

Augusta Regional Sewer Authority

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ Sheet)

New/Update Questions and Answers are in Red
Update on: August 6, 2018

SECTION 1 – SERVICE LINES

1. **Will the SEWER AUTHORITY work with the Homeowner to determine the location of the service line and grinder pump?**
 - a. The SEWER AUTHORITY personnel will work with the homeowner as much as possible on the location of the line and grinder pump. Each request will be considered and discussed on a case by case basis. The homeowner will have some “leeway” in placement of the grinder, but will be limited based on the location of the sewer line that exits the house.
 - b. The SEWER AUTHORITY will require the Contractor to replace anything disturbed with like materials and back to like condition before construction began.
2. **Is the Application for Sanitary Sewer and Agreement (user agreement) an Easement?** No, this was not clearly relayed in the original information sheet. The only easements that will be acquired are for the main line that connects the two systems. The application/agreement (sewer user agreement) is a way to provide written request and consent from the home owner to the utility to obtain sewer services once the line is operational, and allow entry on to the property to install, maintain, and repair the service line and grinder pump. Entry onto the property will only be used for this purpose.

SECTION 2 – EXISTING SEPTIC TANK ISSUES

1. **Do I have to remove my septic tank?** Septic Tanks will remain in the ground.
2. **What do I do with the line running to my septic tank?** The line running to the septic tank needs to be capped off, by the OWNER.
3. **What is best to do with the existing septic tanks?** The SEWER AUTHORITY encourages that septic tanks be filled with sand and gravel, but this is not required.
 - a. **Note: Plumbing Inspector has final say on what is to be done regarding existing tanks.**
4. **Can I connect my septic tank to the new sewer system?** The Septic Tank CANNOT BE CONNECTED to the new sewer system in anyway.

SECTION 3 –GRINDER PUMPS

- 1. Who is responsible for the Electric Hookup of the Grinder Pump?**
 - a. The HOMEOWNER is responsible for providing connection from the Breaker Box of the House to the Outside Disconnect. This connection MUST be inspected by a certified electrical Inspector.
 - b. The Outside disconnect panel WILL be provided by the SEWER AUTHORITY.
 - c. The SEWER AUTHORITY will be responsible for providing the electrical connection from the disconnect panel to the grinder pump.
 - d. The disconnect panel will be placed on the outside of the house as close to the grinder pump location as possible.

- 2. What happens when the electric goes off?**
 - a. The first step is for the OWNER to reduce the number of times of using water and flushing commodes.
 - b. **The max level of storage tank capacity for each grinder pump is 100 gallons; which means the sewage will not run out onto the top of the ground until this max level is exceeded.**
 - c. The grinder pumps are vented – so if sewage backup occurs, the sewage will run onto the top of the ground from the grinder, NOT back into the house.
 - d. The SEWER AUTHORITY will be providing a Disconnect panel that will allow connection to a generator to operate the grinder during power failure. ONLY THE SEWER AUTHORITY will be authorized to connect a generator to the Disconnect box.

- 3. Who is responsible for connecting the Sewer Line from the House to the Grinder Pump?**
 - a. The line coming out of the house will need to be disconnected from the septic tank and connected to the Grinder pump. The OWNER will be responsible for this.
 - b. The Plumbing inspector will be required to inspect the home connection to the grinder pump to insure homeowner safety with proper venting and connections.

- 4. Grinder Pump Rules of Operation & General Knowledge**
 - a. The SEWER AUTHORITY will provide homeowners a list of rules to follow as the grinder pumps are installed.
 - b. **The grinder pump will have a maximum storage capacity of 100 gallons. The pump will pump out sewage when it reaches approximately 20 gallons of sewage; if the pump should fail to do so, an alarm will sound and light will flash when sewage reaches 40 gallons to alert the homeowner that the pump may not be working correctly.**

- c. All grinders will be equipped with an alarm panel. If the sewer level inside the pump should reach 40 gallons, the alarm will sound and a light will flash until the level drops. If the level does not drop and the alarm continues, the homeowner should notify the utility of the potential problem so it can be serviced. This alarm is useful to homeowners, as it indicates the potential for overflow. Overflow will not occur until sewage reaches beyond its max holding capacity of 100 gallons. In the event of an overflow, sewage will not back into the home.
 - d. The grinder pumps will be installed with a check valve, which will prevent sewage from backing into the grinder pump from the main line.
5. **Where will the Grinder Pump be located?** The grinder pump will be installed next to the house, where the existing sewer line comes out of the house. The homeowner will have some “leeway” in placement of the grinder, but will be limited to the location of the sewer line exiting the house.
6. **Can a solar panel be used as electric source (either primary or backup) to the grinder pump?** Home Owners should check with an electrician and the electrical inspector for advisement if they wish to use solar power.
7. **How much smell will come from the grinder pump?** As long as the grinder stays in use, there shouldn’t be any smell. If the grinder is not in use for an extended period of time (such as being gone on vacation), the property owner should follow the appropriate steps to ensure sewage is not just setting within the pump. If this occurs, it is possible that a smell may occur, but only if sewage is left for long periods (several days or more) without being pumped out. Normal use of the grinder should not create a smell.

