

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

Tuesday October 17, 2023

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Public Works held on October 17, 2023 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	Chad Briggs	Absent
Mayor	James Hagedorn	Present
City Administrator	Darren Lamb	Absent
Public Works Superintendent	Kevin Quaethem	Present
Water/Wastewater Admin. Asst.	Theresa Lamke	Present
Interim City Engineer	Charles Stankovic	Present
Assistant City Engineer	Andrea Lueken	Absent
Waste Water Foreman	Kerry Duke	Present
Water Foreman	Dylan Voss	Present
GIS Engineering	Sarah Skeen	Present

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. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held September 26, 2023 meeting. The motion passed without dissent.

Priority Items

You all may notice sitting to your left is a new person; that'll be Theresa Lamke, she is taking over for Sarah, who has moved to the planning position, GIS position at City Hall. Theresa will be our new, well, she's not new, she is our current utility billing clerk out of City Hall; she's moved out to public work. She will be utility billing clerk/administrative assistant for the water and wastewater departments, taking on both roles. Some of the stuff that Sarah did has been transferred over to Martie, my clerk, and she's handling some of it. Theresa will pick up the rest, and Theresa will continue as utility billing. What that gives us, is the ability to bring somebody that has a ton of city experience that's been dealing with water and wastewater. How many years now? 28. There you go. 28 years. So we're not losing that, as she just has been moved out to public works in the water, where she should be, because we are water and wastewater 99% of her job was water and wastewater through utility billing.

Any of the concerns from residents will now be directed out to public works, where they should be. That way, we can handle it all at one time rather than the way it is now. They come into City hall, they go up to the counter, they start there with their complaint or their problem, then it gets transferred to Theresa; then it's either a phone call or an email, so it's just going to make it so much easier and more streamlined to process. Not that we have that many. I'm not saying we have a lot of complaints, but when we do have those ones, it's usually the worst complaints you can get. So that's where they need to be handled anyway. So Theresa, she is taking over for Sarah, and she will be running Sarah's part of the meetings here shortly by herself.

Wastewater

We've got a bill from Vandevanter for \$3,413.75. **Tell us about that Kevin.** Yes. This is some work at the treatment plant for one of our VFDs down there. Some of the stuff that we do on a monthly, sometimes weekly or biweekly basis. I'm just asking your approval to pay for it, and we'll move on. A motion made by Mr. Radetic and seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve payment to Vandevanter in the amount of \$3,413.75. The motion passed without dissent.

It looks like from going through this, that there's a problem with the mixer. Is that going to be something we're going to have to address in the future? We're working on that right now. Our mixers are going out. We've already replaced one. We have three more to go. But the plant is, what, 14 years old? So it's just equipment that is just eventually breaking down. And you'll probably have the pay request for that one. A lot of these smaller things that were day to day operations, I kind of was just running through and paying and getting done. But I'm going to start bringing these to you guys so you guys can actually see, get a lot better feel for what's actually going on.

That makes a difference because we talk about all the expenses, and we see the big ones. But you don't see the small ones. And if it gets to a point where you guys just say, okay "we've seen enough" we don't need to see them, just let me know. But I kind of want you guys to start seeing some of what's going on out there.

Next item is a sewer line improvement on Fair Street. What we've got over there is we have four addresses that, for whatever reason, back when they were built, the builder or whoever did that, I hate to say it, but the city allowed them to hook four houses on one four inch, service lateral. What we have now is a situation at the very first house on top of the hill that has a cleanout, something happens, it gets plugged up. More than likely we could assume it's rags, because that's what we seem to find all over the place. It's plugging up that four inch line somewhere in that run it's about 200 foot run of four inch. The sewage comes out of the top, cleanout runs down the curb into the creek, runs into the creek, runs down to the Missouri river receiving streams. Well, every creek in Washington is what the DNR considers a receiving stream; as soon as that happens, we're in violation of allowing sewage to be discharged onto the city streets. On the wastewater side, but also on the MS4 side.

We have got to fix it. The thing is, I'm bringing this to you guys because we could have just went out there and put a new line in, but this is something I've talked to Charles about; we have always been on the stand of, well, it's a combined service lateral, we don't do anything about it. This is a completely different situation than a whole lot of the other situations that are out there. I think, as the wastewater department, it falls on our responsibility to correct this problem, because it's in a city street, on city right away, city easement and everything else. It's not in like four people's backyards where there's no easements, street, four inches right behind the curb. We have the ability to run 200 foot set of manhole and have fall and flow and everything that should have been done originally, it wasn't done.

And the reality of it is, at some point, I would suspect that one of our inspectors allowed it to go through at the beginning?

