

Clark Township Sewer Project

2024 – 2026 Project explained

February 2024 – Special Edition

PAST / PRESENT & FUTURE

PAST

- Prior to 1970 – we had many septic tanks with no drainfields and septic was draining into the lake. In 1970, a gravity sewer system was installed in Cedarville.
- After the high water levels in the fall of 1986, when some drain fields flooded and left pools of gray water in Snow's Channel, the DNR mandated a "fix", yet it was unfunded. So, the Federal Government gave us a loan to expand the sewer system in 1991.
- Unfortunately, at the time, the option given was a 40-year loan...even though the grinder pumps have a life cycle of 20 years. This was an unfunded state mandate and funded through the Board of Public Works of Mackinac County.



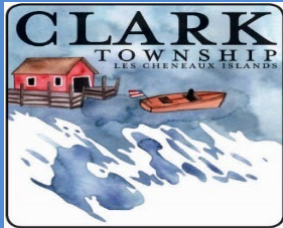
The DNR amended the design when bids were put out to cut cost by changing a critical design component and left customers more vulnerable to sewer backup and damage. Measures like the omission of a 2nd check valve at curb stops, were put in place to save money. As designed, a "y" valve was to be placed between the existing septic tanks and the new sewer line. These were left out and the septic systems were filled with sand or destroyed. Unfortunately, these omissions have caused sewer backup damage to some homes. These two design changes resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage from sewer backups. Because of these omissions, the Township offered free knife valves to isolate homes from the sewer system when not occupied.

PRESENT

- The Township contracted with the State Revolving Fund for a 20-year loan at 1.875% interest to replace all of the grinder pumps in our system. We were given the option of a 40-year loan, but we would be in the same position 20 years from now.
- In addition to the grinder pump replacements, all control panels are being upgraded. These will now have new protection features to shut them down when a fault is detected: run limit, run dry, over pressure, and brown out of overvoltage.
- New curb stops and check valves will be installed where needed to limit flooding and sewage backup into homes.
- We are amending the Sewer Ordinance to clarify and add fines for mis-use of the sewer system, such as flushing wipes, thus creating blockages in our sewer system.

FUTURE

- As part of the project, the Engineers are using ARC Field Map software which will allow our sewer technicians to document, pinpoint, troubleshoot, and log a history of every issue, when they do maintenance, repair, or replacement.



Clark Township Lift Stations and Sewer Information

DO NOT FLUSH!

Baby Wipes, Household Cleaning wipes, Paper Towels, Facial Tissue, Makeup Wipes, Fats, Oils and Grease, Food, Trash, Plastic Bags, Rags and Clothes, Disposable Gloves, Cotton Balls and Cotton Swabs, Dental Floss, Feminine Hygiene Products, Hair or Hair Weaves, Medications, Syringes or Coffee Grounds, Kitty Litter, Latex Paint

WHY?

Cities across the country are seeing an increase in wipes showing up in sanitary sewer pipe systems and causing problems. It's important that we all do our part to protect our waters – please dispose of all wipes in the trash. Toilet paper and human waste are the only things that should ever be flushed down the toilet. Even “flushable” wipes do not readily dissolve in water like toilet paper. They can get stuck in bends in the pipes or cling to grease buildup, causing clogs that lead to sewer backups and/or spills. It costs thousands of dollars in equipment and labor every time work crews need to unclog pipes and clean up a sewer spill, or worse yet, replace broken pumps.

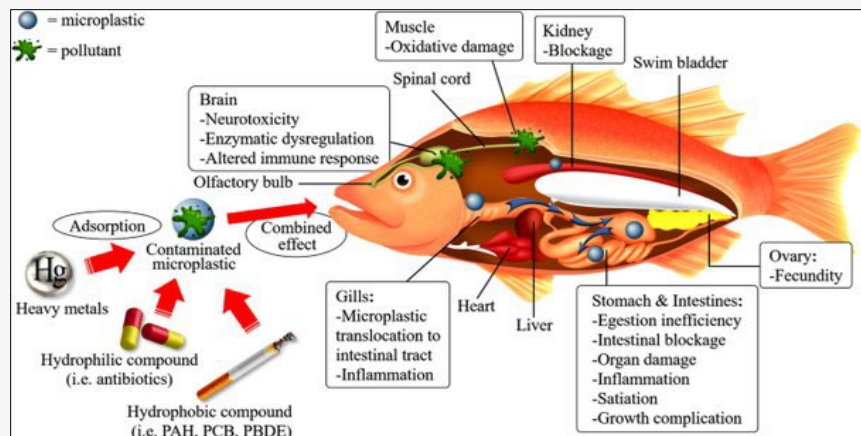


In our Township, the Lift Station pumps at Beech and Hodeck had to be replaced 3 times in 2023. There have also been several other Lift Station or grinder pumps that had to be replaced throughout our sewer system. In 2023, we purchased a backhoe, and replaced a jetter that we have had since the 1960's, in order to perform repairs more efficiently. As a cost savings measure of approximately \$60,000, we also have an agreement with Kinross to rent us their bypass pump temporarily for use when lift stations fail.

