



MEMO

To: Whom it May Concern

From: William Hunter, Director of Public Works

Date: January 20, 2026

RE: Brick Haus Basement Water Investigation and DPW Response

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to document the Department of Public Works' response to reports of water in the basement of the Brick Haus, outline the investigative actions taken by staff, and clarify the circumstances surrounding the eventual discovery of a failed water service elsewhere on Division Street. This memo is also intended to address inaccurate public commentary suggesting that DPW failed to adequately respond to or investigate the issue.

Timeline of Events and DPW Actions

December 9, 2025

The Village of Sparta received a complaint from the Brick Haus regarding water in their basement. A DPW staff member was dispatched to investigate. Staff identified a plugged floor drain that received discharge from condensation lines. The drain was cleared, and DPW staff assisted the Brick Haus maintenance representative in removing the water using a shop vacuum. Based on site conditions, both parties believed the water intrusion was caused by condensation lines discharging into the plugged drain.

December 16, 2025

DPW received a follow-up call from the property owner, who indicated that water was again present in the basement. I advised that DPW could respond the following day to collect a fluoride sample. Due to the limited amount of water observed, both the property owner and I agreed that the situation did not constitute an emergency.

December 17, 2025

DPW staff collected water samples from the Brick Haus basement to test for total chlorine residual and fluoride concentration. Sample collection was difficult due to the extremely low water volume. Results were as follows:

- Total chlorine residual: 1.05 mg/L
- Fluoride: 0.42 mg/L

The presence of fluoride confirmed that the water on the basement floor was treated Village water. However, the low residuals and lack of measurable free chlorine did not identify the source of the water. At that time, potential sources included internal plumbing, discharge to a drain or drain tile, or another unidentified source.

As part of standard water distribution investigative practices, DPW staff listened to curb stops and water services upstream and downstream of the Brick Haus property. I personally used a stethoscope to listen for leak noise. No evidence of leakage was detected at the Brick Haus service or at neighboring services.

December 22, 2025

Village Manager and I met with the property owner regarding the Dollar General sewer lateral. At the conclusion of that meeting, I provided an update on the Brick Haus water investigation. I explained the test results, the steps taken by DPW, and the limitations in identifying a leak when no water is surfacing and no pressure loss is evident. I further explained that, absent surfacing water, it is neither practical nor reasonable to excavate multiple services to search for a potential leak. The property owner acknowledged this explanation and agreed that no definitive conclusion could be made at that time.

January 13, 2026

DPW received a report of a water main break on Division Street. The roadway was closed, and Dan's Excavating was contacted to assist with the repair. Upon excavation, the issue was identified as a failed water service to Trini's Restaurant, located on the south side of Division Street. The service was isolated and repaired.

Visual inspection of the failed service line revealed three pinhole leaks. The exact cause of the pinholes is unknown. While the bedding material appeared to be Class II fill, no material testing was conducted; therefore, no conclusions can be made regarding bedding conditions or causation.

Clarification of Public Commentary

I am aware of comments made on a public social media platform suggesting that the Sparta DPW did not adequately respond to or investigate the Brick Haus concerns. These statements are inaccurate.

The record demonstrates that DPW:

- Responded promptly to all complaints
- Conducted on-site investigations
- Performed chlorine and fluoride testing
- Inspected water services using accepted industry practices
- Communicated findings clearly and repeatedly to Mr. Knauf

At no point during the investigation was there evidence that allowed DPW to conclusively identify a water service or main leak at or near the Brick Haus. All actions taken were reasonable, appropriate, and consistent with standard water distribution practices.

Conclusion

The Sparta DPW team acted professionally, diligently, and in good faith throughout this situation. All reasonable investigative steps were taken, given the conditions at the time. This memorandum is intended to clearly document DPW's actions and ensure the Village has an accurate and complete record of events.

Please let me know if additional documentation or follow-up is needed.