At some point, exactly. I look at it as if it kind of falls on us to repair. Because the city we do very good at catching all of this stuff now. But in the past, as we can see, it didn't happen. I'm not pointing fingers, I'm not judging anybody. It just happened. We have to fix it. And the other thing is, now it's so easy for residents and they have the right to do it, to go on DNR's website and actually file a complaint via their website. We don't want to have that start happening to us. It's going to run right around \$5,000 to do it. We'll do it in house. Our crews will do it and then we will reconnect the service laterals to the new existing main, their house is their responsibility. That's what this letter is all about. A long explanation for this letter. I'm asking for you approval to proceed with this project, to correct this issue. And we will do a case by case review staff, Charles and I and the guys, every time we have a situation like this come up, it will be reviewed, and then at that point, we'll make a staff determination and a recommendation to you

again at that, too. There's some areas that we really need to focus on being careful where we go down the road.

Kevin, I guess the homeowners don't bear any of the responsibility and obviously one of them or some of the four are causing the problem? Yeah, unfortunately.

Obviously those four houses are causing; it's their sewer that's in the street. One of those four houses are causing the backup. We don't know which one it is because we can't even get in the line to even see which one it is. So it's hard to go and say, you're causing the problem It's kind of an all in one problem.

Then they all share in the cost of a problem that they're causing.

Well, we could try and go down that avenue, but it was allowed to be done that way back then. I have a hard time figuring out where that responsibility falls. I feel like the city dropped the ball back then when they should have had a main there; to go and try and get a person that probably wasn't even involved in building the house in the beginning that doesn't even know what's going on. I don't know when these houses were built. I assume that this may have been the norm then. Yes, totally different now. Yes, 100%, They should pay for it all. But I don't want a situation to where obviously they're causing the problem, right, wrong or indifferent, they bought a house that had an issue not knowing right, wrong or indifferent. It's our job to go fix it but not our job to pay for all of it. Because it's not too much different than the situation we had on Rabbit Trail where we know that the stuff was coming out of the nursing home. We had four of them blocked and we got stuck with a bill, almost \$20,000. I'm not saying that we need to, I'm just saying that's something we should

I can get a hold of those four property owners and have a meeting with them and discuss what's going on and work on an avenue. I don't have a problem with it. I'm not saying that's what absolutely should happen. I'm just saying if these were to come up more often, you start spending \$6,000 every time you turn around. Well, and I'll have a better cost on what it's actually going to cost to connect each line because I'll know what material is needed and all that other stuff. As we start removing the first and second, whatever lateral, because we're starting to bottom work our way up, we'll be able to see which one is creating the issue. We'll know that at that point in time. That's true. But right now we don't know because we can't even get our camera in it to even do anything. And you can't come from the bottom because it's too hard of a push to go uphill. And the top is plugged up so you can't put anything in there because you can't see what you're doing.

I will have a complete cost on this project. I'll know exactly what it cost for each house to be hooked up. And we'll be able to use that as a template. Moving on.

WATER

Boehmer Brothers pay request for the Second Street project.

This is the materials for a second street project, for the water line, the corps, the saddles, T's, valves, and all that expensive stuff. The bill is for \$37,979.70. A motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Radetic to approve payment to Boehmer Brothers in the amount of \$37,979.70. The motion passed without dissent.

And these are our line item budget. We actually budget money every year for waterline improvements and extensions and things like that. So this is an improvement on the aging, I'll call it, because it is what it is, the aging infrastructure, something that we, as the water department, should focus on just as much as we focus on anything new. We should focus on the aging. And this project is no different than a couple of other ones we did. When the street department plans a street overlay, we evaluate how many breaks a line on the street has had, what kind of issues it's caused. Second street has had numerous breaks on it down through there, and situations that have caused inconveniences for the residents down below. So this is a prime candidate for replacement. When Main Street's project comes through, we will be doing Main Street also. Same thing. We've had numerous breaks on that line. All the lines we're working on now are in our 100 year era and over. So it's time we do something.

Are most of these copper pipes? Our main lines are cast iron. We're finding that almost all of our service lines are copper. We're very fortunate in that, because we do have a lead and copper rule we're working on. We've been very lucky in the fact that Washington has always kept good records, and I'm a pack rat, so I kept all the records not knowing what they were going to do. But when this rule came into play, we have documentation showing that the city was using copper. We have ordinances and all the other good stuff, but we have documentation all the way back to the 1800's showing that copper was used in Washington. Under the lead and copper rule, if we have documentation showing we use copper instead of doing every curb stop in town, which is what the rule says, with that, we have the ability to say we have documentation, then we only have to do 10% of the areas. Instead of doing every home, we can do 10% of an area because we have documentation.

And this is a continuing discussion that we've been having, right, on increasing our charges?

