

A year in review

City of Otterville 2025

Mayor's Comments:

Welcome to December 2025. It feels great to have made it thus far. We wanted to drop in and give you an update on all things City related, as recently it has been brought to our attention that we have not done well at communicating with our residents. We are so excited to see some folks excited and passionate about our small town. It has been a while since we have seen someone that wants to know what is going on and eagerly ask questions. Although, we have noticed that the information they request and then share is a very one-dimensional view. We think it would be better for us to share the entire story, not just a clip of the information. We will be glad to share the ENTIRE truth on the subjects at hand. We want you, as a community, to be aware of all the things within the city office. We hate to see the partial truths that end up leading to misinterpretations. We do want to thank all individuals involved for their dedication to their city to remind us that it is our town and we should fight to ensure it is ran properly and with transparency!

When we first took office, we had the community newsletter to be sure and keep all our stakeholders informed. However, with the ever-rising cost to keep that up we chose to stop publishing it. Please know, if you really want to stay in the know, you should attend board meetings. All city decisions, discussions and information happen during your city council meetings. Since it has been brought to our attention that the public feels misheard or misrepresented, we will work on a solution to bring back the Mayor's Corner. This way we can ensure that everyone is in the loop as to what is happening in a short recap. At this time, we are not sure where or how often we will publish a newsletter. Our thoughts are in the works for the City Facebook page, the city website and handing out quarterly updates through a published newsletter. As you know, government business tends to move rather slowly. Trying to post monthly, there likely would not be much to add. That is why we are leaning towards a quarterly newsletter.

As we have all mostly seen or heard of a recent social media post, the city pays Mid Mo Operators \$5,500 a month to be their water/sewer licensed operator. This is a true statement. What wasn't said was... The City of Otterville has been under Enforcement with "EPA" Environmental Protection Agency since 2021. This caused the City of Otterville's wastewater permit to not be renewed. It wasn't that we had done anything wrong. It was that the new lagoon technology that was installed in 2016 was not approved technology in the state of Missouri. We had a contract with the owners of the technology that if the test results in the

first year didn't meet the Missouri State Standards put in place by EPA and enforced by Missouri DNR "Department of Natural Resources" the contract would be **VOIDED**. Then the owners of the Demonstration Project would have paid for the technology. This should have been turned into them by prior administration, as the clause on the contract was only good for 1 year, the first year. It would have saved the citizens of Otterville **1.2 million dollars** in wastewater treatment bills. At such time, the new technology sewer system went online on November 9, 2016. In our contract with BiO 2 technologies, it states BiO2 Solutions will assume responsibility for the note. If at the end of the 12-month trial period, the system has not met permit compliance numbers, this responsibility will continue permit compliant has been met for 6 consecutive months of operation BiO2 will no longer be responsible for the note. We state this, because we have NEVER had twelve consecutive months, let alone 6 consecutive months of compliance. However, we only had the first 12 months to let them know to take over the responsibilities of the system. According to the EDM report, we failed the following dates of 7/31/17, 9/30/17, 10/31/17, 11/30/17, 12/31/17, 1/31/18. This was all during our twelve months of trail period, since the system went online November 2016.

However, somehow that wasn't done. In 2021, we still were placed in enforcement with DNR/EPA due to the wastewater treatment plant not being compliant with MO and Federal regulations. Once that happened, we took the new demonstration project mechanical plant offline and have been working on just the standard lagoon. It had been increasingly clear that the mechanical plant would never meet DNR requirements. DNR would never allow the plant to come out of the demonstration phase, based on the results it was producing. Now it is important to know that our old permit was a permit from DNR for a mechanical plant. However, our mechanical plant was shut down. So, Mid Mo Operations had to meet almost near impossible limits just off a lagoon. We pulled the EDMR (electronic discharge monitory report) history from 2016 to current. In 2016, we had 9 violations, in 2017 we had 26 violations, in 2018 we had 14 violations, 2019 we had 3 violations, 2020 we had 23 violations, 2021 we had 20 violations, 2022 we had 24 violations, 2023 we had 9 violations, 2024 we had 18 violations and 2025 we had 11 violations. We are not telling you this, because any operator is doing a fantastic job or a horrible job. We are telling you this, because for a LONG time we have had violations with the wastewater treatment plant and we are continuing to fix the long-standing issues.

