



Agenda

City Council Work Session Meeting
Oelwein City Hall, 20 Second Avenue SW, Oelwein, Iowa
6:30 PM

May 12, 2025
Oelwein, Iowa

Mayor: Brett DeVore

Mayor Pro Tem: Matt Weber

Council Members: Karen Seeders, Anthony Ricchio, Lynda Payne, Dave Lenz, Renee Cantrell

Pledge of Allegiance

Discussions

- [1.](#) Discussion on the Utility Assistance Program.
- [2.](#) Discussion on Budget Cuts.
3. Discussion on the Wellness Center Budget.

Adjournment

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 319-283-5440

Oelwein Utility Assistance Program



Local donations plus city funding

- The city will advertise allowing customers to sign up for the Oelwein Utility Assistance Program.
 - Customers can donate a \$1.00 monthly, or more
- The City would match the program by \$5,000 annually

What Programs Would be Funded?

- Oelwein Leak Assistance Program
- Oelwein Water line Assistance Program
- Oelwein Sanitary Sewer Assistance Program

Oelwein Leak Assistance Program

- Any homeowner who is qualified under designated programs
 - SSI (Supplemental Security Income), or SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)
 - SNAP Benefits
 - Elderly Tax Credit
- The homeowner would receive up to \$350 toward their repair
 - The \$350 would be paid to the contractor

Oelwein Water Line Assistance Program

- This program would provide assistance to a homeowner who has a failed water line.
- The program would fund up to \$10,000 in repairs and replacements each year

Oelwein Sanitary Sewer Assistance Program

- This program would provide funding for any home who experiences a failed, collapsed sanitary sewer line, or repeated sewer backups.
- The program would fund up to \$10,000 in repairs and replacements each year

Benefits

- Helping homeowners stay in their homes
- Helping maintain homes in Oelwein
- Provide aid when it is most needed
- Reduce large, and hard to pay, water bills from leaks
- Reduce city resources and expenses by addressing problems immediately
- Continue to maintain a community utility systems that benefits all customers
- Reduce infiltration into the sanitary sewer

Expense

- \$5000
 - \$2,500 from water
 - This is .11 percent of the water fund
 - \$2,500 from sewer/wastewater
 - This is .10 percent of the sewer/wastewater fund
- The rest would come from donations from customers who sign up voluntarily

Lead Inventory will for the City to Act

- If the city replaces a lead gooseneck on the main to the disconnect, a homeowner will then need to replace their line
- In this event the city will most likely replace the entire line and end up billing the customer.
- The city has an estimated 75-100 galvanized service lines in the system that are downstream of a lead gooseneck.

City Council Action Needed

- Vote to create the Oelwein Utility Assistance Program
- Vote to match the Oelwein Utility Assistance Program annually with \$5,000

Oelwein Leak Assistance Program (OLAP)

Adopted by City Council Resolution #####-####

Program Information

The city of Oelwein has developed a plan to work with local plumbers to offer free leak repair services for income-qualified homeowners in Oelwein. Through this program the city will arrange to repair leaking toilets, faucets, or other fixtures. Sewer repairs are not eligible. The goal of this program is to ensure the homeowners who are in need do not face a high-water bill due to a water leak. The city utility understands that the best practice is to charge users for the water they need, not the water that comes from a leak. This program benefits all users of the system as it prevents unnecessary high bills that may go unpaid. Minimizing water loss is a benefit to all users on the utility.

- Meet the income requirements
 - Participation in one of the following programs:
 - SSI (Supplemental Security Income), or SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)
 - SNAP Benefits
 - Elderly Tax Credit
- Be 18 or older
 - Anyone signed up for water has to be this old, I believe
- Own the home (home must meet structural, meter size and residential qualifications)
 - Beacon
- Applicant must currently live on the property for which they are requesting assistance and the water service must legally be on.
 - Proved through mailing if we have issues
- Have lived at the residents for six months.
 - Utility Account
- Have a single residential water account with the city of Oelwein that has completed six (6) billing cycles.
 - Utility Account
- Water/Sewer accounts cannot be more than two months past due.
 - Utility Account
- Provide all requested documentation to the City of Oelwein to be considered for the program.
 - Application
 - Proof of income requirements

City Procedures

As needed the Public Works department receives bids from local plumbing contractors to secure a per hour price.

