



CITY OF WAUWATOSA  
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**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**Tuesday, October 19, 2010 – 6:37 p.m.**

PRESENT: Aids. Wilson, Berdan, Birschel (7:05 p.m.), Causier, Donegan, Ewerdt, Hanson (7:28 p.m.), McBride, Meaux, Nikceovich, Organ (7:42 p.m.), Pantuso (7:15 p.m.), Roznowski, Walsh (7:20 p.m.), Wilke -16

ALSO

PRESENT: Kevin Shafer, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District Executive Director  
Mayor Didier; Mr. Kesner, City Attorney; Mr. Kappel, Public Works Director; Mr.  
Wehrley, City Engineer

Ald. Meaux in the Chair

**Sewerage System Overview (“Sewer School”)**. Kevin Shafer, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) Executive Director, gave an overview of the interconnection of the District’s sewer system, and municipalities’ sewer systems, noting that the goal of both systems is to protect water quality.

**MMSD, a regional agency, was established by state law and serves** over 1.1 million people in 28 communities over 411 square miles. It has over 300 miles of sewers; another 3,000 miles are owned by surrounding communities. Private property owners own another 3,000 miles of private laterals. This ‘three-legged’ stool comprises the region’s sewerage system.

Years ago, most sewer systems collected both sanitary flow and surface water. Since that time, experts have learned to separate these systems; presently over 95% of the sewerage systems have separate pipes for sanitary flow and either pipes or ditches for stormwater.

MMSD operates two water reclamation facilities: Jones Island and South Shore. Daily, these plants treat an average of 120 million gallons; this figure rises to 600 million gallons per day in wet weather. The deep tunnel, varying between 17 feet and 32 feet in diameter, holds 521 million gallons of water. The system is designed to have periodic overflows, a ‘call’ that is Mr. Shafer’s responsibility. The overflows are permitted in an effort to prevent basement flooding. MMSD’s permit allows for six combined (sanitary and storm) sewer overflows annually. Sanitary overflows are not allowed, however. Over time, the deep tunnel system has kept 82 billion gallons of pollution out of Lake Michigan since going on-line in 1994. Prior to that time, there was an average of 50-60 overflows annually; that figure is now 2.2 annually. MMSD is required to capture and treat 85% of waste and storm water. A second major infrastructure project begun in 2002 will be completed by spring of next year.

Mr. Shafer spoke of the difficulties caused by buildings flooded with storm water or river water. When the storm water recedes via floor drains – which are connected by law to sanitary sewers – MMSD is faced with having to treat millions of gallons of water now contaminated by sewerage. Efforts are ongoing – such as those projects on the County grounds or in Hart Park – to capture and retain storm

water and prevent building flooding. This, in turn, will alleviate pressure on MMSD to treat contaminated water that had once been uncontaminated by raw sewerage. MMSD is also working with property owners to create rain gardens near downspouts, encourage increased use of rain barrels, construct green roofs, etc., all of which can intercept and absorb water that may otherwise end up in building basements. By reducing the flow of storm water into sanitary sewers from various points, the system can function more efficiently.

Mr. Shafer also explained that homes built prior to 1954 could connect foundation drains to sanitary laterals, while homes built after 1954 were required to have sump pumps. In some cases, downspouts are also connected to foundation drains. Sump pumps need to be installed in those homes built before 1954 so the foundation drains can be disconnected from the sanitary laterals and redirected to storm sewers. Additionally, leaky laterals must be repaired.

To encourage correction of these inflow/infiltration (I&I) problems on private property, MMSD hopes to begin a 10-year program in 2011. The proposal calls for municipalities to receive back in-kind dollars based upon the municipality's equalized value. It is hoped that a plan can be developed by early 2011 to facilitate lateral and foundation drain work. The budget over ten years is proposed to be \$151 million dollars; \$8 million has been earmarked from 2011. The capital program will see a 3.9% increase because of this initiative, while the operation and maintenance budget will decrease by 3.6%. It is anticipated the MMSD Commission will approve the program.

This program will be municipality-driven; yet to be determined are the implementation details. Mr. Shafer stressed that if these problems are not addressed, the District will be building more deep tunnels and treatment facilities. Poorly performing sewer sheds must be improved; it can expensive and people who may not suffer flooding problems may be asked to help pay to correct problem areas. Long-term, however, the improvements benefit all.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk

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