



THE LAWRENCE LIFT

February 2017

Costs for infrastructure renewal needs are estimated to be in the hundreds of billions. The AWWA report "Buried No Longer" states that the restoration of existing water systems as they reach the end of their useful life will cost "...at least \$1 trillion over the next 25 years, if we are to maintain current levels of water service." However, I do want to reassure you that Lawrence's present needs are significantly less than \$1 trillion.

While low utility bills are certainly a good thing as far as our wallets go, we need to be aware that by continuing to delay addressing the problems we have now, we are only making it more expensive when we are forced make changes because of a catastrophic failure, or a regulatory action. And we need to ask ourselves if it is right for us to continue to kick this can down the road for someone else to deal with. We have enjoyed the benefits of water and sewer systems built and paid for years ago by others. What will be the legacy we leave to our children and future citizens of Lawrence? Like many other communities, Lawrence is at the point now where there is no viable alternative to replacement of major parts of its water and sewer systems. The plain and simple fact of the matter is that we are now faced with infrastructure issues that cannot be solved with a different management technique, or a different preventive maintenance program. All the things we can do to properly care for and operate our water and sewer systems are being done, and have been done for years. But what we cannot do is turn back time. Old and worn out is old and worn out, and the band aid approach is not cutting it any longer for a lot of our infrastructure.

What do we need to be working on in order to continue to provide adequate, safe and reliable water to our customers?

- Water Treatment Plants need to be replaced or upgraded
- Water system operating controls and data management systems need to be replaced with up to date technologies utilized for maximum efficiency
- Water Mains need to be replaced on a regular basis
- Water Storage facilities need to be cleaned, painted and made structurally sound and safe
- Emergency power generators are needed in well fields and other locations
- New sources of supply need to be planned and installed while maintaining the ones presently in service
- The Business Office phone system needs attention

In short, we must begin in earnest to address all of the various aspects of getting water from the well to the customers tap so that we are operating as efficiently as possible in providing a safe, adequate and reliable water supply. Much work has already been accomplished in 2016 in order to determine the condition of the utility's infrastructure, its finances and its operational requirements. We have made tremendous strides in creating operating budgets, developing an asset management program, and updated and more comprehensive capital plans. The City is also set to roll out improvements in the customer service area with regards to online bill pay and customer access to their account information.

The water utility stands behind the quality of the water we produce and distribute to our customers. Many people work hard each and every day to ensure this happens. We perform a variety of tasks, from operating wells, pumps and other process equipment used to get the water from the well to the customers tap, to meter reading and billing functions, and to emergency repairs, regardless of time or weather.

It is our responsibility and obligation to continue to provide a safe, reliable and adequate supply of water to our customers. We must start by changing our thinking and placing an appropriate value and priority on our water and sewer infrastructure and then be willing to make the needed investment in order to ensure that, as a community, we continue to have a safe, reliable and adequate level of water and sanitary sewer service for ourselves and for those who come in the future.

It is my hope that you now have a better understanding of everything that is involved, and that you also understand that infrastructure does not last forever. The importance of water to our quality of life, as well as for our economy, cannot be overstated. And the public water supply is still the best value around in terms of cost per gallon. That is why investing in our water and sewer systems is an investment in our well-being, and in the well-being of those who will come in the future.

It is our hope that you will support us in our efforts to begin making the infrastructure improvements so sorely needed by our City. Please take some time to visit the utility page of the City's website at "Buried No Longer", which provides a high-level view of the nation's water infrastructure issues. You can also take a look through the Water Preliminary Report, which was prepared by Wessler Engineering and Lawrence Utilities in support of our effort to secure low-interest funds from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program. This report provides a lot more detail concerning the several items touched on in this presentation.

As always, if you have any questions about any of these issues, please feel free to contact me at:
(317) 524-6305 or ssalsbery@cityoflawrence.org

For any water or sanitary sewer billing inquiries, please call 317-542-0511

ATTENTION PROPERTY OWNERS! IF YOU ARE HAVING WORK PERFORMED ON YOUR PROPERTY, HOME OR OTHER STRUCTURE THAT REQUIRES A PERMIT, YOU MUST ENSURE THAT THE CONTRACTOR YOU SELECT IS DULY LICENSED, BONDED AND INSURED TO PERFORM WORK IN THE CITY OF LAWRENCE. IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT A PERMIT IS REQUIRED, NEED TO KNOW PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS AND/OR CONTRACTOR LICENSING REQUIREMENTS, PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY OF LAWRENCE DPW OFFICE AT (317) 545-5566.

Check www.cityoflawrence.org for updates about events throughout our community. Information about personnel contacts, budget reports, volunteer opportunities, employment opportunities, and an archive of committee agendas and minutes are available to you.