REFER TO ARSA WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT GRINDER PUMPS

Videos are available on YouTube regarding E/One grinder Pumps

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeH72xfodoE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzgTpWWM7Bs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWYPbzig8knw>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqo_kPaObFk

SECTION 4 – GENERAL ISSUES

1. **How will my Sewer Bill be calculated?** Your sewer bill will be calculated based on your consumption of water.
2. **What happens if I want to be hooked on to the sanitary sewer but my property is more than 300 feet from the line?** Each property owner that is interested in hooking on to the line, but is farther than 300 feet, will need to be evaluated on a case by case scenario. The utility requests that those interested

sign the application/agreement and the utility will do all it can to accommodate hook on to the system if it is feasible. Things such as elevation and distance away from the line are key factors in determining feasibility by the utility. There may be a cost to the property owner if distance is excessive (to help pay for additional costs of the added line and labor to install).

3. **How many customers are served in each City and how many proposed customers exist in between?** There are approximately 850 customers total of the City of Augusta and Brooksville combined, and approximately 90+ potential customers along the route between the two cities.
4. **If I chose to apply for a waiver on my septic, will I still be responsible for the cost of installation later and will I be required to be hooked on?** If you apply for a waiver, you may continue to use your system under the terms of that waiver, but once your system fails or if your waiver is deemed no longer valid, you will be required to hook on. The costs of connection will be required from the customer at that time, which may include any tap and connection fees, materials, and labor. The fee is only being waived now because there is project money that can help pay for the expense, provided the user agreement is signed prior to the deadline, so the home can be built into the project.
5. **How much is the cost of hookup?**
 - a. Those that choose to sign up for service now (prior to the deadline set and the beginning of construction) will have the cost of their grinder pump and service line covered under the project, and their tap/connection fee waived. The owner will be responsible for hookup of electric from the house to the grinder pump and disconnect panel (See sections 2 & 3).
 - b. For homes hooked on later, the cost to hookup will include regular tap/connection fees, materials, and labor. This cost is estimated to be \$6,000 to \$7,000; but may increase in time due to rising costs of material associated to installation.
 - c. The cost of hookup from the home to the grinder pump and disconnect cannot be determined by the utility because each house is unique with plumbing and electric already in place.
6. **How was the line route determined?** The route of the line was based upon the 2005 facility plan that was adopted in 2010 by both Cities and County. The project was built around that plan, which shows Phase I work being the connection of the two systems, the collection of the Subdivision just off Route 19, and the collection of homes along the force main route of Route 19.
7. **How long until actual hookup and when is payment due?** It is estimated that the line will not be operational until end of 2020 or beginning of 2021. It is anticipated at this time that construction will take about 2 years for both the treatment plant and the lines from the time it is bid out. The homeowner will

not incur a bill for this service until it is operational. Users will have time during that construction period, prior to the operation going live, to get plumbing and electric hooked on. Those hooking on will receive a 90 day notice to inform them the plant and lines are about to be in operation.

- 8. Why the sudden rush to move the project forward if it's been around so long?** The project was formed from the recommendations of the facility plan; plus amendments of the plan as reviewed and approved by KY Division of Water. Funding has been applied for over the past several years, but it was not until 2018 that 100% of the needed funding was committed to the project by funding agencies. The project could not move forward until 100% of the funding was committed. With funding commitments, come requirements, and obligations of ARSA to have the project progress in a timely manner, which includes having the project to bid for construction by a certain time. ARSA's actions to move forward stems from the requirements of the funding agencies to keep the project moving on course.
- 9. What about farmers that water livestock and crops? Will they be charged sewer for that water?** ARSA is currently working with the Bracken County Water District to form practices on how to best handle this situation. ARSA will not charge sewage rates on water that is being used for agricultural use and not returning to the collection system for treatment. There are several options to alleviate this situation and accommodate farmers. Again, ARSA is working with the Water District to form policies on handling this according to the best determined solution.
- 10. Who will hire contractors and operators for the new system? Who do we call if there is a problem with our grinder and line?**

 - a. ARSA will be the governing board of the authority; and will make decisions, and have oversight, concerning the contractors and operators of the system, as well as other duties the authority will be responsible for. Details of the operation are still being determined, but the Authority will contract a general manager for the system. ARSA plans to follow similar operation procedures very similar to many other utilities already in existence.
 - b. Contact information for questions, concerns, and emergencies will be listed on monthly bill sent out to customers.
- 11. Why isn't the plant located in Augusta?** The plant was originally going to be located just outside the City limits of Augusta, with discharge into the Ohio River; however, the plant site had to be moved due to archeological reasons. At that time, ARSA consulted with Division of Water to find another suitable location for the plant, knowing the plant could not be located just anywhere. A plant of that size would require location near a water source that would be

suitable for discharge. The plant also required enough acreage for future operation and expansion.

