



## DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM

### FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies, and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below.

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please provide them at this time. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Ponca 2021 Water Improvements  
APPLICANT: Ponca, Nebraska  
COUNTY: Dixon County  
POPULATION: 1,062 (2010 census)  
DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: D311632  
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$3,425,000  
ESTIMATED LOAN FORGIVENESS: \$685,000  
ESTIMATED DWSRF LOAN AMOUNT: \$2,740,000

The City of Ponca, Nebraska has applied for funding for the above-referenced project through the DWSRF program administered by the NDEE. This project is included on the Priority List in the DWSRF State Fiscal Year 2021 Intended Use Plan (IUP) with 70 priority points. DWSRF loan financing is available for a term up to 30 years and at an interest rate of 0% per annum plus 0% annual administrative fee on the outstanding principal balance.

The City of Ponca is located in Dixon County. The City has planned to replace aging water main at various points throughout the City. Additionally, the above-ground water storage tank in Ponca has been noted to need repair for many years. Ponca has proposed to build a new water tower at a high point in the City and demolish the old water storage tank. The water main replacement in this project involves replacing aged water mains with lead and okum joints, eliminating open water loops, replacing lead service lines, and increasing the sizing of water main to provide additional water volume.

According to the American Community Survey 5-year Data (2014-2018), the current population of Ponca is 961 and the average median household income is \$54,063. The population has decreased by approximately 9.51% since 2010 when the population of the City was 1,062.

Based on criteria in the IUP, the City's population, and the City's median household income, it has been determined that Ponca is eligible for 20% loan forgiveness through the DWSRF program, which equals \$685,000 in loan forgiveness.

Water use fees would be pledged to repay the loan. The current residential water rate is \$21.00 per month plus an additional \$1.75/month per thousand gallons for the first 100,000 gallons of water use. Using a general expected 5,000 gallons/month winter usage rate, the average monthly user rate is calculated to be around \$29.75 per user per month. For a 30-year loan with principal equaling \$2,740,000, the expected annual debt service, including an additional 10% debt service coverage would be \$100,467. Based on 467 active service connections, residential water rates may need to be raised approximately an additional \$17.93 per month to address the new debt service. This would create an average monthly user charge of \$47.68 per user.

The City's consulting engineer sent out requests for comments to related state and federal agencies on September 27, 2021. The City received one response. The Aeronautics Division of the Nebraska Department of Transportation determined that the proposed water tower would not affect any flight paths to local airports. The City also held a public hearing regarding the project on September 27, 2021, providing 41 days of notice prior to the meeting. No comments were made by the public at the hearing.

The City has a permit to operate a public water system under the provisions of the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act and the Regulations Governing Public Water Supply Systems, Title 179. The system last underwent a routine sanitary survey by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in December of 2019, wherein five deficiencies were noted, and were addressed. That completed survey is the first step of the Technical, Financial, and Managerial (TFM) program policy. The system will still be required to undergo an initial, and if necessary, a final TFM assessment by the NDEE, to ensure that their capabilities meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Their Enforcement Targeting Tool score is 0, well below the allowable 11 per DWSRF guidance.

The proposed project's environmental impact will be positive, as replacing aged infrastructure will help the public water system maintain compliance and result in more efficient water transmission and less water loss. No significant environmental impacts have been identified that would result from the proposed action. All necessary permits for construction will be obtained from the appropriate agencies (i.e., NDEE, etc.) if necessary. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

This action is taken on the basis of careful review of the facility plan, the environmental assessment, and other supporting data, which are on file in the office of the NDEE. These are available for public review upon request. A copy of the environmental assessment is attached. The NDEE will not take any administrative action on the project for at least 30 calendar days from the date signed. Persons having a comment on this determination are encouraged to submit directly to Andrew Klescewski of the NDEE by email at [andrew.klescewski@nebraska.gov](mailto:andrew.klescewski@nebraska.gov) or by phone at (402) 471-4260, or John Danforth by email at [john.r.danforth@nebraska.gov](mailto:john.r.danforth@nebraska.gov) or by phone at (402) 471-3373 during this period.

Signed this day of 24 November, 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Macy", written over the printed name and title.

Jim Macy  
Director

JM/amk

Attachments: Environmental Assessment  
Distribution List  
Maps

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

### A. Project Identification:

**Applicant:** City of Ponca      **Project No.** D311632  
**Community:** Ponca      **County:** Dixon County      **State:** Nebraska  
**Total Project Amount:** \$3,425,000  
**SRF Loan Funds:** \$2,740,000      **Forgiveness:** \$685,000

### B. Community Description:

**Location:** The City of Ponca is located in Dixon County.

**Location and Population:** The 2010 census showed a 9.5% decrease in population from 2000 to 2010. A population of 961 is estimated.