- Utility Clerk calls resident with a suspected leak, or a customer comes in complaining of a leak
- Resident fills out an application and submits it to city staff
- City Clerk verifies all things on the form (Utility Clerk, treasurer, Administrative assistant)
 - SSI (Supplemental Security Income), or SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)
 - Ask for verification letter or bank statement

- SNAP Benefits and WIC
 - Ask to see card
- Elderly Tax Credit
 - Check on beacon
- One or more missed payments in a calendar year
- On rare occasions the City Administrator may provide approval should the applicant be enrolled in a low income program not listed by the city of Oelwein
- Utility Clerk calls in to selected contractor providing all information needed to the contractor
- Contractor repairs said home
 - If the amount of funding will not cover the repair, the contractor must work with the homeowner. The city will only pay to \$350.
- The contractor will submit an invoice to the city
- Treasurer sends out check with claims and tracks activity of the program

Program Information

- The annual cap for any single property is set at \$350.00 in plumbing assistance.
 - Tracked by City Hall on the utility bill account
- The city of Oelwein will solicit licensed plumbers to do any work performed.
 - The City will bid this work out each year and request and hourly rate
- The city of Oelwein will coordinate and schedule plumbing calls after proper documentation is completed.
 - The Utility Clerk will call the plumber
- The city of Oelwein will pay the Plumbing company directly after a proper invoice is submitted.
 - City Hall

Eligible Leaks

- Toilet
- Faucets (Kitchen, bathroom, bath)
- Shower/tub spout
- Outdoor spigot
- Leak in wall pipes
- Water softener bypass issues

Non eligible leaks

- Drain leaks
- Any sewer related leak
- Leaking roof
- Irrigation system
- Water heaters (some water heater leaks may be eligible for repair)

Oelwein Water Line Assistance Program (OWLAP)

Adopted by City Council Resolution ####-####

City Procedures

- The resident would contact the city to inform them that they are replacing their water line that is damaged or not functioning.
- Public Works or Community Development will verify that the water line is faulty or failing
- The resident will contact a contractor for the repair/replacement
- The contractor will follow all city rules and regulations
- The contractor will submit an invoice to the city
- Treasurer sends out check with claims and tracks activity of the program

Policy

The city owns the portion of the water service line from the water main to the curb stop, the property owner is responsible for the service line from the curb stop to the meter. This policy was developed to lessen the burden of homeowner portion service line replacement. Funding is limited to the extent of money budgeted for the fiscal year.

The city will allot \$10,000 annually for this program out of the water utility.

No income verification is needed as water line failures have commonly occurred in low valued homes. This failure has been tracked for the last 10 years with the largest number of failures in one year being three.

City Rules and Regulations

- This program is available only to owner occupied properties, no rental properties or commercial/ industrial properties will be considered.
- All work must be performed by licensed and approved contractors.
- Two competitive quotes will be submitted for consideration.
- Community Development or Public Works staff will inspect and approve all work.
- Acceptable materials will include Type K $\frac{3}{4}$ " copper or CTS PEX, in the case of PEX there will be a 12-gauge copper tracer wire installed and terminated at the curb box cap. All brass fitting will be clearly marked as no lead "NL" fittings.
- The work will include site restoration including any concrete removed for work performed.

Oelwein Sanitary Sewer Assistance Program**Adopted by City Council Resolution #####-####****City Procedures**

This program would provide funding for any home who experiences a failed, collapsed sanitary sewer line, or repeated sewer backups.

In all new sewer lateral installations, a properly installed and approved backflow device is required.

Given the condition and susceptibility of some sanitary sewer mains, as identified by Public Works throughout the city, a backflow device installed in the home can limit the damage caused by sewer backup.

Policy

The city owns the sanitary sewer, the homeowner is responsible for the sewer lateral from the house up to and including the connection to the city main.

