WATER/SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING

March 9, 2026

The Water/Sewer Committee of Chardon City Council met on Monday, March 9, 2026, at 11:30 AM in Conference Room A of the Municipal Center.

Andrew Blackley, Chairman of the Water/Sewer Committee presiding.

Members of the Water/Sewer Committee present: Andrew Blackley, David Lelko.

Others present: City Manager Benjamin Young, Clerk of Council Amy Day, Public Service Director Justin Czekaj, Water/Sewer Superintendent Frank Taylor.

Mr. Blackley called the meeting to order at 11:37 AM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Lelko moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to accept the minutes of the Water/Sewer Committee meeting from November 25, 2024 as presented. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS – none.

NEW BUSINESS

Regarding the City Manager Goals and Priorities (Goal 4.1), City Manager Ben Young stated that he has composed action steps to the broad goals he had previously presented to Council. He is requesting that each Council Committee review the goals and action steps that pertain to their respective committees, and make comments, add, remove or amend the strategies or initiatives presented.

<u>Goal 4.1</u>

Mr. Young reviewed his proposed initiatives to Strategy 4.1 ensuring the long-term stability of public utilities including:

- Establishing working capital targets
- Assessment of infrastructure capacity
- GIS for public infrastructure,
- Transitioning connection charges to an EDU-based calculation

- Compliance with EPA best management practices,
- Endorsed source water protection plan,
- Construction of a second clearwell,
- Rehabilitation of water tower
- Adoption of EPA-mandated asset management program
- Adoption of CRWP EPA-endorsed storm water code,
- Evaluation of the creation of a storm sewer utility
- Expansion of utility service beyond City boundaries
- Emergency fail over connections for water system.

Mr. Young began reviewing the initiatives. He explained that the initiative to establish working capital targets will ensure that each utility maintains sufficient reserves to cover costs without relying on sudden rate increases or short-term borrowing.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to conduct a comprehensive assessment of infrastructure capacity. He stated that the City has a lot of growth, but not in the way that the last infrastructure capacity study projected, so he would like a revised study.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to develop GIS capabilities to map and manage infrastructure assets, which will improve planning, maintenance and transparency. He added that GLCAP may be able to financially help the City with this effort.

Mr. Blackley stated that a GIS system can help quickly locate assets.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to transition the City's sanitary sewer connection charges to an EDU-based calculation rather than the current method of using plumbing fixtures.

Mr. Lelko requested Mr. Young reference the system development charge because that is the term Council is familiar with.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to be in compliance with EPA best management practices, including tracking lost water and breaks per year, identifying inflow and infiltration issues, and addressing 4-inch water mains.

Mr. Young stated that the EPA's recommended lost water threshold is 15%, and he is recommending an analysis to identify the most likely sources of lost water. In addition, the City will also track other sources of lost water such as hydrant flushing and fire suppression.

Discussion occurred regarding how to track water usage for fire suppression.

Frank Taylor explained a situation at Redwood where underground leaks were detected, that resulted in reduced water loss.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to identify inflow and infiltration issues that affect the wastewater treatment plant, causing higher flow, particularly during rain events.

Mr. Blackley added that when the City becomes a Phase 2 community, there will be additional EPA mandates related to I & I that will affect the City.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to reduce water main breaks through a targeted replacement and rehabilitation strategy.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to address 4-inch water mains.

Mr. Lelko asked why the replacements haven't been done sooner.

Mr. Taylor stated that there have been higher priorities. He added that he has been vocal about not repaving roads that have issues that need addressed underground.

Mr. Czekaj added that the City has not been leveraging funds and there are grant opportunities available. He added that he has been working to get a lot of projects engineered so that they are shovel-ready.

Mr. Lelko noted that the City has benefited from OPWC grants in the past and would like the City to continue pursuing grant opportunities, keeping in mind that other communities have needs too.

Mr. Czekaj added the strategy with OPWC is to apply for at least 2 projects annually and ask for at least $400,000/year.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to formally adopt a source water protection plan to identify potential contamination risks and outline protective strategies.

Mr. Blackley noted that the City should keep an eye on the mining activity of Covia that operates just outside the City limits.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to construct a second clearwell, which the City received $1.28 million for.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to rehabilitate the water tower, noting that an evaluation will be done in 2026 to determine the scope of necessary repairs and if the $2.2 million projected expense is accurate.

Mr. Lelko asked if the exterior of the water tower will need repainted.

Mr. Taylor stated that there is structural damage inside, and the outside will need painted following the interior repairs.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to adopt an EPA managed asset management program and CRWP EPA-endorsed storm water code.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to evaluate the creation of a storm sewer utility, noting that if the City is designated as an MS-4 community, this would be his recommendation.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to expand utility services beyond City boundaries, which would assist with the underutilization of the the City's utilities that ultimately places a financial burden on current ratepayers.

Mr. Blackley stated that he would prefer that if the City extended water service beyond City limits, he would like public input on that.

Mr. Lelko stated that once the City is closer to full build-out, this may be more a of a possibility.

Mr. Blackley stated that he would also consider it is if this is part of a JEDD.

Mr. Lelko stated that given the annexation history in the City, this may not be well-received.

Mr. Young stated that neither the City nor the townships seem in favor of annexation, and expanding utility services is a way to work with the townships to recoup some costs.

Mr. Blackley asked if Mr. Young is also considering wastewater expansion, noting that the City is close to capacity now.

Mr. Young stated that he is mainly interested in expanding water service.

Mr. Taylor added that the City's average yearly wastewater treatment is not at capacity, but during a rainstorm, capacity is exceeded.

Mr. Lelko requested that this initiative to expand utility services be removed for now.

Mr. Young explained the initiative to establish emergency connections to neighboring water systems.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – none.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Blackley inquired about the City's changes to the bidding process and asked how the bid notices are publicly advertised.

Mr. Young stated that by State law, the City is required to publish the notices in a newspaper of general circulation. He stated that ideally, he would also like to post on Facebook.

Mr. Blackley asked if plans, bid books, and bid specifications are available to print as pdfs online.

Mr. Young stated that plans, bid books, and bid specifications are available to print as pdfs online and he reviewed the public bid submission and opening process available through Bid Express.

Mr. Lelko asked about the advantages of submittals through Bid Express.

Mr. Young stated that the advantage is for ease of tracking.

Mr. Blackley asked if the Law Director has reviewed the proposed changes the City Manager has proposed.

Mr. Young stated the Law Director has reviewed the proposed changes he has proposed.

ADJOURN

Mr. Lelko moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to adjourn. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:47 PM.

Attest:

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AMY DAY
Clerk of Council