

DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Drinking Water State Revolving Fund environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below.

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please provide them at this time. The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Replacement Well and Water Tower, Transmission Main and Distribution System Improvements
City of Wisner, Nebraska

DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: D311622

ESTIMATED PROJECT AMOUNT: \$4,346,000

PROPOSED LOAN FORGIVENESS AMOUNT: \$1,086,500

The City of Wisner has applied for funding for the above-referenced project through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program jointly administered by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). This project has been ranked as a high priority project and is included on the Funding List in the DWSRF State Fiscal Year 2019 Intended Use Plan (IUP). Based on supporting documentation on file with the NDEQ, the City was determined to be eligible for a DWSRF loan with corresponding loan forgiveness capped at 25% of project costs.

Wisner is located in the eastern part of Nebraska, situated east of the City of Norfolk, southeast of the intersection of State Highways 51 and 275. The community has a population of 1,170 according to the 2010 census. Wisner has been issued a permit to operate a public water system (PWS) under the provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Regulations Governing Public Water Supply Systems, Title 179.

In June 2015, the City's Engineer completed a Water System Study that evaluated the siting of a replacement well with transmission main, distribution system improvements, and water storage standpipe replacement. The PWS consists of three municipal wells, a booster pump station, a 120,000 gallon water storage standpipe, and a distribution system divided into two pressure zones. One of the three municipal wells is on emergency status due to nitrate

concentrations over the maximum contaminant limit (MCL), has not been used for potable purposes for two decades, and is recommended for replacement. One of the two remaining wells has a history of exceeding the selenium and nitrate MCLs, and though currently compliant, is planned to be placed on emergency status after the installation of a new well. The water storage standpipe was constructed in 1896. The standpipe's age is a concern for the system and the capacity of the existing standpipe is less than the system's average day demand. The recommended tower would eliminate the need for the booster station; though additional pressure regulation may be needed in the lower elevation (southern) part of town. Lastly, there are numerous sections of the water distribution system which are undersized, prone to breakage, and in need of replacement.

The proposed project was reviewed by numerous Federal and State agencies for environmental impacts. Based on received responses, there are no known impacts. All necessary permits will be obtained prior to project construction including, but not limited to, a Section 404 permit through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers if impacts to the Waters of the U.S. cannot be avoided during design. The local floodplain administrator will be consulted for required permits for work that may occur within a regulated floodplain and/or floodway.

The Village is eligible for a 30-year loan at an interest rate of 2.0 percent on 75% of the estimated project costs (i.e., 25% will be forgiven). In addition to principal and interest payments, an administrative fee of 0.98 percent of the loan balance will be assessed each year. The revenues from Wisner's water utility will be dedicated to repay the loan. The projected annual DWSRF Debt Service (including 10% coverage) is \$194,435. Wisner's current water rate for a typical residential connection is \$9.00 per month for the first 6,000 gallons, with an additional \$1.50 use charge for every 1,000 gallons of water furnished thereafter. That equates to a water bill of \$12.00 per month, based on a common household water use of 8,000 gallons. With 644 active service connections, household rates will need to be raised \$25.16 to just over \$37 per month to address the new debt service.

A Public Hearing was held February 20, 2018, with 41 days advanced posted notice. A presentation of the proposed project was made by the City Administrator, including the project scope, impact on water rates, and source of funding. It was noted that concerns about the project impact on the City budget were heard, and in response, it was stated that the entire project will be funded through the SRF. Subsequently, a resident has raised concerns about the new well and tower location through open letters posted in the local newspaper, a letter to the City, and action in court. The City issued a response, summarized in a local newspaper article, detailing items in the preliminary engineering report, acquisition of funding, and the decision to place the water tower and well at the proposed location.

The proposed project is determined by DHHS to help the PWS maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The system last underwent a routine sanitary survey by DHHS in May of 2016, wherein several deficiencies were noted and subsequently addressed, entered into the Safe Drinking Water Information System for the community. That completed survey is the first step of the Technical, Financial, and Managerial (TFM) program policy. The City will still be

required to undergo an Initial, and if necessary, a Final TFM Assessment by the DHHS, to ensure that their capabilities meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Also, their current Environmental Tracking Tool score is 0, below the allowable 11 per issued U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance.

No significant environmental impacts have been identified that would result from the proposed action. All necessary permits for construction or waste discharges will be obtained from the appropriate agencies (i.e., Section 404, NRD, etc.), if necessary. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

This action is taken on the basis of a careful review of the environmental assessment, the engineering report and other supporting data that are on file with NDEQ. The latter are available for public review upon request and the environmental assessment is attached. The NDEQ will not take any administrative action on the project for at least 30 calendar days from the date shown below. Persons having a comment on this determination are encouraged to submit directly to Cyril Martinmaas at 402 471-0513 or email cyril.martinmaas@nebraska.gov of DHHS, or David Lathrop at 402 471-4252 or email david.lathrop@nebraska.gov of the Water Permits Division of NDEQ.

Signed this 4th day of October, 2018.

Sincerely,



Jim Macy
Director

Attachments: Environmental Assessment
Distribution List
Map