

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS**  
**Tuesday December 27, 2022**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Public Works held on December 27, 2022 at 7:30 a.m. in the City Council Chambers located at 405 Jefferson Street, Washington, Missouri. The following were present/absent:

**MEMBERS:**

Chairman	John Vietmeier	Present
Vice Chairman	Brad Mitchell	Present
Secretary	Mike Radetic	Present
Member	Steve Richardson	Present
Ex-officio Member	Steve Strubberg	Absent
Ex-officio Member	Vacant	

**OTHERS:**

Council Representative	Mike Coulter	Present
Council Representative	Duane Reed	Absent
Mayor	James Hagedorn	Present
City Administrator	Darren Lamb	Absent
Public Works Director	John Nilges	Present
Public Works Superintendent	Kevin Quaethem	Present
Water/Wastewater Admin. Asst.	Sarah Skeen	Present
Assistant City Engineer	Andrea Lueken	Absent
Waste Water Foreman	Kerry Duke	Present
Water Foreman	Dylan Voss	Absent

**Originals and/or copies of agenda items of the meeting, including recorded votes are available on record in the office of the Public Works Department for one year. Video/DVD and audio tapes are kept only until the minutes have been approved for the meeting. DVD copies of this meeting are distributed to Board Members if requested.**

**Minutes**

A motion made by Mr. Richardson and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held November 22, 2022 meeting. The motion passed without dissent.

## Priority Items

None

## Wastewater

This is a proposal and a request to approve to move forward. Our West 5<sup>th</sup> Street Lift Station across from West 5<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary. We have a complete failure of that lift station. It has decided to blow up the pumps and the wiring. It has completely failed so we have to replace it. Right now we have a bypass pump system set out there. We went out for bids and we got a bid from the Pump Shop and from Vandevanter. Vandevanter's price is higher because they chose to put in replacing all the check valves and everything. I contacted them and told them that we weren't going to do that and they said they were going to go with what we've got. Another case of them being so busy. Pump Shop has done some work with us before but they came in with the other bid. The only two bids we got, so we are going to have to go with the Pump Shop. Going with the Pump Shop gives us a little bit of a lead way because right now we have one pump in there that was rebuilt and we tried to use that as a bypass but when we hooked it up it took out the rest of the control panel. It is just old and antiquated stuff. This new pump will last us 20 years. It's a small station and picks up West 5<sup>th</sup> street schools, bars, furniture, and 4 or 5 houses on 5<sup>th</sup> street. There is no way to convert this to gravity so it's going to be with us forever. Vandevanter included a whole new vaulting system which included two check valves, two valves. The expected life of what we have now should last just about as long as the system. That's not what wears out so bad, it is the electrical and the pumping. We can rebuild the valves, it is really just a flap and a seal. The \$50,000 difference is because it had to have the vault to come along with it. It basically took the whole station and redesigned the whole station. With the way things are going right now, I didn't think it was prudent to do a complete rebuilt when we can still work with what we got. As long as we can still get the parts we need for everything we got in there, we are fine.

A motion to accept the bid from the Pump Shop was made by Mr. Richardson and seconded by Mr. Radetic. The motion passed without dissent.

A Cogent pay request for the SCADA programming for the West End Lift Station that was not part of the actual construction of the Lift Station. They forgot to bill us for this, and they came across this. We are bringing all of our lift stations into the SCADA system so that we can look at our phones or laptops to know what's running or not running. It was adding features into the SCADA system that wasn't there currently and the wiring in the station to bring it into the SCADA system. This wasn't in the base bid but it was part of the original project. It was a separate invoice that should have went out.

A motion to pay Cogent in the amount of \$6,318.00 was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Radetic. The motion passed without dissent.

A COE Equipment pay request for the camera trailer. I will get a video for you to see while it is in operation. This is the equipment that gives us the ability to get into a 6" line and do lateral launching like we do with our 8" line. We used it over on Elm Street at the Dutch (Hotel) and 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The new camera has a pan and tilt head on it. We were able to get into the service lateral and we were able to pan and tilt to see what the problem is. We saw some stuff that we think caused the problem but at least the property owner know what they have to work with when they start digging. It looks like two pieces of telecommunications conduit. It is also going to be used

for the inspections for our cost sharing program with Engineering; we can now go out into the service lateral and verify what is wrong and be able to see if we have any illegal connections in the service lateral after the house. We've seen it before, we seen some lines coming in and we don't know if they are capped off. We can look and see if they are in-service and if they are functional. Often times, it is downspouts attached to the service lateral. Which is an I&I (inflow and infiltration) issue, it generates more flow into the lift stations and the treatment plant and more cost of operations. Most of it is from 5<sup>th</sup> Street down to Front Street. When you see downspouts that goes under ground and they don't come out anywhere and you know where they are going. (The camera) is a great investment to be able to see into a 6" line, that we have never been able to get into and look at service laterals. The original bid came with a new controller that they thought that we would need but we were able to make it work with the controller that we got. We were able to save just under \$10,000 by utilizing what we already had.

