

This spring many Harrisburg residents are asking, 'What is the City doing about the sewer lagoons and smell?'

As the weather warms the solid waste sitting at the bottom of the sewer lagoons building up all winter starts to rise to the surface bringing all sorts of smells with it. This process, while regretful, is necessary. As the solids start to move the bugs that eat the solids also begin to reactivate after going dormant all winter. As the bugs wake and do their job the smell begins to go away. Additionally we recirculate water within the lagoons to raise oxygen levels to aid the bugs. Lastly, excess water in our lagoons is pumped to the city of Sioux Falls and in the first two months we have pumped over 12 million gallons. We currently pumping to Sioux Falls. This process every spring of solids coming to the surface is called 'turn over.' Turn over should take two weeks if temperatures stay consistently high, which they have not. Every city and town with lagoons are going through the same process and smell. The thing that can cause turn over to take longer is 'over loading' or when too many solids are in the lagoons for the bugs to keep up and do their thing. Our lagoons do have over loading, which brings us to what we are doing long term.

In 2015 Sioux Falls gave Harrisburg a new long term contract that would have cost Harrisburg between \$25-\$30 million over the next 20 years. As a result of the unexpectedly high cost to contract with Sioux Falls the city contracted with Stockwell Engineers to study other more affordable options to treat our waste water. The results of that study came back to the City in December 2015. The City Council held two meetings where the results were presented to the public and we advertised those meetings as we always do by posting the agendas on our website. We also did additional outreach methods on Facebook. Stockwell presented two options that would cost between \$15-20 million over 20 years. The city continues to work with Stockwell to identify locations south of Harrisburg to relocate our sewer treatment. Once a site is determined soil testing must take place to firmly determine viability of the site. We are pushing ahead on several other fronts as well. We continue to negotiate with Sioux Falls on more preferable and affordable terms for a long term contract. We conducted an engineering study with Tea and Worthing to analyze the possibility of treating our waste water together as all three communities face limited capacity in the near future.

In conclusion, those of us in City Hall, on City Council, and in the maintenance department are trying our best to be good stewards of Harrisburg's limited resources and tax dollars. It will be some time before we know exactly which direction we will go for a a long term solution. That solution, regardless of what it is will be expensive and take time to implement. And during the spring and fall the lagoons will still go through the normal process of 'turn over.' We need our next waste water treatment option to be as cost effective as possible and work for Harrisburg far into the future.