

## Springfield reviews water meter replacement

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SPRINGFIELD — Although an advanced water meter system could cost Springfield \$1.5 million, the city would hope to make back any investment by saving \$17,000 in water costs each month.

Springfield city commissioners heard a presentation from Dan Devane of Zenner USA, a company that sells water meters, on Monday. Devane suggested a fixed base system, which would send meter readings electronically directly to City Hall. Along with meters, the city also would be responsible for the monthly cost of a software system, possibly \$1,200. However, the city would be saving on fuel costs because employees read each of the city's between 5,500 and 6,000 meters manually. Devane's argument is that those employees could put to better use performing other tasks.

"They bend down 350 times a day, 10 hours a day, they feel it," City Clerk Lee Penton said.

Penton added, as Mayor Ralph Hammond has pointed out, that the meters the city is currently using are over 10 years old, well past a normal water meter expiration date. Penton suspects this accounts for a majority of the city's water loss, which averages at 28 percent of the city's total water and has been as high as 42 percent.

"We want to get that under 10 percent," Devane said.

A new system would also help detect where other losses occur. The data available should allow the city to see leaks as they are happening, saving residents costs and headaches.

The city has already received one grant from the Northwest Florida Water Management District for \$499,000 it plans to use on meters. Hammond said the city also has received interest from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.