

UTILITIES, SEWERS & STREETLIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday May 14, 2026
6:00pm Town Hall Council Chamber

The Utilities, Sewers & Streetlights Committee met on Thursday May 14, 2026 at 6:00pm. In attendance were Committee Members Jody Donsbach, Doug Grey, Rachel Smith, Mayor John Berry, Interim Village Administrator Jeremy Weaver, Council Members Louise Estep, Sean Thiebaut, Rick Tolles and Grand Rapids Resident Lynn Sylvain.

Agenda items included:

Water Rates

- Committee members, as well as current council members, discussed the necessity and probability of raising water rates in the village to accommodate the recent rate increase that was incurred from our water supplier, the City of Bowling Green. We incurred a 3% rate increase in 2025 and an additional 7% increase this year. It was noted that we have not raised water rates for Grand Rapids Village Residents since 2022 and that our current minimums are as follows (based on 0-3,000 gallon usage per billing cycle): \$40.65 in town/\$60.98 out of town. Doug Grey will be working on gathering a comparison of rates from 3 similar municipalities in the Northwest Ohio Region for us to discuss at a future time. Copies of both our Water Rate and Sewer Rate Ordinances were distributed to council members to review before further discussions take place in reference to possible rate increases.

Infrastructure of System

- Committee members, current council members, the interim village administrator and mayor discussed the current state of our water/sewer systems. We talked about several factors that are of concern, including our aging equipment and difficulty in keeping trained employees in positions to operate our systems. It was noted that we have had 6-8 water line breaks in the past 2 years, as well problems with our lift stations. The group brainstormed ideas to develop a long range plan to help keep our system operating reliably and in compliance with EPA regulations, as well as costs associated with the possible plan. Grand Rapids is currently surrounded by communities who utilize Northwest Water and Sewer for their water and sewer needs. The committee asked the mayor to research and talk with our solicitor about the feasibility of joining a larger system, and what kind of economic impact that would have on the village.

Creation of Storm Sewer Drainage Fund

- The Committee discussed the possibility of establishing two new funds to support storm sewer drainage in our village, the Storm Sewer Drainage Fund and the Storm Sewer Drainage Capital Improvement Fund. It was recommended that our mayor contact our solicitor to begin drafting a new ordinance to facilitate the creation of said funds

Committee Chairperson Donsbach adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jody Donsbach
Grand Rapids Village Council Utilities, Sewers & Streetlights Committee Chairperson