewer by helping to clear low spots. There will be a pump station at River Road and Water Street in the right of way. There will not be a pump station on Mapleway. There will be a total of seven or eight pump stations in the city.

Q. Does any portion of the project include storm sewer work?

A. Some parts of the project will require work. Where there are known collapsed pipe, for example, repairs will be made.

Q. How can homeowners prevent or take care of damage to their homes, particularly if historic?

A. They should take photos before construction begins. If damage does occur, a homeowner can address that with their insurance company.

Q. Who maintains the pump stations after they are installed?

A. Each customer receives a bill for operation and maintenance that is built into the sewer bill.

Q. How long will each phase of the construction process take?

A. Each phase will take approximately four to six months to complete. Weather and infrastructure problems that are discovered could obviously influence the timeframe.

Q. What is the timeframe after sewer is in until the road is put together and what materials will the road surface be?

A. The road will be a stone base with a full-depth asphalt top. The repair to make the road passable will be immediate and all finish paving will take place in 2019.

Q. For a poorly working septic system, what can homeowners who are outside the sanitary sewer project do?

A. Cuyahoga County Board of Health is in charge of septic system. Rick Novickis can help. Also, a forum will be held in 2019 to further address dealing with and shutting down old septic systems. Rick mentioned that not all contractors who service septic systems have experience with connecting to sanitary sewers, but the County can help homeowners make the right choices.