

January 2023 Update

We've contacted Armstrong, Century Link, and Everstream to remove their lines that are in contact with our electric lines on SR 57 from Fulton to Back Massillon Rd. **Working with Armstrong and ODOT we've determined the lines were illegally tied together for an oversized load. We'll work with Armstrong to cut them loose, but it is a fairly big job on a busy road. Still on the list.**

Water plant design work is in progress. **EPA engineers have a conference call on 1/12/23 with our engineers to discuss the water plant design approval. The EPA seems pleased with the design as per the conference call. If all goes as planned we should put this out to bid in April/May.**

We are currently in the process of painting Klusch Hall and the town hall interiors between other jobs and Klusch Hall rentals. The main room and kitchen are done. We are starting the bathrooms and storage room the week of 2/6/23, and then will move into the town hall. The doors and door trim at Klusch will wait until warmer weather as the doors need to be opened to paint the jams.

Hand the sludge lines at the sewer plant clog with leaves and rags a couple of times. The guys are painting the pipes in the sand filter room. **The sand filter painting is complete. Still having rags clog our sludge pipes every couple of weeks. We've seen a marked increase since covid as have other municipalities.**

Nature Preserve Project final contract from the State has been signed and the availability of the monies has been extended one year. Now in the design phase.

We have a low service pump out of commission. Jameson Pump is rebuilding it to get us through to the new plant. **Pump installation is complete. Our pumps are running as designed.**

Utility software has been installed. We are working through the little bugs, but we've also taken three credit card payments. It works nicely and should be ready for full usage in January. Each credit card payment has a 3.5% convenience fee for the customer. They all had no problem with that. **Still working through some software bugs, but our credit card system has been used several times.**

Spent a lot of time with delinquent utility payers. It's almost always the same 10 or so people. We shut them off, and they pay, but are often belligerent and difficult to deal with, and they are getting worse. **Same story, but our shut offs were down slightly. We also shut off the water instead of electricity during days below 32 degrees. We get the same response: quickly paid.**

We have started our electric rate study with Courtney & Assoc. Our rates haven't been examined or raised since 2004, and we need to be sure we are covering costs. This study does not indicate a rate increase is in the offing. It only looks to see if we are meeting our fiscal responsibilities.

Remember, we welcome any and all council members to come down to the utility department to get a glimpse of a typical day. Tough to manage with no idea what goes on each day.

Reminder to let citizens know when they complain about paying utility bills. They are received on the 1st of the month, due the 15th of the month, a late charge is added the 16th of the month, and shut off is the 26th of the month. We are amazed at how many people we deal with monthly (usually the same people) who are surprised when bills are due. Also, payments can be dropped off at the night deposit at the bank or at the town hall AND they are credited on the last business day. If the 15th falls on a weekend, they can be paid on the following Monday. **I like to monitor our community page and others on FB. I have found a disappointing trend: people like to complain about their bills, shut offs, etc. basically anything about the town, and amazingly none of these people contact us about their issues (they tend to neglect that they didn't pay their bills). We/I will not respond on FB as that is not the proper channel. Another big complaint is they call and no one calls them back. We have Armstrong Cable telephone service. We can monitor all incoming and outgoing calls, dates, time of day, length of call, etc. Just in the past month I have been able to prove to two people making that complaint that they never called or left a message. They were dumbfounded.**