



Utilities Commission
Commission Meeting

Agenda

July 3, 2025
8:30 AM

CALL TO ORDER

MINUTES APPROVAL

June 5, 2025

ADJUSTMENT JOURNAL

June 2025 Adjustment Journal-None

NEW BUSINESS

*Ordinance No. ____-2025, An Ordinance Establishing Requirements for Backflow
Prevention and the Control of Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG)*

- Ordinance No. ____-2025

Added-Project H2Overhaul

- Project H2Overhaul

OLD BUSINESS

OTHER

ORDINANCE NO. ____-2025**AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REQUIREMENTS FOR BACKFLOW PREVENTION AND THE CONTROL OF FATS, OILS, AND GREASE (FOG)**

WHEREAS, the City of Mount Vernon seeks to protect the public water supply from contamination and to prevent blockages and overflows in the public wastewater system; and WHEREAS, this ordinance establishes requirements for permitting, inspection, and enforcement of backflow prevention devices and FOG control systems;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, OHIO:

Section 1. Purpose and Authority

This ordinance establishes permitting, inspection, and enforcement procedures for:

- Backflow prevention devices, to protect the public water supply from contamination due to backflow or cross-connection hazards.
- Fats, oils, and grease (FOG), to prevent their accumulation in the public wastewater system, which can cause blockages, obstructions, and sanitary wastewater overflows.
- This ordinance shall be enforced by the City of Mount Vernon Code Enforcement Department under its authority to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

Section 2. Applicability

This ordinance applies to:

- All properties required to install or maintain backflow prevention devices;
- All food service establishments, vehicle service facilities, industrial facilities, commercial kitchens, and other facilities that discharge FOG into the municipal wastewater system.

Section 3. Definitions

The following are applicable definitions for reference within this ordinance:

- Backflow Prevention Device: A mechanical assembly that prevents the reverse flow of water from a private system into the public water supply.
- Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG): Organic polar compounds derived from animal or plant sources, petroleum-based oils, or other substances found in food preparation, vehicle maintenance, or industrial processes.
- Food Service Establishment: A facility that prepares or serves food for commercial purposes.
- Vehicle Service Facility: an establishment offering maintenance, repair, cleaning, and diagnostic services for vehicles like cars, trucks, and motorcycles. Services include oil changes, tire rotations, brake repairs, engine diagnostics, car washing, and detailing, using specialized equipment and trained technicians to ensure safe and efficient vehicle operation.
- Commercial and Industrial Facilities: A facility engaged in manufacturing, processing, or other industrial activity potentially generating FOG in its wastewater.

- Grease Control Device: A grease interceptor, trap, separator, or other equipment designed to remove FOG from wastewater.
- Best Management Practices: Operational procedures designed to reduce the discharge of FOG into the municipal system.
- Pretreatment Device: A plumbing system, such as a grease trap or interceptor, designed to remove FOG from wastewater before it enters the municipal wastewater system, preventing blockages. A backflow device, such as a backwater valve, prevents sewage from flowing back into a building from the sewer system. Both are required for compliance with local codes to protect public health and infrastructure.

Section 4. Permit Requirements

This section contains requirements for permitting related to backflow prevention devices and and FOG:

A. Backflow Permits

- Property owners required to maintain a backflow prevention device must obtain a permit from the Code Enforcement Department prior to installation or renewal prior to annual inspection.
- The permit fee is \$50 per device, with a maximum annual fee of \$250 per property.

B. FOG Permits

- All commercial and industrial dischargers and FOG-generating businesses must install and maintain appropriate pretreatment devices.
- All food service establishments, vehicle service facilities, industrial facilities, commercial kitchens, and other facilities that discharge FOG must obtain a FOG permit from the Code Enforcement Department prior to operation.
- The annual FOG permit fee is \$100 per property, due at the time of application or renewal.
- Permits must be renewed annually and displayed on the premises.
- Non-profit organizations are eligible for a reduced FOG permit fee of 50% per property, annually.

Section 5. Installation, Inspection, and Maintenance

This section relates to the installation, inspection, and maintenance of backflow devices and grease control devices:

A. Backflow Devices

- All devices must be installed and tested by a certified backflow-tester upon installation and at least every 12 months thereafter.
- Property owners must retain testing and maintenance records and make them available to the City upon request.
- Each device must have a visible tag showing the date of last test, tester's name, and any repairs.
- Defective devices must be repaired or replaced at the owner's expense without delay.
- Installation, inspection, and maintenance records must be kept on-site for at least three (3) years.

