

New 5-Year Rate Structure

Improving and Maintaining the Investment

As of 2019, the previous 5-year MCSE rate structure came to an end. The Mahoning County Commissioners have now implemented the continuation of the 5-year rate plan model from 2020 through 2024.

The Sanitary Engineering Department is required by law to provide the necessary funding to meet regulatory mandates from the Federal and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency in the form of NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permits. These ever-changing requirements — which have become more numerous and expensive to comply with over time in order to provide an overall quality of life — govern what we must do to return clean water to our communities' waterways.

While the requirements of meeting the environmental aspect of the wastewater system are ever-present, there is an equal legal responsibility in the form of meeting the mandated provisions of the Trust Indenture, the financing mechanism used to fund significant and necessary ongoing upgrades to the wastewater system — including treatment plants, pumping stations and conveyance systems.

In order to meet these mandates, we must ensure that the best available technology is applied, and that our system is designed and maintained in order to deliver wastewater treatment services in the most effective and cost-efficient manner possible.

Your monthly sewer bill is calculated based on two components:

- A *user charge* — that is, a rate that is charged for every 1,000 gallons of water used in your household or business
- A *fixed monthly rate*, a financial component of each sewer bill to provide a stable revenue source to meet the debt service as contained in the Trust Indenture.

In 2020, the average MCSE customer (5,200 gallons of water per month usage) will pay \$63.89 under the new rate system (5.2 x \$10.20 + \$10.85).

Here are the user charges and fixed monthly rates from 2020 through 2024 and the monthly bills using this 5,200-gallon average:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<i>User charge</i>	\$10.20	\$11.25	\$12.30	\$13.60	\$14.95
<i>Fixed rate</i>	\$10.85	\$11.25	\$11.95	\$12.55	\$13.15
<i>Average bill</i>	\$63.89	\$69.75	\$75.91	\$83.27	\$90.89

Always Working

24 Hours a Day - We Turn Wastewater into Clean Water



Mahoning County Sanitary Engineering Department
761 Industrial Road
Youngstown, Ohio 44509

Pre-Sorted Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 422
Youngstown, OH

WINTER 2020
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sanitary.mahoningcountyoh.gov

Information for customers of the Mahoning County Sanitary Engineering department

Rain – a Four-Letter Word for Some in 2019

No doubt about it — the past year has been a challenging one for many in our area who have experienced flooding issues caused by a series of unusually heavy rain events.

Some areas made it through the rain events relatively unscathed, while others were not so fortunate. We'd like to address what has been learned from the flooding issues from two perspectives: ours at MCSE, and yours as a resident or a business owner.

WHAT MCSE IS DOING

Just as heavy rains can have an immediate and noticeable impact on your home and property, they also impact the MCSE system as a whole. Ideally, our sanitary sewer lines would carry only wastewater from Mahoning County homes and businesses to our treatment plants.

The problem comes when clearwater from heavy rainfall infiltrates the system, adding significantly to the total volume that is treated (and thus, to our costs to provide treatment). Our system comprises over 800 miles of pipe — some of which was installed many decades ago.

Concrete and clay pipes deteriorate over time, and when this happens, clearwater will seep into the pipe during heavy rain events. In some cases,



that water is accompanied by debris, which can impede the flow of wastewater through the pipes, and also cause problems at the treatment plants.

One of our major, ongoing tasks at MCSE is to evaluate those 800+ miles of pipe, and systematically identify those sections of it that are most in need of attention to stop this infiltration of clearwater and debris. One strategy becoming more common is the relining of existing pipe with a Cured-in-Place Pipe (CIPP), which is stronger and less prone to allowing water to infiltrate. In extreme cases, pipe has deteriorated so badly that we must replace with more preferred PVC (PolyVinyl Chloride) pipe.

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CONTACT MCSE

CALL: 330.793.5514 EMAIL: seinfo@mahoningcountyoh.gov WEB: Sanitary.MahoningCountyoh.gov

How to SAVE MONEY on Sewer Services



Homestead/Disability Fixed Sewer Rate Reduction

- **Eligible:** Customers at least 65 years of age (or permanently handicapped of any age) who own their own home AND are served by MCSE.
- **The program offers:** A reduction on your monthly sewer bill. Call 330-793-5514 for the current rate.