A motion to pay COE in the amount of \$70,781.36 was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Radetic. The motion passed without dissent.

### Water

I decided that I would start adding some of the supplies for you guys to see what we are ordering, when we are ordering and how much it costs. This is just an fyi, discussion, information on what we are purchasing to keep the system running. We usually wait but due to the nature of delivery and availability, we are now moving into a "use a part, order a part" because we noticed that when we make a big mass order, we may get five of what we ordered and seven are on back order and we are sitting and waiting for them to come in. We don't want to get into a situation where we are stuck without a part because we waited too long. Valves can take anywhere from 2-10 weeks. If we need a part right away, we don't go out for bids. With the cost of valves, I always like to try to get the best I can. They can cost \$600 - \$1200 depending on what valve you are getting. If we need one in an emergency, we will run over to Boehmer Brothers because they are just over in Foristell. That is one of my jobs is to spend the city's money as wisely as I can. If we not in an emergency, I don't see any sense in just going over to Boehmer Brothers just because they are quick.

**Is there any benefit to ordering more than one at a time?** There is always that benefit, we use to have valves sitting on the shelf but because of the cost of them now, the last time we ordered 12-inch valves, they have gone up over 200% in cost. If we got a project, we will go out for bids. Most of the time, we may have one valve go out in a year and we just need to cut in a new one. We use to be a supply house for people but we too are having the same problem getting material. We do an inventory every year, so we have our history of inventory. All of our meters we buy as much as we can when we can get it. They are hard to get. We usually stock 40-50 feet of 6" and maybe 40 feet of 8". You don't want to have pipes sitting out in the sun too much, because they will break down. We been cutting our stock on our valves back, we usually try to keep two valves of everything. I would love to be back to 4 years ago when I knew I could do a bulk of everything we needed and not have the pain of the price when it comes in. We try to do what we can with the supplies we have. Just about everything we order, we are lucky to get anybody that says we have everything you need. We've got some bidders, that if you do an MJ or a cast bid, which is your valves, T's, or 90's, and we put stainless in the bid, which are the repair sleeves, that bidder won't even bid because they can't compete with the stainless. We have to break the bids out into two pieces so that we can make it fair for everybody that could bid. We break out our mechanical fittings to our stainless repair fittings. Before we just sent it out to everybody and now we are getting "we are not going to bid on it, because we can not compete" and then they just don't bid

on any of it. Boehmer Brothers is usually one of our lowest bidders on our mechanical joints. We want them there because they do help out.

**Were there ever conversations with the water district or another municipality to purchase together?** We have never done the big bulk across the board, but everybody's plans are so different on what we are going to be doing but we all help each other out. If Union needed something, and they call and we have it, they can use it. We do that with the local contractors too. If they need something from us, and we have an extra one, we will let them use it; they reorder and get it back to us. In the same token, if we need something and they have it, we can use it. The volume bidding will help with pricing too because the more you order you do get a better deal. The district is a little different because that is Alliance, and they are for profit so they are a little different than what we are. I could open up conversations with New Haven and Union. John would have to be involved in it because he is my boss and I am sure we would have to talk to legal about it just to make sure that it is something that could be done but it is a good idea.

### Other

The plant is functioning good. We got our new set of lamps are in, they are not in because we don't put them in now, but they are in house and in their carriers and are ready to go. Still have our same low readings. As I get them, I am always a month behind. I am going to wait a few months and then I am going to bring them in again; the numbers are really not changing a lot. We will go through the winter and see how the winter does and then we will have a full summer to see what the differences are.

