

TCEQ-Approved Infrastructure Repair Project

Mayor McCoy, along with the Elkhart City Council continue to “Move Elkhart Forward” by embarking on a major overhaul of the City’s water distribution system, implementing major repairs that have been needed, but neglected for many years. Per TCEQ, the City’s water supply is perfectly safe to drink; however, in order to plan for future growth of the City, the age, condition, and size of the lines currently distributing water to the City’s residents and businesses, must be addressed.

The Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have established regulations and standards for the safe treatment, storage, and distribution of potable water to the public. All Public Water Supply (PWS) systems operating within the State of Texas must adhere to these regulations and standards, and the City of Elkhart takes this task very seriously.

The City of Elkhart draws its groundwater from the Wilcox Aquifer. The City operates two wells that are capable of a combined production capacity of approximately 444 gallons per minute (GPM), or 0.6394 million gallons per day (MGD). Once factoring in the number of available connections (985), the value of the ratio of the GPM is drastically reduced to 0.45GPM, which is well below the 0.6 GPM required by TCEQ. In order to bring the City’s system into compliance, the City will begin a 2-phase construction project, which is expected to last between 18-24 months.

To fund this project, the City of Elkhart encumbered a debt of \$2,050,000 through Combination Tax and Revenue Certificates of Obligation. This funding enables the City to begin the much-needed improvements to the City’s water pressure, as well as water distribution lines throughout town, which will occur in two separate phases:

Phase 1 - Water System Pressure Improvements

1. The landmark “Elkhart” water storage tank located behind City Hall will be taken out of service and secured.
2. The Newsome Well site will be upgraded with the installation of a 10,000-gallon hydro-pneumatic tank, as well as a high service pump station
3. The School Well site will be upgraded with the installation of a 10,000-gallon hydro-pneumatic tank, as well as a high service pump station

Phase 2 - Water Distribution Improvements

Replacement of aging, deteriorating, and undersized lines in selected areas of the City will begin.

1. All 4” and 6” water lines on the west side of Hwy 287 from Jenkins Road to E. Parker Street will be replaced with 10” water lines.

2. All 6” water lines on the west side of East Parker Street from Hwy 287 to North Main will be replaced with 10” water lines.
3. All 2” water lines on the west side of Hwy 287 from East Parker Street to approximately Cimarron Street will be replaced with 8” water lines.

Payments of the financial obligation will be made in installments of \$170,000 per year, over a period of 15 years. The City has worked tirelessly to solidify a plan with minimal impact on City utility customers. **Beginning with October billing, customers will notice a dedicated line item on their water billing – “TCEQ Approved Infrastructure Repair Project,” which will add \$2.25 per month to each customer’s bill.** Coupled with the approved tax rate passed on September 23rd, City officials believe the established, dedicated fund will ensure timely payment of the City’s financial obligation.

In addition to the projects funded by the current loan, Mayor McCoy proposes dedicated funding for additional improvements each fiscal year, allowing Public Works staff to continue “Moving Elkhart Forward” by replacing as many lines measuring 3 inches or less in diameter, with priority being given to lines with 10 or more connections. This proposal will ensure customers are provided with access to sufficient water pressure for years to come.

It is no secret that small cities such as Elkhart operate with limited funding. However, being reactive is no longer an option. The City must be proactive and fiscally responsible with the taxpayers’ dollars, using those funds for improvements instead of continuous band-aiding.

“It is very exciting to see the many improvements already taking place within our city. I am proud to be a part of the team effecting these changes. This is only the beginning; we have big plans for our amazing community.”

Mayor Jennifer McCoy