The city of Oelwein will offer dependent on available funds, up to \$2000.00 for the installation of a sanitary sewer backflow device, repair to a sewer lateral, or replacement of a sewer lateral.

The city will allot \$10,000 annually for this program out of the water utility.

The funds will be available to homes that are susceptible to backup caused by the city sewer, as determined by the Public Works Director or his designee.

City Rules and Regulations

- The home must be owner occupied and zoned residential.
- The home must have a current water/sewer account in good standing with the city of Oelwein.
- The home must have a history of city caused backups, or the potential for backup.
- The device will be installed by a licensed plumber
- The device will be approved by the Public Works Director or his designee.
- The property owner is required to sign a full and complete release of any and all claims against the City arising from the sewer backup incident in order to be eligible for the program.

Water / Sewer Plan notes

I have read through the Lead Service Rule, it states any service line known to at any time in the past be constructed of Galvanized Steel downstream from a lead gooseneck must be replaced by 2035, “current deadline” that could change.

In Oelwein the customer owns from the curb stop to the house meaning they would be responsible for the cost of replacement.

Even in the case of us replacing our portion from the main to the curb stop it falls on us “City” to make sure the homeowner’s side is replaced. Whether we pay for it or force the homeowner to pay for replacement under the threat of disconnect.

I checked with Lisa Bahe and also my own insurance company, there would be no coverage for the water service line based solely on the fact it is downstream from a lead gooseneck, it would have to be leaking to be covered.

We estimate we have between 75-100 galvanized service lines in the system that are downstream of a lead gooseneck. These will all need to be replaced in the next ten years.

I don’t have a number as to how many of these are rental properties but I would estimate at least half.

So realistically we could have 50 owner occupied residents that will need to come up with five thousand plus dollars for replacement.

Sewer Laterals

In the City of Oelwein, the homeowner is responsible for their sewer lateral from the house to the city sewer main, generally the center of the street in front of the home.

There are exceptions where the homeowner owns as much as 200’ of private lateral.

The department has no records or maps of private laterals so it gets confusing at times trying to figure out where some are connected to the main.

The sewer is different than the water as a “new” pipe type was popular throughout the 50s and 60s called Orangeburg, it was made up of a material that is certain to fail at some point.

Before Orangeburg, butt joint VCP “vitrified clay pipe” was used and most is 75-100 years old.

Recently a young couple purchased a home in town not knowing their sewer lateral was 140’ long and runs through their neighbor’s yard on the way to the city main. The sewer plugged and is believed to be collapsed somewhere in the neighbor’s yard. The cost to fix this issue the correct way will exceed ten thousand dollars.

We estimate the sewer lateral issue could affect as many as 50% of the homes in town.

Replacing these laterals not only benefits the homeowner it also reduces infiltration sources in the sanitary sewer system that everyone pays for.

Oelwein Utility Assistance Program

Adopted by Resolution #####-####

The City of Oelwein allows customers on their utility bill to be charged \$1.00 or more monthly to assist customers in need. This program is called the Oelwein Utility Assistance Program. All interested customers wanting to take part in the Oelwein Utility Assistance Program must sign up at City Hall.

The program helps fund the following programs:

- Oelwein Leak Assistance Program
- Oelwein Water line Assistance Program
- Oelwein Sanitary Sewer Assistance Program

These programs ensure that homeowners can make critical repairs to their own infrastructure that ultimately help the entire utility system. Customers that failed to make a payment because of a large leak have a difficult time getting back on track for payments. Additionally, a house with leaking water lines creates further issues and can result in a home being uninhabitable. Homes with a broken water line, broken sewer line, or one that experience frequent backups are not beneficial to the community. Making timely repairs and ensuring function water and sewer lines are critical to homes.

The city will match all donations made up to \$5,000 annually. Payments from this fund are made to contractors and do not go to the homeowner. Once all funds have been exhausted for the year, the city will no longer take applications until the next fiscal year.



