

Falls City water gets new plan

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — Work on the city of Falls City's water master plan update is in full swing and should be completed by October.

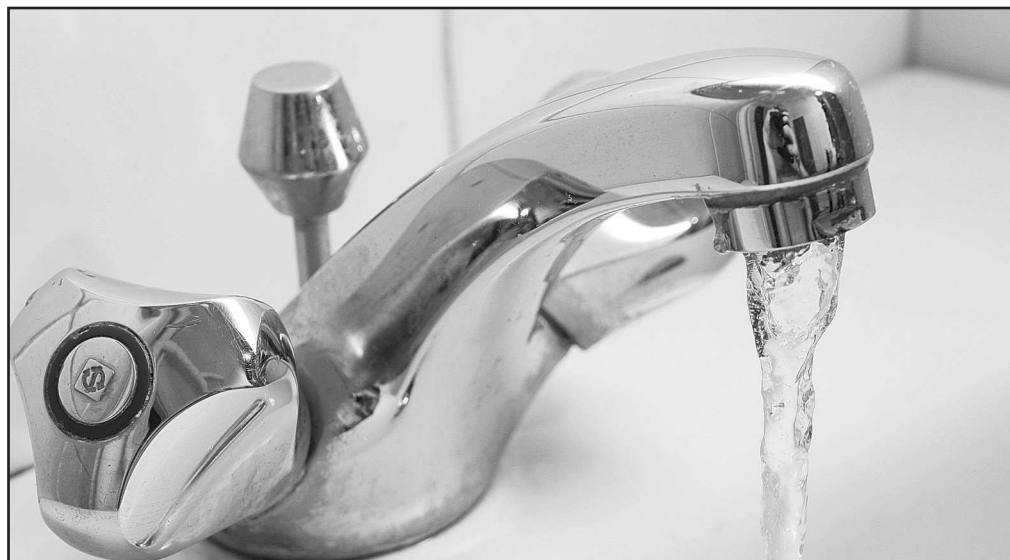
Plan contractor HBH Consulting Engineers of Portland updated the Falls City City Council on its progress at the council's May 12 and June 9 meetings, which included a presentation on priorities for system improvements over the next 20 years.

Among the top priorities (to be completed within 10 years) is adjusting water pressure in certain areas of town. The current pressure range is 13 to 132 PSI (pounds per square inch) and the desired range is 30 to 80 PSI. Natalie Jennings, with HBH, said high pressure can result in water main breaks and other damage to the system.

"Throughout the main part of the town, they are just astronomical," she said at a recent council meeting.

She said the wide range in pressure is due to elevation differences in town. Engineers will suggest possible solutions in the plan.

High pressure compounds another issue within



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The city of Falls City should have an updated water master plan by this fall.

the city's distribution system: brittle pipes.

Jennings said that about 23 percent of the water distribution system is asbestos cement pipe, which has proven troublesome.

"Asbestos cement pipe is an older technology from the 1960s and 70s that is found to be really brittle," she said. "It's causing a lot of the water main breaks in town, especially because the system has really high pressure. In the part of town that has high pressure and brittle pipe you have a really big problem."

The asbestos cement pipe doesn't pose a health risk, according to engineers, but replacing it is a priority for structural reasons.

Other top priorities are improving water pressure for firefighting and upgrading the crossings that carry water over rivers in town.

One thing the city won't have to worry about is having enough storage. Water needs projections for 20 years in the future don't come close to the city's reservoir capacity, Jennings said.

"After talking with the city, we've really pointed out it's

probably the least of your worries. You have plenty of storage up there," she said. "You are already having some problems with disinfection by-products, which is when the water is stored too long, then it creates problems with the chlorine by-products. In order to avoid that, you want to have less storage. You definitely don't want to have more."

The project is costing the city \$48,980.00, with a \$20,000 in a grant from Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority helping to cover that cost.

Couple faces sex abuse charges

By Jolene Guzman
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POLK COUNTY — A Polk County woman has been charged with witness tampering, while her husband faces sex abuse charges, both involving a juvenile female family member.

On June 9, Polk County Sheriff's deputies arrested Tinitale Makalea, 48, on sex abuse charges and violating a "no contact" order with the girl he had previously been accused of abusing sexually.

Upon further investigation, deputies charged his wife, April Makalea, with tampering with a witness on June 16. Police said the investigation revealed April Makalea had knowledge of the alleged sex abuse of the minor female, yet she did not report it. She also told the victim not to disclose the sex abuse to investigators, police said.

April Makalea was taken to the Polk County Jail where her bail was set at \$15,000.

On Jan. 12, Tinitale Makalea was arrested on a charge of third-degree sex abuse after a minor female family member disclosed he

had touched her sexually in September 2015, according to police. Upon posting bail on the charge, Tinitale Makalea was ordered to have no contact with the victim.

In early June, detectives learned Tinitale Makalea was not following that order. With assistance from Dallas Department of Human Services Child Welfare and the Independence police investigators, the girl disclosed additional sexual contact prior to Tinitale Makalea's arrest in January. She also told investigators Tinitale Makalea had been sexually abusing her over a two-month period from March to April 2016 at his new residence about one mile from the her residence in south Polk County, police said.

He was charged with nine counts of second-degree sex abuse, six counts of third-degree sex abuse and violation of the no-contact order. Tinitale Makalea is being held at the Polk County Jail on \$1 million bail.

The investigation is ongoing. Additional victims or anyone with information: Detective John Williams at 503-623-9251.

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