



Legislation Text

File #: 1988-2020, **Version:** 1

The Department of Public Utilities, Division of Sewerage and Drainage administers a program known as Project Dry Basement: Backwater Valve Installation and Sump Pump. The goal of this program is designed to prevent sewer backups in single and two-family homes in Columbus due to surcharging in city sewers from heavy rain or sewer blockages by protecting the home up to the top of casting of the nearest upstream manhole with a Spears or preapproved backwater valve, which allows use of plumbing fixtures above that elevation in the remainder of the home. Only homes deemed eligible by the City of Columbus, Department of Public Utilities, Division of Sewerage and Drainage qualify for this project. Under this project an eligible home with an interior perimeter foundation drain connection to the lateral is also eligible, at the owner's option for the installation of a sump pump that will redirect the foundation drainage away from the sanitary lateral to the sump pump and then discharge that drainage away from the house. A contract was awarded for this program that was estimated to last 3 years. It was estimated that 120 valves (40/per year) and 60 sump pumps (20/per year) would be installed during the 3 year term of the contract which is due to expire on December 12, 2020. With the heavy rains there has been an upsurge of 763 application requests sent out, of which 510 applications have been returned, since March of 2020 with more coming in on a regular basis.

Due to this upsurge in requests and the backlog of work needing to be done the Division of Sewerage and Drainage is now planning to allow owners of single and two-family homes in Columbus to privately contract with approved, licensed plumbers for the installation of backwater valves only, and then submit a request for reimbursement of the allowable costs, up to a maximum amount of \$2,500.00. Property owners will be required to sign a release of liability in order to receive reimbursement. This program is currently scheduled to end when COVID-19 is no longer a factor. At that time the program will be re-evaluated to determine if it is in the City's best interest to continue it or not.

This legislation authorizes the City Auditor to transfer appropriation within the Sanitary Sewer Operating Fund to allow for the reimbursement payments to homeowners for the private installation of backwater valves to proceed. Transferred appropriation will also be utilized to cover the potential payment of any claim being handled by the City Attorney's Office that may be settled yet this year.

This legislation authorizes the Director of the Department of Public Utilities, on behalf of the Division of Sewerage and Drainage, to establish and administer the Project Dry Basement: Backwater Valve Installation Reimbursement Program, and establishes the funding necessary for the reimbursement of costs associated with the owners private installation of backwater valves only.

SUPPLIER: N/A

FISCAL IMPACT: A total of \$250,000.00 in funding is needed for these refunds. There is sufficient budget authority available in the 2020 Sanitary Sewer Operating Fund's Budget to fund the transfer of appropriation which totals \$330,000.00. Of this transfer amount \$250,000.00 will be utilized for the Project Dry Basement Backwater Valve Installation Reimbursement Program and \$80,000.00 will be utilized to cover the potential payment of any claim being handled by the City Attorney's Office that may be settled yet this year. Expenditures will be reprioritized to allow for this reimbursement program to proceed. If additional funding is needed in the future legislation will be processed for its establishment.

\$0.00 was spent in 2019

\$0.00 was spent in 2018

EMERGENCY DESIGNATION: This ordinance is being submitted as an emergency due to the high volume of backlogged application requests still needing to be worked. The reimbursement program will allow owners, who qualify, to have the work done quicker by a licensed and approved plumber rather than wait for the City to have the work scheduled and completed.

To authorize the City Auditor to transfer \$330,000.00 in appropriation authority between Object Classes within the Sanitary Sewer Operating Fund; authorize the Director of Public Utilities to establish and administer the Project Dry Basement: Backwater Valve Installation Reimbursement Program, to authorize the expenditure of \$250,000.00 from the Sewerage System Operating Fund, and to declare an emergency. (\$330,000.00)

WHEREAS, the Division of Sewerage and Drainage administers a program known as Project Dry Basement: Backwater Valve Installation and Sump Pump; and

WHEREAS, due to the heavy rains this year the Division is currently unable to keep up with the upsurge in requests for the installation of backwater valves and sump pumps, resulting in a backlog of work needing to be done; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Utilities now wishes to establish a reimbursement program whereby allowing owners of single and two-family homes in Columbus to privately contract with approved, licensed plumbers for the installation of backwater valves only, and then submit a request for reimbursement of the allowable costs up to a maximum amount of \$2,500.00; and

WHEREAS, this program is currently scheduled to end when COVID-19 is no longer a factor. At that time the program will be re-evaluated to determine if it is in the City's best interest to continue it or not; and

WHEREAS, if unforeseen issues or difficulties are encountered that would require additional funding, another ordinance would be processed for the needed funds, and

WHEREAS, the Division of Sewerage and Drainage has a need to transfer \$330,000.00 in appropriation authority between Object Classes within the 2020 Sanitary Sewer Operating Fund's Budget to allow for the Project Dry Basement: Backwater Valve Installation Reimbursement Program in the amount of \$250,000.00 to proceed, and \$80,000.00 to cover the potential payment of any claim being handled by the City Attorney's Office that may be settled yet this year. Appropriation authority for the transfer has been identified and is available in Object Class 01 (Personnel); and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Public Utilities, Division of Sewerage and Drainage in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the City Auditor to transfer appropriation between Object Classes within the Sanitary Sewer Operating Fund to allow for the timely payment of any claims being handled by the City Attorney's Office; and to authorize the Director of Public Utilities to establish and administer a Project Dry Basement: Backwater Valve Installation Reimbursement program, **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the City Auditor be and is hereby authorized to transfer existing available appropriations of \$330,000.00 from Object Class 01 Personnel to Object Class 05 Other Expenditures in Fund 6100 Sanitary Sewer Operating Fund.

SECTION 2. That the Director of Public Utilities, on behalf of the Division of Sewerage and Drainage, be and is hereby authorized to establish and administer the Project Dry Basement: Backwater Valve Installation Reimbursement

Program and to enter into the necessary agreements with property owners.

SECTION 3. That the Director of Public Utilities be and is hereby authorized to refund the approved costs, for the installation of back water valves only, to owners of single and two-family homes in Columbus who privately contract for the installation of the valves, and then submit a request for reimbursement of the allowable costs up to a maximum amount of \$2,500.00

SECTION 4. That the expenditure of \$250,000.00 or so much thereof as may be needed, is hereby authorized in Fund 6100 Sewerage System Operating Fund in object class 05 Other Expenditures per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 5. That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

SECTION 6. That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this Ordinance.

SECTION 7. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.