

MEMO

TO: Chairperson Board and Commission Members
FROM: Andrew M. Beyer, P.E.
DATE: June 5, 2024
RE: Public Works Commission Meeting of June 11, 2024

Review and take possible action: Explore Options to Service Area 4 of the Town of Emmet Cooperative Boundary Agreement with Public Water and Sanitary Sewer Services

Background

The City of Watertown and the Town of Emmet are under a cooperative boundary agreement through December 31, 2032. Under this agreement there are four (4) mandatory boundary adjustments that are to occur in the first ten (10) years of the agreement, the last to transpire this September 29, 2024. Area 4 is the fourth and final boundary adjustment and has the largest land mass – see attached site map.

Area 4 properties are currently on private well and septic systems. Under the agreement, as these properties attach to the City, they are required to:

“Following attachment, properties shall be required to connect to the City’s municipal water and sanitary sewer systems within one (1) year following the date of attachment, except that connection to the City municipal water and sewer systems may be delayed for a period not to exceed sixty (60) months if the property owner provides a current evaluation of the existing private well and/or private sanitary sewer system as performed by a Licensed Plumber or Certified Sanitarian.” (Pages 24 & 25 of 39 of the Intergovernmental Cooperative Plan Under Wisconsin Statute Section 66.0307 Between the City of Watertown and the Town of Emmet).

As the cooperative boundary agreement stipulates that these properties must connect to public water and sanitary sewer within one to five years upon attachment to the City, and considering these areas currently lack City utilities, extending public water and sanitary sewer to them and providing individual connections is a costly endeavor. The Public Works Commission needs to weigh the following options, prioritizing the best interests of both affected property owners and the City:

Option 1: Extend utility mains and assess affected property owners cost of sewer and water main extensions per Chapter 512-2(C) and Chapter 512 Article III of City code. Property owners would be assessed design, construction, and administration costs based on assessable linear footage of frontage for each benefited property within an assessment district.

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Option 2: Property owners to address sewer and water main extensions at time of well or septic failure following application process and requirements set forth in Chapter 512-2(B) and Chapter 512 Article III of City code. It's important to note that construction projects take several years to develop before a shovel is put in the ground. Appropriate planning and design need to take place prior to construction.

Preliminary design and construction cost estimates to serve the area with sanitary sewer and water mains are roughly \$1.1 million. The preliminary estimated cost per property to serve with public water and sanitary sewer is significant. One should note that the current total assessed value for some of these properties is less than the cost to serve the property with public water and sanitary sewer.

In summary, establishing a special assessment district requires time and may be viewed as burdensome by affected property owners. Waiting for a well or septic system to fail before moving forward with sewer and water main extensions avoids immediate assessment costs, however it takes considerable time to plan and design public improvements if utility connection is desired.

It's important to note that if the Commission favors establishing a special assessment district for Area 4, design, construction, and construction management costs are not currently included in the Water/Wastewater Division's or the Annual Street Program's five-year capital plan.

Enclosed:

- Informational packet
- Chapter 512-2, City of Watertown Municipal Code of Ordinances
- Chapter 512 Article III, City of Watertown Municipal Code of Ordinances