To: Department Heads
From: Dylan Mulfinger
Subject: Budget Cut Act of 2025
Date: 05/12/2025

In FY2025 staff already accomplished the following to respond to less revenue for city services:

- Did not fill a police patrol position
- Raised building permit fees
- Cut the Fixed Based Operator (FBO) position
- Raised cemetery fees
- Cut fire equipment line
- Cut library page position
- The pool concession has been more aggressive in sales

It is important to recognize what has been done, and what needs to be done. The first out first in rule allows for prioritized items to be brought back once funding becomes available.

First out:

1. Police Patrol Position
2. Park and cemetery part time workers
3. Library funding
4. Community Development Administrative Assistant
5. City Hall reorganization

First in:

1. Police Patrol Position
2. Park and cemetery part time workers
3. Library funding
4. Community Development Administrative Assistant
5. City Hall reorganization

Budget cut Narrative

- Police Patrol Position
 - The city will hold back on hiring a police officer position that was already authorized by the city council. The opening comes from a retirement of a police officer in 2024. This will place a strain on the department as current shifts are already tight, and the flexibility of the department will be strained. Having a full staff of officers allows the city to take on work at a reasonable level for all employees
 - Cut= \$60,000
 - Started in 2024



- Park and cemetery part time workers
 - The city will cut \$30,000 from Parks and Cemetery. This will result in fewer part time employees at each department. There is potential for parks to be mowed less, the cemetery to be mowed less, and maintenance on all of our facilities to be delayed. Each department will not be able to take on additional projects and will force the department to prioritize maintenance over new services for the community. You cannot get as much mowing done with six employees when the city had eight. This will also affect the downtown and Depot Park.
 - Estimated Cut= \$30,000
 - Starting April of 2026
- Library funding
 - The city council will need to reduce the library department by \$30,000. This is to ensure the general fund will be balanced in FY2027. The city will need to make this cut and provide time for the library board to determine what moves they will make to absorb the cut. This could result in less services at the library. Once we take away all our public places, people will no longer be able to go anywhere.
 - Estimated cut \$30,000
 - Starting July 2026
- Community Development Administrative Assistant
 - With the reduction of Community Development, the city will not fill the administrative assistant position in Community Development. While the city was hoping to absorb this position over time, this position became open in April of 2025. All of these tasks are being divided up amongst staff. We will have some employees in Community Development take on tasks along with City Hall front office staff. All foot traffic will go through the front door of City Hall and Community Development will no longer have someone assisting for only Community Development matters. This places more tasks on City Hall and will reduce the availability to tackle City Clerk and City Administrator tasks or projects. This also places an additional workload on the existing Community Development employees.
 - Estimated Cut- \$44,928
 - Started April 2025
- City Hall reorganization
 - This move will start with the retirement of the City Clerk/Treasurer. City Hall will be evaluated, and staffing levels will be studied.
 - Cut costs unknown
 - Starting July 2026
- New phone contract October 2025
 - The city will move away from RingCentral and work toward a new plan that costs less and uses more function on computers.
 - Cut unknown
 - Starting October 2025
- Lower cost internet Summer 2025



- The City will sign up for fiber internet through Hawkeye Telephone for the police station and city hall.
 - Cut= \$2,000 annually
 - Starting in late fall of 2025
- Drop bigleaf contracts that prioritize bandwidth
 - With fiber internet, the city will no longer need bigleaf to prioritize bandwidth within the police station and city hall.
 - Cut= \$4,800
 - Starting in late fall of 2025
- Work to lower attorney fees
 - This is an ongoing project that the city will need to prioritize. Attorney fees have climbed up with the focus being on code enforcement and nuisance abatement. Since brining on Lynch Dallas, the city is nearing back-to-back years of \$100,000 attorney fees. This is much higher than any comparable city.
- Less mowing in the parks department with prairie plantings
 - The city will start placing prairie wherever prairie can be planted.
 - Cut unknown
 - Starting unknown
- No downtown hanging baskets
 - The city will no longer water the downtown hanging baskets. This will most likely result in the end of this program.
 - Cut 4 hours of staff time a day
 - Starting May of 2026
- Remove downtown streetscape
 - This will happen gradually as the downtown sidewalks are repaired. This will require less staff time, equipment, and supplies.
 - Cut unknown
 - Starting Summer of 2026
- Reduce city cell phones
 - The city has invested in voip which works on desktops and laptops. The city has also invested in radios. The need for cell phones is not as crucial as it once was for city staff. Any staff that needs to report to work must provide a cell phone or form of contact. Once the employee gets to work they can use the city phone or the radio. The city's voip allows for an app that forward calls to a cellphone and allows the cellphone to make calls through the app. Staff is still evaluating this cut as it may not be large enough of a cut to make a complete switchover.
 - \$3,243.24 annual cut general fund
 - \$2,157.84 annual cut other funds
 - Starting November 2025
- Snow text alerts
 - This service has been underutilized by residents and the city. The city currently has 263 or four percent of the population signed up for the service. City hall has only used this for



