

Water / Sewer Plan notes

I have read through the Lead Service Rule, it states any service line known to at any time in the past be constructed of Galvanized Steel downstream from a lead gooseneck must be replaced by 2035, “current deadline” that could change.

In Oelwein the customer owns from the curb stop to the house meaning they would be responsible for the cost of replacement.

Even in the case of us replacing our portion from the main to the curb stop it falls on us “City” to make sure the homeowner’s side is replaced. Whether we pay for it or force the homeowner to pay for replacement under the threat of disconnect.

I checked with Lisa Bahe and also my own insurance company, there would be no coverage for the water service line based solely on the fact it is downstream from a lead gooseneck, it would have to be leaking to be covered.

We estimate we have between 75-100 galvanized service lines in the system that are downstream of a lead gooseneck. These will all need to be replaced in the next ten years.

I don’t have a number as to how many of these are rental properties but I would estimate at least half.

So realistically we could have 50 owner occupied residents that will need to come up with five thousand plus dollars for replacement.

Sewer Laterals

In the City of Oelwein, the homeowner is responsible for their sewer lateral from the house to the city sewer main, generally the center of the street in front of the home.

There are exceptions where the homeowner owns as much as 200’ of private lateral.

The department has no records or maps of private laterals so it gets confusing at times trying to figure out where some are connected to the main.

The sewer is different than the water as a “new” pipe type was popular throughout the 50s and 60s called Orangeburg, it was made up of a material that is certain to fail at some point.

Before Orangeburg, butt joint VCP “vitrified clay pipe” was used and most is 75-100 years old.

Recently a young couple purchased a home in town not knowing their sewer lateral was 140’ long and runs through their neighbor’s yard on the way to the city main. The sewer plugged and is believed to be collapsed somewhere in the neighbor’s yard. The cost to fix this issue the correct way will exceed ten thousand dollars.

We estimate the sewer lateral issue could affect as many as 50% of the homes in town.

Replacing these laterals not only benefits the homeowner it also reduces infiltration sources in the sanitary sewer system that everyone pays for.