**Current Water System Facilities:** Water is pumped from two wells in the city and blended prior to distribution. City distribution infrastructure is primarily PVC water main. The water storage facility for the water system consists of a 200,000 gallon above-ground water storage tank.

### C. Project Description

#### Purpose:

**Type:** The City of Ponca plans to replace an aging water storage tank with a new water tower. In addition, Ponca plans to replace some cast iron water main with leaded joints and lay new PVC water main, as well as increase the size of some water main where lower-diameter water main has caused volume issues for residents.

**Design Factors:** The design criteria for the water system are based on the following parameters as set out as part of the original municipal water system design:

Projected Population	961 people
Domestic Water Ave Flow	200 gallons/capita/day
Peaking Factor Formula	1.4
Ave Flow	0.192 MGD
Peak Flow	0.269 MGD

**D. Alternatives Considered:** As part of the engineering report, performing additional tank maintenance and relocating the tank were considered as alternatives.

**Reasons for Selection of Proposed Alternative:** Constructing a new elevated tank was chosen because of the longer lifespan and improvement to overall system pressure in Ponca.

### E. Environmental Impact Summary:

#### 1. Primary

**a. Construction:** No significant impact is expected. Noise and air pollution typically associated with earthwork construction will occur during work hours. Minor soil erosion and vegetation losses will occur during construction. No burning, blasting, herbicides, or defoliants will be permitted in clearing of

the site.

**b. Environmental:** Any negative impact due to disturbing of the existing landform will be temporary. A construction storm water runoff permit and related erosion control provisions will be required by NDEE for this project because more than one acre of land will be disturbed.

**c. Financial:** The City will obligate revenues of the water system towards repayment of the proposed DWSRF Loan. The current water use fees are \$21.00 fixed charge plus \$1.75 per 1,000 gallons of use for the first 100,000 gallons of water use. Using a general expected 5,000 gallons/month winter usage rate, the average monthly user rate is calculated to be around \$29.75 per user per month. For a 30-year loan with principal equaling \$2,740,000, the expected annual debt service, including an additional 10% debt service coverage would be \$100,467. Based on 467 active service connections, residential water rates may need to be raised approximately an additional \$17.93 per month to address the new debt service. This would create an average monthly user charge of \$47.68 per user.

## **2. Secondary**

**a. Population Impacts:** More efficient water distribution could accommodate increases in population, if necessary.

**b. Land Use and Trends:** The area is zoned for a mixture of residential and commercial mixed use.

**c. Environmental:** Filling in Waters of the US is not expected. All expected impacts to Waters of the US will be permitted under the Clean Water Act, Section 404 Nationwide Permit. The National Wetland Inventory, as provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shows that no mapped wetlands are in the proposed project sites or in the City of Ponca.

The City is bordered by the Missouri River to the North and the Aowa Creek to the South. The City participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). If any water mains are placed in an existing floodplain or floodway, they will meet the "Minimum Standards for Floodplain Management Programs" as prescribed by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

Three locations within the City are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. None of these properties are expected to be disturbed by the water main improvement project. In addition, there are no known significant archaeological properties within the City.

**3. Mitigation measures necessary to eliminate adverse environmental effect:** A requirement to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act will be included in the project specifications. To avoid, the City may restrict tree clearing activities inside of the Northern long-eared bat (NLEB) pup season from June 1 through July 31 as recommended by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and thereby avoid impacting the NLEB.

**4. Irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources:** Resource commitment will be minor in construction materials and energy use to build and operate a distribution system and water tower. Change in land use at the water tower site is expected.

## **F. Measure Taken to Insure Environmental Soundness:**

**1. Public Involvement:** A public hearing was held on September 27, 2021, having the required 30-day advertised notice.

2. **Public Opposition or Opinions:** No public opposition was provided at the September 27, 2021, public hearing.

3. **Coordination and Documentation with Other Agencies and Special Interest Groups**

a. **Preliminary Engineering Report for the Ponca, Nebraska Water System,** March 2007, prepared by JEO Consulting Group Inc.

b. **Federal:**

1. **None**

c. **State:**

1. **Nebraska Department of Transportation,** October 29, 2021, e-mail

d. **Consulting Engineers:** Veenstra & Kimm, Inc., Sergeant Bluff, IA

e. **Public Groups:** None

**G. Positive Environmental Effects to be Realized from the Proposed Project:** Removal of lead jointing and lead service lines will eliminate the possibility of lead infiltrating the drinking water system. Additionally, upgrading the City's water system will result in better service pressures.

**H. Reasons for Concluding there will be no Significant Impacts:** No expected adverse impacts will occur on wetlands, floodplain, or recorded historical resources. Provisions included in the construction contract will protect nesting migratory birds.

