

December 15, 2021

To the residents of Spring and Cow Creek Sanitary District.

From Dwane Russell's perspective, as a member and Trustee of the District.

I am writing this as I have received phone calls asking what we are doing and where are we going with the District. First of all, we have to look at the history of how we got where we are today.

The first sanitary district was abandoned over twenty years ago and the Court handed the District over to Hughes County. At the time there was a small storage tank and a sewage lagoon which was designed for approximately 500 residents when there were only around 45 at the time. To make a long story short the lagoon dried out and cracked. The County attempted to fix it by making a smaller lagoon at the South End. This didn't work very well either as it also leaks. DANR has given notice that it needs to be fixed. The water storage tank also needs to be replaced as it is old worn out and just recently repaired with no guarantee on how long it will last.

Approximately 3 years ago the County attempted to sell the Sanitary District. They were contacted by residents and asked to hold off the sale until we had a chance to form a District. This didn't go as fast as some of us hoped for and the vote to form the District took place in the Spring of 2020 and the District was formed. Board members were elected by all those that attended the election at the Hughes County Court House.

At the time of taking over the District it was very clear that the sewer lagoon and water tank needed to be fixed and updated to meet today's population which we have all seen grow over the last few years.

We as a board began to explore what could be done to make the changes and fixes that are substantiable at the lowest cost to all members of the District within the first months of getting started. We contacted Mid Dakota Water, South Dakota DANR and the Enhancement District which was formed to help Cities and Counties in Central South Dakota obtain grants and guide them through the system.

Step one was to have an engineering firm with experience in water and sewer projects map our system and this was started by Hughes County prior to the District being formed which was Bartlett & West. Mid Dakota water also uses this engineering company, so we also benefit from the knowledge they have as to the system we get our water from.

It is required that we have a complete study of the water and sewer system before we can either borrow money or get a grant to fix it. State and Federal grants do not allow us to borrow money for future development.

Any sewer repair needs to be approved by DANR and the engineering firm presented three options. There were pros and cons with all three options, and we choose to go with option two which not only was the cheapest but would be the easier to maintain and keep viable. The smells should only occur twice a year during turnover time and only last a week or two. This system is expected to be able to take care of all the platted land within the district that has been built on or is expected to be built on. Platted land is the lots or acreage the respective County Boards have currently approved to be built on.

Now on to the water issue. As you all know we ran out of water on July 3rd. It was an exceptionally dry year, and many folks were watering lawns or in general using a lot of water as most of us had

households full of people. We were getting 80 gallons of water per minute from Mid Dakota. We not only used the 80 gallons per minute or 115,200 gallons in a 24-hour period. We also used all the water we had in the Storage tank which when full holds a little over 55,000 gallons. We were forced to tap into Mid Dakotas feeder line for additional water which brought us back online and filled the tank. We also asked everyone to not run sprinklers. This incident brought the problem of water storage to everyone's attention and made us speed up the solution as much as possible.

1st action we took was to increase the water flow from Mid Dakota from 80 gallons per minute to 100 gallons a minute which is 25% increase but still only 144,000 gallons in a 24-hour period. Even with a full storage tank we are still below the amount of water that was used on July 3rd which was over 200,000 gallons for the day. **Note: that Mid Dakota has no more water to sell us currently until they upgrade their systems.**

Many people have drilled wells for lawn and garden watering which will help this coming summer and we thank them for doing this.

Bartlett & West had suggested to have a hydraulic study early last spring which we agreed to. Some of you may remember Bryan Wiseman and I driving in your neighborhoods last spring with maps writing down where every shut off valve was located. By helping we cut the costs from the engineers.

As the study was progressing some thought 150,000 gallon storage would be enough and some of you heard this number. We are currently proposing a 200,000 tank and this could go up if the final study shows we need more. Fire suppression needs would be one reason to have a bigger tank. We also need to be able to keep water flowing during the dry seasons. The tank's purpose is to make up the shortfall when we are using more water than we have coming in. Simply buying more water from Mid Dakota is not a good option. We get charged all year based on our peak demand. We will save money by not paying for water we don't need during the winter months or weekdays. Over time this will help pay for the tower. Another reason for having a tower versus storage tank is that the pressure is nearly always constant, and we have some back up water if we should lose power. The goal is to have 60 PSI which is another good reason. Mid Dakota pressure on their line is capable to pushing water and filling the tower which will eliminate the need for a pumping system and the expense that goes with it.

Other districts we have contacted also highly recommend the tower over a tank and pump system.

Many of you have raised concerns that we, the existing users will be paying for the new developments that are being proposed in Sully County. Our ordinance states that developers must pay for any enhancements along with the water and sewer infrastructure. It is the board's intention to follow the ordinance. Please read the ordinances on the District's website under expansion.

Developers will have to pay for a hydrology study as to the needs they may have and then pay for the expansion.

We are now in the process of applying for grants and loans to first take care of the sewer and then the water once all the engineering paperwork is complete. **Again: this is for the existing need. We cannot borrow money or get a grant money for future projects that may or may not materialize.**

It is my goal that we have a sustainable water and sewer system that is reliable. We are going to see rates go up to pay for it, but the goal is to get the best deal possible while interest rates are low along with any grant money we can procure.

I can understand everyone's concern, but we really don't have a choice. The sewer lagoon must be fixed, and we all now know there is not enough water during high use times in the Summer.

Getting loans and Grants is a long tedious process and we are following State and Federal laws and rules to make this work, so patience is required.

Thanks for taking the time to read this and I hope I have answered some of your questions and concerns.

If not drop me an e-mail and or call and I will do my best to get you an answer.

Thanks,