Commissioners' Gate Valve Program

- **Eligible:** Customers, particularly those with older homes, who experience basement flooding during heavy rain events because their storm water and sewer systems are interconnected.
- **The program offers:** Financial assistance to offset some of the costs of installing a backflow control device (gate valve) to separate these systems. In some cases the work may also involve the installation of a sump pump. You can receive up to \$3,600 in assistance for this work.



Commissioners' Tap-In Fund Program

- **Eligible:** Customers in areas that have recently received sanitary sewer service for the first time and are required to tap into the system.
- **The program offers:** Up to \$9,000 to help defray the costs of mandatory tap-ins for any single household. The Mahoning County Commissioners established the Water and Sewer Tap-in Fund to make these funds available to county residents.

Second/Deduct Meter Program

- **Eligible:** Customers who frequently water their lawns, wash their cars and/or have gardens using a high volume of water not returned to the sewer system.
- **The program offers:** A second water meter, which allows water used outside of the home to be metered separately. In this way, your sewer bill will be based solely on the water that actually enters the wastewater treatment system.



Call (330) 793-5514 between 8:00 am and 3:30 pm on weekdays to learn more about any of these programs.

MCSE/YSU Partnership Will Seek Solutions to Corrosion

The Mahoning County Sanitary Engineering Department is partnering with Youngstown State University's Department of Civil/Environmental and Chemical Engineering to conduct a detailed analysis of a persistent issue related to H₂S (Hydrogen Sulfide) gas and microbial-induced concrete corrosion.



H₂S in concrete sanitary sewers and manholes has led to a reduction of useful service life and increased maintenance cost. Several strategies, including chemical additives and surface treatments, have been used and evaluated over the years with varying degrees of success. Currently, MCSE is dosing wastewater with

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Commissioners Commit to Critical Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a term you hear thrown around a lot these days. A good way to understand what it means is to first consider your own "infrastructure."

Your home or business (as well as its contents) are, in a sense, your infrastructure. This includes not only the literal roof over your head, but also your utilities (water, electricity, gas) and the devices that tie into them — such as your sinks, tubs, toilets, refrigerator, stove, lights, furnace, water heater, etc. By extension, you might also say that your vehicles are a part of your infrastructure too.

We know how inconvenient — and sometimes even serious — it can be when parts of your infrastructure break down. And so, we clean debris from our gutters, replace our furnace filters regularly, change the oil in our cars, etc. in order to keep things functioning smoothly. As a business grows, owners may add on to or expand facilities to meet greater demand. These are just some basic things done to maintain your financial investment and ensure your family's quality of life or the success of your business.

When it comes to the county's wastewater treatment infrastructure, Mahoning County Commissioners and MCSE personnel must take a similar approach. They must not only regularly maintain the existing components of the system, but also upgrade the ever-changing technology in use, while allowing the system to expand when necessary to accommodate residential and business growth.

The Commissioners have made a firm commitment to supporting Mahoning County's wastewater treatment system — not only now, but well



into the future. They have directed the Sanitary Engineering Department to "...plan and implement a comprehensive program to address the extensive infrastructure providing services.

"Through an approach utilizing five-year rate adjustments to set benchmarks for operating, maintenance, replacement and debt service costs, the Sanitary Engineering Department has been aggressive and proactive in implementing capital improvements through the Metropolitan Sewer District." Part of this process involves seeking grants and loans from both state and federal programs to fund these improvements.

As the commissioners state, "Because of the overall financial value of the infrastructure comprising the Metropolitan Sewer District — and its importance to the quality of life for Mahoning County's residents, and businesses, as well as to economic development — the message of the Board is to continue to be proactive as opposed to reactive and be good stewards of the system both operationally and financially."



Anthony Traficanti



Carol Rimedio-Righetti



David Ditzler

Mahoning County Commissioners

Helpful Information for Cleaning Drains in the Home

If you have a problem with the sewer service at your home or place of business, MCSE wants to know right away. It's important that you contact us first — before calling a drain service company or a plumber. We don't want you to incur any unnecessary expense.