In fact, as of November 1, 2025, we, the City of Otterville have received our new permit. In this permit we are now back to a LAGOON! Meaning, we now have lagoon limits, but also meaning we no longer require to have a Class C Operator at our wastewater treatment plant. This will be a huge cost saver to the citizens of Otterville, as anyone with a high school diploma or GED can now be our operator. Since we have received the new permit, we have been looking at going towards another route for operations. Our contract is coming up with Mid-Mo and in perfect timing for the board to discuss the future of the lagoon. As stated above, all things in

government move at a much slower pace. However, no worries, it is in the works to no longer have this expense for a Class C wastewater operator. Not that Mid Mo didn't help the City of Otterville out in a great time of need, they did! It is just that the solution we have been working on for 5 years has finally come through and we are almost ready to be self-sufficient again! This is a long-awaited and very exciting thing for the City of Otterville. Not many, if any other operators would have hung their license up, knowing the failure the plant was. Not only did Mid-Mo help the city out being our operator, but they also helped the city transition back to the lagoon with DNR. The city owes many thanks to Mid-Mo and Missouri Rural Water Association for helping guide and navigate the city into the best long-term solution. Using experts in the fields will always be a huge asset for the City of Otterville.

The next topic of truth that we have seen recently. It is true the City of Otterville paid \$97,000 recently to a company to do the Lead Service Line Inventory. It was NOT testing, but it was inventory. By October 14, 2024, we were required to have a report to DNR to tell what was in the ground both on our side of the line as well as the customer side of the line. This is what some people may understand as the result from Flint, Michigan. We applied for a grant from DNR SRF Funding to pay for the lead service line inventory. The City of Otterville was awarded \$122,400.00 to spend on Lead Service Inventory. The city had to pay \$2,600 of that total cost. So, of the \$97,000 that was spent, the customers of Otterville had to pay \$2,600. If we take the \$2,600 divided by 196 homes that comes to \$13.27 that each resident may have paid for Lead Service Inventory. Again, I think the word INVENTORY is important, as you were told it was testing and it WAS NOT! As for the question of bids, yes, they were put out. Yes, the city had to do a request for Proposals, as this was a grant award. There are a lot of hoops we had to jump through. The city, in fact, received 2 proposals. The city chose the company that could be bonded, as the other company that sent a proposal was a brand-new start-up company that was not bonded at the time. Since the city had felt that it had not worked out in their favor in a previous endeavor, they chose to go with the M&M Landscaping LLC. "Bonding is where if a company fails to provide the service they have bid on the bond owner will guarantee compensation. Meaning hold the city not responsible for a job not completed." With the relationship we developed with M&M Landscaping LLC., they even came in to try and help the city out with figuring out the water valves by the tower. This is another great example of neighbors helping neighbors. That's what a small town is all about!

The last thing we need to address is the elephant in the room. We know that the pending Legal case has spent far too much money and has drag on far too long. We also know the ball is not in our hands. This case is a legal matter, so not much can be said. We can just say that this board would love nothing more than for it all to go away. Some of the folks on the board were not even on the board when the case began. However, know that a city only speaks via ordinances, minutes and/or resolutions. A city cannot speak!

“We have paid Mayfield Law \$1,842.50 in regards to the Lawsuit the rest was for other City Business. We have paid Lauber law \$24,074.00 in regards to the Lawsuit the rest was for other City Business. We have paid Strotz \$2,500.00 in regards to the Lawsuit. Hardin’s Cummins was for Payroll and W2 review to ensure the information was correct due to the new clerk at the time having to do it by hand due to an extended period of time with no computer data. MMLC and M&M Landscaping LLC are the same company. If you do a quick google search you will find that MMLC is their DBA. These monies were for Lead Service Inventory from above. Kutak Rock LLP is the handler of the Certificates of Participation for the bonding company that holds the debt for the street and sewer and water tower. If you add the actual totals spent on the lawsuit it comes to a total of \$28,416.50.”

