



## CITY OF WASILLA

290 E. HERNING AVE.  
WASILLA, ALASKA 99687  
PHONE: (907) 373-9050  
FAX: (907) 373-0788

COUNCIL MEMORANDUM NO. 92-08

FROM: Public Works Director

DATE: January 16, 1992

RE: Sewer Utility Tank Pumping Operations

The additional one-half year of manpower for the sewer utility approved by Council effective last July appears to be having a major beneficial effect on the sewer system operations. For the first time since we began operating the collection system we have been able to perform preventive maintenance rather than only trying to keep up with problem calls. One of the most important activities accomplished is the inspection of septic tanks and pumping those that needed pumping prior to filling up and resulting in an emergency response. As a result, the failure of effluent pumps has been significantly reduced, as has the requirements of overtime work, operational hours of the rodder truck and emergency call-out of commercial pumper trucks.

We believe we can further reduce system operational costs by reducing the cost of septic tank pumping. When the original sewer rate schedule was established the commercial pumpers were charging \$65.00 per 1,000 gallons. This past year, our competitive bid resulted in a rate of \$90.00 per thousand gallons for residential and \$120.00 per thousand for commercial. Additionally, it was originally believed that residential units would not need pumped more often than once each 4 to 5 years and commercial operations would need pumped each 2 or 3 years. However, our experience is that more frequent pumping is cost effective from a maintenance viewpoint.

The City Code provides for pumping as follows:

- (a) Residential - once each 3 years
- (b) Commercial with water volume less than 60,000 gallons per month - once each 2 years
- (c) Commercial - over 60,000 gallons water per month - each year  
(Some restaurants pay the cost of an extra annual pumping)

If we pump the existing customers using a commercial operator in accordance with the frequency listed above, the cost would be \$31,783.00 per year. We only budgeted \$7,000 for annual tank pumping but we have expended about \$12,000 the first half of this year. Our inspections indicate that a considerable number of tanks should be pumped next spring. However, the reduction in the cost of maintenance in other areas as a result of the tank inspections and pumping will partially offset the increased pumping cost.

*Approved 1/27/92*

We do not believe that it will be necessary to pump the tanks as often as provided by the City Code, but if we were to pump all the septic tanks on the sewer system in accordance with the maximum frequency schedule, it would require about 1/2 of a work day, 70 days each year. We believe that existing staff can perform the work. The pumping can be scheduled so that our treatment plant digester can handle the volume.

The purchase price of a used 3,000 gallon capacity pumper truck is expected to be about \$40,000. We recommend that the sewer utility borrow the purchase price from the General Fund and make repayments of \$10,000 per year, including interest, until paid in full. Upon Council approval of the concept described in this memorandum, we will prepare specifications and advertise for proposals for a used pumper truck unit and prepare an appropriation ordinance for funding.



---

Robert E. Harris  
Public Works Director