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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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South Waterliet Drain Project to Start This Week

City addressing other areas of need simultaneously; thousands of dollars saved

Waterliet, MI – The Berrien County Drain Commissioners office has informed the City that the South Waterliet Drain Project (SWDP) will start the week of October 5, 2020. The project will improve the overall drainage network within the drainage district and will also consist of water main and water service improvements. The majority of these infrastructure improvements will take place along West Division Street, Lucinda Lane, Silver Terrace, Summit Drive, South Pleasant Street, and Park Street.

The project was initiated due to the need for drainage improvements within the district. The existing storm sewer infrastructure within this area is significantly undersized, dilapidated, and obsolete. As such, the City filed a petition for maintenance and improvements with the Berrien County Drain Commissioners office to address the growing stress on the initial 1920 course of the drain. In total, the project is estimated to repair or replace 5,700 feet of storm sewer, storm water detention, 3,700 feet of ditching, 1,800 feet of sidewalk and ADA ramps, 1.25 miles of roadway replacement, and restoration within the drainage district.

In addition to storm sewer and roadway improvements, approximately 3,800 feet of water main improvements and associated water service replacements will be included within the project. Included in these improvements are the replacement of undersized water mains as well as mandated water service replacements where lead services or galvanized previously connected to lead services have been identified as mandated by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy (EGLE).

When discussing the project and the innovative approach to maximize the mobilization of equipment, reduce overall engineering costs, and limit inconvenience for the public,

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Watervliet City Manager Tyler Dotson stated that “this project will save tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars as well as several thousands of dollars from our water fund.” He went on to say that “working with the Berrien County Drain Commissioner has allowed us to use one contractor and address maintenance needs in not only our storm sewer system, but our roads, sidewalks, and water system. All in all, this is a huge win for our community and the residents who live within the district. They’ve been dealing with these drainage issues for a while and we’ve really maximized our resources and improvements here.”

In total, the project is estimated to bring nearly \$2.2M worth of infrastructure improvements with the City (municipality) paying nearly \$720K from revenue sharing funds via MDOT’s Act 51 funding program and the City’s sewer fund. Additionally, the City is spending just under \$400K from its water fund to pay for the aforementioned water line/service replacements. Outside of direct City funding, the project is being funded through various assessments to Watervliet Charter Township, Berrien County, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and residents within the drainage district. These assessments were calculated by the Drain Commissioners office.

The project is scheduled to be completed by June 2021 but according to Dotson, the City is actively planning future infrastructure projects using the newly completed City-Wide Asset Management Program (CAMP) and was recently awarded a \$117K grant from the State of Michigan for a project to be completed late next summer on Elm Street.