B. Grease Control Devices

- All required facilities must install and maintain an approved grease control device, in accordance with manufacturer specifications and best management practices.
- Grease control devices must be cleaned and serviced frequently enough to prevent FOG accumulation exceeding $\frac{1}{3}$ " of grease capacity or $\frac{1}{4}$ " of solids capacity.
- Installation, cleaning, maintenance, and inspection records must be kept on-site for at least three (3) years.

Section 6. Best Management Practices

All regulated FOG facilities must implement the following best management practices:

- Train staff on FOG reduction and proper disposal
- Post signs above sinks and drains discouraging FOG discharge.
- Dry-wipe all equipment, utensils, and parts before washing.
- Recycle used oil and grease.
- Maintain receipts for disposal for a minimum of three years.
- Prohibit use of food waste grinders or floor drains for FOG-laden waste.
- Keep outdoor grease and oil containers covered and away from storm drains.

Section 7. Access and Inspections

This section relates to accessibility for inspection:

- The Code Enforcement Department may inspect any regulated facility or property connected to the public systems with 24-hour notice.
- Owners, lessees, or occupants must cooperate and provide requested documentation; refusal to do so may be deemed evidence of noncompliance.

Section 8. Violations and Penalties

This section identifies violations related to backflow, FOG, and general enforcement of this ordinance:

A. Backflow Violations

- First violation: Written notice and 30 days to comply.
- Second violation: Civil fine of \$100 per noncompliant device.
- Third and subsequent violations: Fine of \$250 per device and potential water service disconnection.

B. FOG Violations

Failure to comply with permit conditions, grease control device maintenance, or best management practices may result in a civil fine of up to \$100 per violation.

- Continued noncompliance may result in permit suspension or revocation, or further legal action.

C. General Enforcement

All permit fees and fines are in addition to any costs for testing, maintenance, or repairs, which remain the sole responsibility of the property owner.

Section 9. Appeals

This section establishes an appeals procedure for violations resulting from the enforcement of this ordinance:

Any person or facility seeking to dispute any action by the Department of Code Enforcement may submit a written appeal to the City of Mount Vernon Utility Commission within 10 business days of receiving the notice. The Utility Commission will take action at their next scheduled meeting.

Project H2Overhaul

City of Mount Vernon, Ohio

Date: June 26, 2025

Prepared for: Utilities Commission and City Council

Prepared by: Tanner Salyers, Safety-Service Director

Project Overview

The City of Mount Vernon's Water and Wastewater Utility proposes a \$1,993,000 project to modernize infrastructure and enhance operational efficiency.

The project includes:

- **Purchase of Equipment**
 - 4,000 water meters at \$200/unit = \$800,000
 - 400 smart point readers at \$170/unit = \$68,000
 - Total Equipment Cost: \$868,000
- **Installation**
 - 3,500 water meters over 12 months at \$150/unit = \$525,000
- **Infiltration and Inflow (I/I) Study:**
 - Citywide assessment to reduce sewer system inefficiencies = \$500,000

Total Project Cost: \$1,893,000

Objectives

- Improve billing accuracy and reduce water loss through modernized metering.
- Enhance sewer system efficiency by identifying I/I sources, ensuring regulatory compliance.
- Maintain financial autonomy with cost-effective funding.

Funding Proposal

We recommend a \$2 million loan from the City's Reserve Balance Account at a 4% annual interest rate, repaid over 12 quarters (three years). Payments will be split equally between the Water and Wastewater Departments with each department contributing \$90,614.75 per quarter (total quarterly payment: \$181,229.50). The final payment in Quarter 12 will be adjusted to \$136,435.91 (\$68,217.96 per department) to close the loan.

Interest Rate Rationale

The 4% rate is competitive with 2025 municipal bond rates (3.5–4.5%)

Payment Split

- **Water Department:** \$90,614.75 per quarter
- **Wastewater Department:** \$90,614.75 per quarter

Financing Summary

- **Total Payments:** \$2,174,154.01
- **Total Interest Paid:** \$174,154.01
- **Quarterly Payments (Quarters 1–11):** \$181,229.50 (\$90,614.75 per department)
- **Final Payment (Quarter 12):** \$136,435.91 (\$68,217.96 per department)

Contractor Request for Proposal (RFP) Details

Purpose:

To engage a qualified contractor to install 3,500 water meters over 12 months, ensuring timely and high-quality execution.