IF these items make it through the grinder pumps and the lift stations – they then flow to the sewer lagoons. We recently discovered that the wipes sit on the floor of the sewer lagoons and block the aerators. The lagoons will have to be drained in the near future to fix this issue. We are investigating measures to mitigate this threat.

Per a DNR mandate in 1991, the sewer lagoons are discharged bi-annually into Pearson Creek, rather than the upland discharge system that was installed with the gravity system in 1970, specified to be used with the new system.

The wipes and other non-flushable items contain micro and nano plastics that are discharged into our lake. Studies have found plastics in our fish and wildlife, as well as humans fertility, and endocrine gland issues. In conversation about this topic, one of our residents shared that he recently had his gall bladder removed, and medical personnel let him know that plastics were found in his gall bladder!



RATES AND RATE HISTORY

2014 – Rates increased from \$84 to \$90 per quarter

2015 – No rate increase

2016 – No rate increase

2017 – No rate increase

2018 – No rate increase

2019 – Rates increased from \$90 to \$105 per quarter

2020 – No rate increase

2021 - Rates increased from \$105 - \$150 per quarter

***2022 – No rate increase**

*2023 - Rates increased from \$150 - \$165 per quarter

2024 – Possible rate increase

**Clark Township Residents did not incur an increase in 2022 or most of 2023 because the Township received funding from the American Rescue Plan (ARPA). Much of this funding has been utilized for Lift Station replacements or repairs and any surplus is put into the Sewer Fund for future use.*

YOUR QUESTIONS / ANSWERS

Didn't "they just raise the price last year? No, please see the info above. Last increase was 2021. Rates are not increased every year.

I have septic at my home – why do I have to pay more? The sewer upgrade was on the ballot. 65% of the voters agreed with the millage. Also, this replacement ensures the safety of the whole community. Sewer issues can have a very negative impact on our schools, businesses, marinas, parks, and restaurants. The strategy of using millage AND user fees was adopted so that those connected to the system bear more of the Sewer costs than those not on the system.

We can't voice our concerns at Clark Township Board Meetings meetings or stop in the office due to the working hours. The elected officials are available via email. If the Township Office stayed open longer – the taxpayers would then incur additional costs to pay the employees. The hours are set up in a cost effective manner. Also, if board meetings were after hours, again this would cost additional expenses as well. Also, written comments or questions can be submitted to the Clark Township Office anytime at supervisor@clarktp.org.

I thought they maintained the grinders. The Department of Public Works does maintain them, but they have been determined by engineers to be past their useful life, and for years now, maintenance requires rebuilding pumps and motors, and now often costs more than replacement.

By statute and ordinance – sewer funds cannot be spent elsewhere. Clark Township is audited annually as required by the State. There are strict laws and rules that all Townships have to abide by.

Where did the last "increase" monies go? Repairs, equipment, replacements, and reimbursement for backups. All monies collected from sewer billing are deposited into the sewer fund.

Thank you Clark Township Residents for getting involved and bringing your concerns to our attention. I am in hopes that your questions have been addressed.

Mark Clymer

Clark Township Supervisor



NEW GRINDER PUMP USERS - You have a new pressure sewer system. It consists of a pumping unit that is connected to a network of pipes. These pipes transfer wastewater to the sewer system or treatment plant. There is not much you need to do and very little that can go wrong. In the event of a power outage, limit water usage as much as possible.

**DO NOT TOUCH THE VALVES
DO NOT COVER THE PUMP STATION LID**

**DO NOT TURN THE POWER OFF TO THE PUMP
DO NOT BLOCK THE VENT ON THE PUMP STATION**

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR ALARM SOUNDS

Press the button located under the alarm panel to silence the alarm. However, the alarm light will continue to be lit. Limit water usage.

Wait an hour and again, limit water usage. Check to see if the light on the alarm panel is off. If so, everything is fine and no further action is needed.

If the light is still on the alarm panel, contact our DPW
906-484-2026

**SEWER EMERGENCY: JIM LANDREVILLE AT
906-430-8060**