Anders M. Klein Reviewing NDEE Engineer 11/24/21 Date

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DISTRIBUTION LIST

### PONCA, NEBRASKA

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#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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Mail Code: WWPDWIMB  
Lenexa, KS 66219

#### STATE CONSERVATIONIST

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
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#### DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

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State Program Manager  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
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#### APPLICANT

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City of Ponca  
123 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Ponca, NE 68770

#### ENGINEER

Chad Kehrt, P.E.  
Veenstra & Kimm, Inc.  
P.O. Box 220  
Sergeant Bluff, IA, 51054

#### LOCAL NEWSPAPER

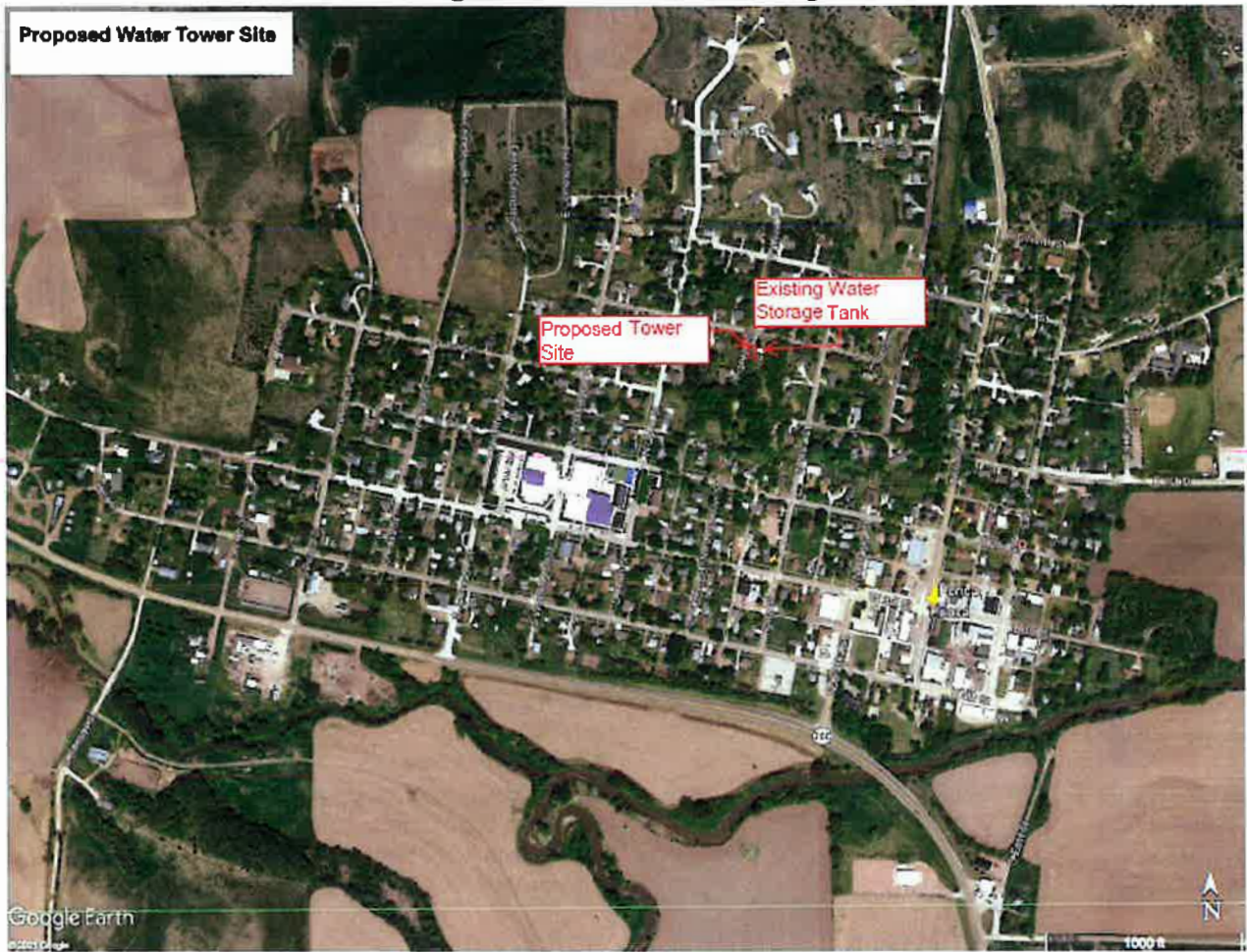
Nebraska Journal-Leader  
110 East Street  
Ponca, NE 68770  
(Public Information Only not for Public Notice)

#### LEWIS & CLARK NRD

Curtis Armstrong  
608 N. Robinson Avenue  
P.O. Box 518  
Harrington, NE 68739



**Figure 1: Water Tower Siting**





**Figure 2: Water Main Replacements**