Scope of Work:

- Install 3,500 water meters across Mount Vernon's service area (approximately 300 meters per month).
- Coordinate with the Utility to schedule installations, minimizing disruption to customers.
- Ensure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations, including Ohio EPA standards.
- Provide labor, equipment, and materials for installation, including fittings and permits.
- Conduct post-installation testing to verify meter functionality and integration with 400 smart point readers.
- Submit monthly progress reports and a final completion report.
- Estimated Cost: \$525,000 (\$150 per meter, including labor, equipment, and permits, based on regional averages).

Contractor Qualifications:

- Minimum 5 years of experience in water meter installation for municipalities.
- Licensed and bonded in the State of Ohio.
- Demonstrated ability to meet project timelines and budgets (references required).
- Familiarity with smart meter technology and integration.

RFP Timeline:

- Release RFP: Month 1 (post-loan approval).
- Submission Deadline: 30 days after release.
- Contractor Selection: Within 45 days of RFP release.
- Contract Start: Month 4, aligning with equipment delivery.

Performance Requirements:

- Complete 3,500 installations within 12 months (300/month average).
- Adhere to a fixed budget of \$525,000 with penalties for cost overruns.
- Maintain safety standards and obtain necessary permits.
- Provide warranties for installation work (minimum 1 year).

Proposed Evaluation Criteria:

- Cost competitiveness (40%)
- Experience and qualifications (30%)
- Proposed timeline and methodology (20%)
- References and past performance (10%)
- Contractors must submit proposals, including cost estimates, project plans, qualifications, and references.

Alternative Funding

Ohio Market Access Program (OMAP)

OMAP loans are less favorable due to:

- **Higher Costs:** 3.8–5% interest plus 0.5–1% administrative fees.
- **Stricter Terms:** Requires state approvals, environmental reviews, and permitting, adding delays and costs.
- **External Oversight:** External reporting requirements reduce City autonomy.
- **Funding Uncertainty:** Competitive application process risks delays or denial.

The internal loan is preferred for its cost savings, flexibility, and control.

Benefits

- **Billing Accuracy:** New meters and smart readers reduce errors and provide real-time data, ensuring fair and accurate customer billing.
- **Increased Revenues:** Improved billing accuracy will capture previously unbilled or underbilled water usage, increasing Utility revenues. This additional revenue stream will support more accurate budgeting for future wastewater treatment plant and water treatment plant upgrades, ensuring long-term infrastructure sustainability.
- **Water Loss Reduction:** Detects leaks, minimizing non-revenue water (estimated 10–20% in aging systems, we believe our system is up to nearly 30% in water loss in meter related inefficiencies).
- **Sewer Efficiency:** I/I study reduces treatment costs and prevents overflows, ensuring EPA compliance.
- **Cost Savings:** Internal funding avoids external fees.
- **Community Impact:** Supports reliable services for Mount Vernon's residents and businesses.

Implementation Plan

- **Phase 1 (Months 1–3):** Secure loan, purchase equipment, release RFP for contractor services, contract I/I study.
- **Phase 2 (Months 4–12):** Install 3,500 meters (300/month), conduct I/I study with flow monitoring and CCTV inspections.
- **Phase 3 (Months 13–36):** Complete installations, integrate smart point readers, finalize I/I study, repay loan.

Risk Mitigation

- **Cost Overruns:** \$107,000 budget buffer included in \$2 million loan.
- **Contractor Delays:** RFP includes performance clauses and penalties for missed deadlines.
- **Equipment Supply:** Early procurement mitigates supply chain risks.
- **I/I Study Scope:** Fixed scope and budget to prevent cost escalation.

Recommendation

The \$2 million loan from the City's Reserve Balance Account at 4% interest, repaid over 12 quarters with equal contributions from the Water and Wastewater Departments, is the optimal funding solution.

It ensures cost efficiency, project control, and timely execution of the \$1,893,000 project while reducing the quarterly payment burden.

The increased revenues from accurate billing will support future treatment plant upgrades, enhancing long-term sustainability.

The OMAPS alternative introduces unnecessary costs and delays.

We urge the Utilities Commission and City Council to approve the internal loan to advance Mount Vernon's infrastructure modernization.