MCSE service personnel are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to respond to your problem. Call us at 330-793-5514; department personnel will come out to your home or place of business, inspect your system and determine the cause of the disruption of service.

The responsibility for repairs and maintenance to your system depends on the location of the problem:

- If the problem is with the **main sanitary line**, The Mahoning County Sanitary Engineering Department will undertake maintenance repairs or replacement.
- If the problem lies with the property's **internal plumbing system** or the **lateral sewer line** that connects it to the main sewer lines, the property owner is responsible for repairs. The lateral sewer line extends from the main sanitary line to the structure.



- If the department determines the problem is not in the main sewer line following inspection, you can then call a drain service company and ask for a cost prior to having service performed. Based on estimates we've received, pricing for cleaning your main drain by running a cable with a cutter up to 100 feet generally ranges from \$105 to \$165.



- If time permits, always try to get more than one price to ensure a fair fee for the service.
- If you have more questions, call us at **330-793-5514** or email seinfo@mahoningcountyoh.gov

In addition to responding to specific problems within the system, MCSE personnel also visit neighborhoods on a regular basis to undertake routine maintenance of the system. Visits are scheduled in advance, and we typically give customers two to three days' notice. You'll find a green card on your door knob telling you that we'll be in soon.

All MCSE employees now carry photo identification cards. If you have any question as to whether someone you see working in your neighborhood is employed by the Mahoning County Sanitary Engineering Department, feel free to ask to see his or her ID card.

pipelines

Sanitary Engineer



Patrick T. Ginnetti

Rain— Four-Letter Word *Continued*

The relining process can be done more quickly than replacement and with less disruption to neighborhoods, so we do this whenever we can. What's important to remember is that, when you see our crews in a neighborhood — working on pipes or even rehabilitating manholes — what they're doing will ultimately benefit you, even if they're not nearby to your own home. Our goal is always to look at our system as a whole, and address the most critical problem areas in order of importance. In this way, we reduce the amount of infiltration, which lowers the volume of water we must process, keeping our costs (and your bill) as low as possible.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can do your part to keep the Mahoning County sanitary sewer system functioning properly too. If your drains are running slow, you should call a drain cleaning service to investigate. You may need to have your drain(s) cleaned leading to your home's sewer lateral, or the lateral itself may need to be inspected to make certain there are

pipelines

MCSE/YSU Partnership *Continued*

hydrogen peroxide and Biowish to limit the development of H₂S in the liquid phase. Even with these efforts, the H₂S and corrosion persist.

When MCSE was presented with the chance to work with YSU and seek grant funds for research into this issue — we seized upon this opportunity to investigate a viable solution. After the YSU Department of Civil/Environmental and Chemical Engineering defined the H₂S issue and developed a process for full analysis, an application was then submitted to obtain grant funds from the Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA) to assist in the research.

A grant request in the amount of \$88,247 was submitted and approved by OWDA in October, 2019. The total cost of the project is \$177,677. Matching funds will be \$89,429. The research project will begin this year, with a report to follow in 26 months. This research is anticipated to provide the Sanitary Engineering Department with valuable data to address H₂S in the concrete sanitary sewer pipe and concrete manholes. We are grateful for the support and the opportunity to work with YSU.

no defects adding clearwater to the sanitary sewer system. If there are problems with your sewer lateral, you may be eligible for reimbursements for a portion of the repair costs.

If you have an older home, your downspouts may be tied into your sewer lines, again allowing rainwater to go where it shouldn't go. You should consider MCSE's Gate Valve program, which can help defray the costs (60%, or up to \$3,600) of installing a valve that will separate your home's sewer and clearwater systems. Alternative solutions may also be available.

For more information on these programs, call our offices at **(330) 793-5514**, or visit our website at Sanitary.MahoningCountyOH.gov



The Mahoning County Commissioners urge you...

Please Participate in the 2020 Census!

IT'S EASY. You can mail your Census form, fill it out online, or respond by phone.

IT'S CONFIDENTIAL. Your information will be used strictly to generate statistics. It will never be shared with any other government or law enforcement agency.

IT'S IMPORTANT. A complete and accurate count of Mahoning County citizens = more Federal funding for projects that directly benefit you and your family.