snow alerts and has not ventured into other notifications. The problem from the staff's perspective is that events don't happen enough for this app to be useful. Plus, when it comes to snow, the snow ordinance has been in effect for six years. The residents who get towed are not signed up for the service. I believe the process is now simple, if it snows, check the website and you will know if it is a snow emergency. The snow emergency is almost always called the night before as it is based on the anticipated amount of snow and not actual snow amounts.

- Cut=\$2,544.10
- Fall of 2025
- Back track on funding for the farmer's market
 - This funding was never officially approved because the City Administrator was working out the details with the farmer's market. The farmer's market still wants funding and was willing to work with the city on any funding amount. The city has no obligation to provide funding, but with the resurgence of the farmer's market, this was an investment the city wanted to make.
 - Cuts= \$5,000
 - Timeline= Current
- Move funding for the chamber to the hotel motel tax
 - The city would reduce the amount of available hotel motel funds from \$20,000 to \$10,000 each year with the chamber receiving \$10,000, of their \$50,000, from hotel motel funds. This would not include the payback clause should the chamber run a profit on their events. This frees up local option sales tax to be used for other general fund needs.
 - Cut= \$10,000
 - July 1, 2025
- Take junk house removal to 50,000 instead of 60,000
 - This cut is straightforward. The city would do less tear downs.
 - Cut \$10,000
 - July 1, 2025
- The housing tax abatement program will start to fall off each year eventually providing \$20,000
 - The city is slowly ending their five-year tax abatement plan. The new plan abates taxes but does not offer city reimbursement. The current reimbursement are paid for using the local options sales tax.
 - Cut \$10,000
 - Ongoing and will end in Spring of 2027
- End the reduced priced stickers for bulk items during the summer from local option sales tax
 - The city would stop using local option sales tax to fund this program and use fees from the landfill fee. The Fayette County Solid Waste Commission returned a fees to the city as they were sitting on too much funding. We will buy down this funding each summer to help reduce the cost of large items stickers. Once the funding runs out, the city will stop this program.
 - Cut= \$5,000
 - Starting May 2025



- The tech spec payment ends in July of 2026 \$35,000
 - The city partnered with the school district on the tech spec building which created the Regional Tech Complex. The city entered an agreement to pay \$35,000 for 10 years. This payment ends in FY2026.
 - Cut= \$35,000
 - Starting July 1, 2026
- Police Loan Shift
 - Move the police station loan payment away from franchise fees to debt service as allowed each year
 - Free up franchise fee for supplementing public safety
 - This would be three transfers of \$100,000.
 - This money could also be used for library HVAC or pool floor
- Reduce road spending in Franchise Fees
 - Franchise fees can be used for public safety. Any time we offset the cost of public safety it allows the city to spend money on other general fund departments. While the city needs to maintain the streets, cuts are needed to ensure the city functions.
 - \$50,000 transfer from franchise to the general fund
 - The city already transfers \$30,000 for public safety from franchise fees

Large moves

- Vote on local option sales tax language to change to all government purposes
 - This is needed to allow for general fund operations to be charged to local option sales tax

The goals for these cuts was \$300,000. Completing all these cuts would result in \$391,759 savings to the general fund. It is important to know that even with all of these cuts made, the future is still bleak as the state of Iowa only wants to reduce property taxes.