- 12. Did it add costs to move the plant site up the hill by Brooksville instead of having the plant in Augusta and letting gravity flow over the hill to the plant?** The cost to move the plant site from the previous location in Augusta to the new site just north of Brooksville only changed the total cost estimate of the project by less than 1%. The original plan already had pump stations included, but the location of those had to change with the change in the treatment plant site (as amended in 2016). The original location required piping through the City of Augusta to get to the current discharge point of the Ohio River; with changing sites to the Brooksville area, that piping in Augusta was no longer needed.
- 13. What other options were there for fixing the Cities problems?** The facility plan identified several alternatives (such as building separate plants – one for each city). The recommendation of the plan, as approved by Division of Water, was to construct one regional facility.

SECTION 5 – PUMP STATIONS

- 1. How big is the pump station and how many are there?** There are four pump stations within the project. Easements for pump stations are typically 50ft x 50 ft but the actual footprint of the station on the ground is significantly smaller than that. Pictures of typical pump stations are located within the information provided by ARSA and also on ARSA website.
- 2. Who decided the location for the pump stations?** Pump stations can only pump sewage a certain distance. Pump size and elevation plays a large part in how far they can pump and how far apart each station can be from the other. Because of these factors, pump station placement can be very limited in location.

SECTION 6 – CUSTOMER RATES

- 1. How will rates be calculated?** Rates will be calculated based upon water usage. ARSA is working with the water utilities to accommodate for water usage by customers that does not come back through the sanitary sewer (farm use, pool fill up, leaks, etc.).
- 2. What will my bill be?** Rates and charges for the facilities and services are required to be set to meet the cost of maintaining, repairing, and operating the sewer system, plus meet the obligations of the debt that are incurred, at the terms stipulated by the funding agreements. Rates will be reviewed and

adjusted annually. Based upon project calculations, which may change upon completion of the project, the **projected** initial rates are anticipated to be:

- a. First 2,000 gallons @ \$48.60 – Minimum Bill
- b. All Over 2,000 gallons @ \$ 7.75 – per 1,000 gallon
- c. Added NOTES:
 - i. The average monthly use for Augusta and Brooksville is approximately 3,000 gallons of water use per month.
 - ii. These calculations are projected, based upon the cost estimates to construct the system, as well as operate the system once it is live
 - iii. These calculations are based upon serving 855 existing users and 73 new additional customers
 - iv. Brooksville City Council has approved and signed an agreement to provide the monthly billing to customers for \$0.00 charge
 - v. Augusta City Council has approved and signed an agreement to provide the monthly billing to customers for \$0.00 charge
 - vi. Bracken County Water District is in the process of evaluating what this monthly billing charge will be

3. **What if you don't have public water and use a cistern or well for water now?** For those that do not have public water provided to them, there is still a mechanism to calculate sewage usage. The grinder pumps are equipped with an hour meter that can be used to calculate usage for billing purposes. Residents without public water service will still be required to hook on if they meet the criteria of the mandatory hook up ordinance once the line and system is operational.

SECTION 7 – APPLICATION FOR INSTALLATION & AGREEMENT (USER AGREEMENT)

1. **I'm I required by law to sign this document by August 15th?** No, this application/agreement is not a legal requirement. This form is an application of the user to be provided sanitary sewer service by ARSA once the regional plant and sewer lines are in operation (approximately end of year 2020 or beginning of 2021). The user agreements are being offered now as a way to build properties into the project when it is in construction, so the property owner can have their grinder pump and service line covered within the project costs. The goal was to alleviate as much financial burden as possible to the property owners. This application and agreement will also give permission to ARSA, and its contractor's, to access the property to install the service line and grinder pumps. **This is not an easement – see Section 1, Question 2, of this Sheet**

2. **Why is it required to be returned by August 15th?** ARSA has set the deadline of the 15th based upon the requirements of the funding agencies to have the project bid by October 2018. This allows time for ARSA to account for all new users that would like to be included into the project prior to construction bidding, so contractors will know an exact count of homes they will be required to install within the project when they submit their pricing.

3. **What if I refuse to sign up now for sewer service?** Nothing happens now if you do not sign up; not until the plant is constructed and the line is operational. While there is no legal requirement you sign up now; it will save property owner the cost of the service line and grinder pump if the agreement is signed now prior to the August 15th deadline. For those that do not sign, they may apply for a waiver/exemption according to the Fiscal Court's Mandatory Hookup Ordinance (see ordinance for details) prior to the system being operational. When the regional sewer system goes into operation, property owners that fall within 300 feet of the line that have not already signed to hook on as of that date, and have not been granted a waiver/exemption, will be in violation of the County ordinance and will be required to hook on at that time. Costs associated to hook up at that time will be the responsibility of the property owner.