**What can the city do or not do, if I own a property and the tenant is not paying and the water gets shut off but the tenant turns the water back on?** We are dealing with one of them right now. We go back and shut it off. This particular property owner put cameras on his house. We do have the ability to bring litigation against them. **Do we have the ability to lock or disable the meter?** Our apartment complexes – yes we can lock out the valves outside of the meter. Residential homes, since our valves are down in a hole in the curb stop; there is not a lot out there that gives us the ability to lock those out. There is a certain tool that if anyone is a mechanic knows what size tool that is to get on and how to open that up. Our local supply stores sell the curb stop wrench for plumbers that anyone can go buy. They make a plug that you can put down into the curbstop, but all they have to do a rod and jam it all the way in and then you can't get it turned back on or turned off and then we have to dig it up because we are responsible for the curbstop. **The curb stops belong to us, right? Can't you arrest them for trespassing?** A lot of it plays into, do you have evidence that they did it. We try to make it as inconvenient as we can. We do have the new meters so if the owner of rental property would like to absorb the cost of the electronic ones that we can turn off electronically. We have two in the system right now, one that we put in to a business we have never been able to find the curb stop, and the group was notorious for not paying their payment but when we put that in there and then shut them off, it is amazing how now they pay their bill. The electronic one, if we turn it off and they mess with it, it stays off. They can cut the wire; they can do whatever they want. They can pull the meter out and put straight pipes in; it throws out an alarm that says empty pipe so we know there is no water in the meter. **What is the cost for one of these meters?** They cost \$420. That is for the material. We have never charged labor to do anything with the meters. We have to have an appointment and make sure that the person is not there. There is a process we have to go through.

**Some time back we started working with the customers and getting them on the electronic payments to eliminate shut offs. We don't hear anything about that anymore.** We have about 80 a month now compared to 400-600 we use to have. So it has gotten a lot better but we still have our frequent flyers. We turn them off and then they come in and pay up to current and the on/off fee. It's gotten a lot better. **Obviously, it cost us money to send someone out there to turn it off and then they come in, pay it, and then send someone back out to turn it on. At some point, we should just put the electronic meter and you can shut it off sitting at your desk.** We did increase the turn on fee, from \$25-\$50, because we realized our man-hours weren't making any sense. We did double that as a way to offset that. **I would strongly consider putting in the electronic meter for people that are frequent flyers.** As long as we can get an appointment with them. A lot of them are homeowners. We have a code that says that we can do that. **It seems to me that over time, if you go back to the same spot, those individuals can be doing something else.** I do have to say that it is a lot quicker to get them off and on because we have been there so much, the valve works really good. Ideally, I would like to have enough of those meters to be able to do all of that but right now the meters are limited, we only have a certain amount so I keep them for the really bad ones. The units that have only one curb stop and you have an A and a B. A pays really well and B doesn't because they know can't be shut off because they know the situation of the house. Those are the kinds that I have been pushing more. It is a lot cheaper for that property owner to invest the \$420 into that meter, instead of the \$2500 to put in another curb stop or the aggravation of putting it in their own name. A lot of the landlords, they don't want them in their name because they want those inspections. If you put it in their name, then they don't have to do an inspection anymore. They are supposed to but because there is no trigger, they don't get it inspected. The ones that are on there all the time, they are not really our problem because it is so easy to get them turned on and off. There are maybe 10 that are the same ones. It is not like it is the same 80 that are on the list. That number floats. The same ones that are on there that we know are multi units that have the same curb stop. There are your three options, which one do you want to do? Probably at least half of them put it in their own name and the other ones, the bill gets paid. It becomes and non-problem and we move on to something else. John, to answer your question, you would like to know how many people are on the payment plan? I can check on that, we only had one or two the way it was scheduled last time, it just didn't make any sense. Since we revamped it, I can get you that number. I will have to get with Finance on that.

**For the ones that we are shutting off do we offer that payment plan?** That is supposed to be offered at the time of payment, at the counter, to get into those arrangements. We are finding that the credit card fees are continuing to increase. A lot of people are putting it on a credit card. They get shut off and they pay on a credit card. **Do we charge a 3 or 4% fee?** No we don't, we chose not to. With the increase of the \$50 fee, and we are getting our payment. This has been going on for a few years now. We get the payment but we absorb the fee.

### **Old Business**

Mr. Richardson will be gone for two or three months. Mr. Strubberg will move over as a voting member of the board in Steve Richardson's absence. A motion to accept the proposal was made by Vietmeier and seconded by Mr. Radetic. The motion passed without dissent.

**Next Scheduled Meeting Date**

The next scheduled meeting date is Tuesday January 24, 2023.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned on a motion by Mr. Vietmeier and seconded by Mr. Richardson. All in favor aye, those oppose, none. We are adjourned.

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Prepared by: Sarah Skeen  
Sarah Skeen  
Water/Wastewater  
Administrative Assistant

Adopted and Approved by the Board of Public Works:

Date: January 24, 2023      Signature: [Handwritten Signature]  
Secretary