



## **City of Mount Vernon Presents “Our Life Sustaining Systems; Wastewater”**

*Video to educate the community on the Mount Vernon Wastewater treatment system and the effects key decisions have on the surrounding environment, Wastewater Department, improvement projects, and citizens*

MOUNT VERNON - City government officials created an educational video to share information with the public about the Mount Vernon Wastewater system as well as outline the effects that key decisions relating to the wastewater system have on the surrounding environment, Wastewater Department, improvement projects, and citizens.

After multiple meetings, and hearing the public's responses, it was felt that further information should be provided specifically on the wastewater system. By sharing details on the system directly from those that are closest to its operations, it is the hope that it will provide the audience with deeper understanding and connection to this life-sustaining system for our city.

The video provides key data points about the city's wastewater system as well as provides examples of projects from the past and for the near future. The video production also breaks down the customer's utility bill showing how their payment is allocated, how much the all-in-one cost of city water is compared to other common purchases, and explains the effects that a rate increase will have on the department and benefits to customers.

“Obviously, there is much to know and plan for our city utilities and the resources we need to provide basic life-sustaining services,” said Mount Vernon Mayor Matt Starr. “We all want to be able to flush our toilets and take showers knowing that our wastewater is treated for the safe removal of residuals with clean water released into the Kokosing River.

“No one wants to see rates increase, but there is an urgency about the matter as well as a long-term commitment to future generations of the city,” Starr added.

The three main reasons for the suggested increases to the wastewater utility include rising fixed costs such as chemicals and the transportation of the chemicals for the wastewater treatment process, aging infrastructure like the two plant digesters that need upgrades, and federally-mandated processes - notably, the removal of phosphorus before being released into waterways. Projections based on planning estimates suggest that under current rates, the city will not be able to meet the expected costs unless wastewater fees are adjusted to handle the new federal requirements while also replacing outdated equipment.

City council determines the wastewater rates and is considering a rate increase which would add 74 cents per 100 cubic foot in 2021, 84 cents in 2022, and 97 cents in 2023. In last night's legislative session, city council agreed to postpone voting on the proposed increase in wastewater rates until January 25, 2021.

The video is live via a YouTube Link at <https://youtu.be/4gh41wS73Dg>. Other links to the video production are also found at *The City of Mount Vernon* Facebook page, @CityMV1805 on Twitter, and at MountVernonOhio.org.

### END ###

**ABOUT THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON:**

The City of Mount Vernon is an innovative community with an authentic hometown feel. Home to 17,000 people, Mount Vernon is the county seat for Knox County and boasts historic buildings and districts as well as business and professional, educational, and recreational opportunities through many adaptive reuses of the community's infrastructure and spaces. Specific attractions are the historic Woodward Opera House, the Knox County Memorial Building and Theater, and the 250-acre Ariel~Foundation Park adjacent to the state scenic Kokosing River. With strong ties to higher education, Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Kenyon College, and Central Ohio Technical College have satellite locations in the historic downtown. Located 40 miles northeast of Columbus, Mount Vernon is near the geographic center of Ohio and has connections all over the globe.

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