

Springdale Water and Sewer Commission approves requests aimed at fixing more water leaks

Official says water losses costing about \$200,000 per month

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by [Tom Sissom](#)



SPRINGDALE -- Springdale Water Utilities officials said Tuesday they are finding new leaks almost as fast as they can patch old ones, but they have a plan to get the problem under control.

"We've had a tremendous number of leaks in our community," Heath Ward, executive director of the Water Utilities, told the members of the Water and Sewer Commission at a meeting Tuesday morning. "This isn't new. This is a problem we've been wrestling with for several months if not years."

Ward told the members of the commission a large percentage of the leaks are being found in areas where polyethylene pipes were commonly installed in residential subdivisions in the 1990s and early 2000s. He said that over time, it has been found that the plastic pipes are more prone to degradation and failure than was previously believed. Ward said Springdale adopted a policy of not allowing polyethylene pipes in 2015. Some research into the use of the plastic pipes indicates that chlorine in the water leads to degradation of the pipes, Ward said.

"In some cases, entire subdivisions have had mass failures," Ward said.

Ward and Rick Pulvirenti, chief operating officer and director of engineering for the Water Utilities, said the Water Utilities has a \$500,000 contract with the Seven Valleys Construction Co. to repair leaks, but the company hasn't been able to reduce the number of leaks in a timely manner. Water Utilities records indicate as much as 10% of the water purchased from the Beaver Water District is "lost" and while that is not an excessive loss rate, it is still costly.

"It's in the range of \$200,000 a month," Pulvirenti told the commission.

Pulvirenti said the Water Utilities had between 150 and 160 reported leaks when Seven Valleys Construction began working. He said the company has repaired around 145 leaks in eight months, but new leaks have caused the number of reported leaks still needing to be repaired to remain high.

"We're still sitting at around 120 reported leaks," Ward said.

Ward and Pulvirenti told the commissioners they wanted to extend the contract with Seven Valleys Construction, adding another \$250,000 to the original \$500,000, so the company can continue working to repair reported leaks. They also said they wanted commission approval to form a new

dedicated leak detection and repair crew to further reduce the number of leaks. The commission approved both requests.

Ward told the commission the Water Utilities may have to replace the plastic service lines in entire subdivisions completely to get the problems of new or recurring leaks under control in those areas. He said the Water Utilities is using copper pipes to replace the plastic pipes and the replacement does not cost the individual customers anything.