It is important to note that as of today, November 26, 2025, we currently have \$230,345.04. There will still be monthly bills to be paid this month, but that is cash accounts. With the addition to the CD’s that the city has for maintenance, water tower cleaning, sewer replacement and extension and Street savings that is additional \$324,482.84. That is making the Total Assets for the City, as of September 2025 (last banking statements so far received for all accounts this year) as \$563,509.81. 5 years ago the cash that was on hand in all accounts from savings and CD’s to checking accounts on July 1st 2020 was a total of \$266,754.34. As you can see we have improved the net value of total cash assets to the City fairly substantially while continuing to improve the water infrastructure and roads. We are working hard for you to ensure your money is spent well and working towards saving your money to ensure we can continue to improve our city. We spent around \$200,000 in the last 3 years resealing the streets. Maintaining the property is just as important as getting it new in the first place. Kinda like our mom’s used to say, “you just can’t have nice things.” Well, we want to ensure that you do, and you can keep them.

The year 2025 has been a transition for the City of Otterville. We have navigated to have a full city staff. These individuals are working very hard for the community they work for and showing tremendous pride in doing so. We have introduced our new city officer in, Brian Hazlett. This has been a great asset for the city. As of now, we have someone that can enforce our city ordinances. This also serves to ensure we are a safe community for everyone that passes through. He has made some great changes in the police department both for short term and long term. We also introduced, Michael Cannon, as our maintenance man. Michael has come in and is not afraid to get dirty, literally. He has worked hard to correct issues as they have come up, as well as wearing that smile he has. You will never hear him complain, because he is so focused on the job at hand. The last addition we have made is Lexie May, as our new city clerk. She has a solid background as a hardworking and diligent individual. She is very intelligent and drives attention to detail. She was born and raised in Otterville and has a wonderful understanding of the community. She has come into role and really shined as our

face of the city. We truly believe we have built and developed a staff that will continue to flourish for the City of Otterville.

Moving forward, we are now in a positive position looking at future improvements. We have really examined and started to prioritize continual improvements within. We do know we will always have maintenance items come up, but we have larger goals in mind. It has taken years for the city to be in a greatly positive financial situation like it is today. This has been by reducing costs in areas not needed, honing costs and expenditure on day-to-day operations and really being very mindful of our stakeholders' investments. We truly want to see this city continue to invest in its long-term future. After all, we are building the foundation for our next generation's future memories and places to call home. I think a lot of our citizens would agree, Otterville is a great small town to truly thrive and call home.

Again, we are very excited to have folks that wish to be informed and involved. Please feel free to attend our meetings and hear the facts firsthand. Please reach out to the folks that are making decisions for your community and ask them for clarity to ensure they are making decisions for the people whom they live amongst. We look forward to continuing to work for the people of Otterville. This is Your Town and Your Future that we all enjoy. This elected position pays exactly ZERO dollars! We are here, because we love this town and the folks in it. We encourage you to attend the meetings. We encourage you to VOLUNTEER for your community. We encourage everyone to be as engaged as possible, but in a positive light. This community is built on the back of several volunteers. We continue to work hard, smart, and diligent to ensure Otterville has a bright future. After all, this city wouldn't be anything, if people chose to not call Otterville home. To seeing the school light up and all the kids faces on the first day of school, the pool glistening in the hot summer sun, the kids laughing and enjoying the park, the street fair buzzing at full tilt every September, the firetrucks saving the day, all the volunteer organizations within and seeing all the same smiling neighbors day in and day out.... This community is what we all love to call home.

**To everyone taking time to read this, we all here at the City of Otterville,
wish nothing but the best holidays and new year to all our citizens!**