Yes, it is. This is on the water side. Three years ago, we raised rates for water user rates, but the connection fees were not looked at this time. When we raised sewer rates, we looked at the connection fees and raised them to be comparable to the area around us. We need to do the same thing to water. I think you should have a copy of what it is and what it was or what it was and what should be. We're mirroring. The same thing we did with the sewer is using O'Fallon's billing rate. O'Fallon does the same thing with their water as they do with their sewer. They go off of the meter size, and then that's the connection fee that is charged. If you look at this ordinance here, it says that it was changed in 2014. It wasn't the connection fees that was changed, it was verbiage in the ordinance that was changed, which

then gives it an ordinance date change, which kind of misleads the time when things are actually reviewed and changed. These connection fees hadn't been reviewed since 89, either 89 or 92.

One, are these the same rates that O'Fallon charges or. It's a percentage of what this is?

This is actually 20% less. Same as what we did on wastewater. It's the same on water. 20% reduction from what O'Fallon charge. So we're trying to keep it as Washington as we can, because we're Washington, but yet we need to get up to what the current charge standing is. If we don't do this and we have growth happening, we're relying on the users to build a new well we should be relying on the incoming to help assist in that need for a new well or a tank, whatever would need to be happening. So it's the same thing as wastewater. We're just trying to spread out the burden on the fees.

A motion made by Mr. Radetic and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to approve the new rates. Motion Passed without dissent. I'm going to get this to Mark for review. I'm going to try and get this to the next council meeting for approval. And then this will take effect January 1, along with the sewer rates. Going to try and get everything into one start date rather than doing sewer and incoming the following month or two months. And we're going to try and get it all together. I'm a fast track council to get it approved so we can get it all started on January 1, the same time that all of the new building codes will be started. So we're trying to bring everything together at one time.

A lot of work, a lot of changes in the past six months. And we're going to see a whole bunch more changes in the codes. There's a lot of codes out there that have not been reviewed in a long time. I've kind of taken that upon myself this year to review codes on the water and wastewater side. I will be bringing next month, I guess they call it a repeal of a code. We still have a code that discusses and talks about districts and tax fees, things that we have not used. Talking with Mark Piontek, that's something needs to be removed from the code. We'll be removing some that don't need to be there anymore or shouldn't be there anymore, and amending and changing some to get them up to current standards. Just, it's going to be a long process, so it's just going to be ongoing.

I do have a question. The budget, this is up to September. We have one more, and then the budget year is over. And we've talked recently about our wastewater and how we're going to end up way in the hole and things of that sort. As many times as I looked at this budget over the years, I'm not sure I still understand it. But tell me where this great big loss is. When I look at this budget that shows everything's hunky dory. I can't follow. **Were you talking about wastewater or water?** Let's talk just wastewater. Well, like you said, this is a really hard budget to follow. As far as reports, the best place to look, and that's what I look at, is I wait until the actual audit is done, and then you can look and actually see what to really get a good feel for where we're at. If you look at the audit, which is online, anybody can go look at it. It's under finance. We're still in the positive overall. Overall, that positivity is dropping though, as the years go on. And that's why we need to raise rates to keep that from going in the downward trend and need to start to get back in the upward trend. I will request that Mary Sprung is here at our next month's meeting, our finance director; I will let her explain to you how we try to read this budget. **But we're projected to be in**

a deficit position at the end of the year? Yes. After deductions. And that's as September 30th. Yes. So at the end of the year, extrapolate it out a little bit. What is your projection?

In the operational side of it, between expenses and revenues, we'll be running in the red. There is apparently a whole bunch of other stuff Mary deals with. I don't deal with that. At the end of the year when you look at the audit. We're not in the red. We're still in the black. But we're decreasing. Some of it has to do with cash on hand. And Brad would know a lot more about this than me. Remember I don't want to mislead you guys and give you answers that I can't answer correctly. But I can have somebody here next month, that can give you better answers than myself. It's an important question. You guys have the right to ask. We should have an answer for you. I don't. But I can get you that answer from the Finance Director.

Well, I think it might be helpful, especially with all this other discussion about how the finances are and where we stand and just getting a little bit better understanding, that's all. Yeah, thanks.

How much longer are the repairs on the sewer lines up and down Second Street? You probably got another two weeks. Three weeks probably, guys, you think? Yeah, three weeks, probably. **How many blocks west are you going?** We're going all the way to Cedar. You have another three weeks of work, but when that three weeks happens is a different story. Yes. We were really going good, and we were moving and moving and moving, and people started getting sick. **Is the sewer line being addressed or only if there's any faults in the line?** When you're going down the second main and front. That's all part of our slip lining project. Have we slip lined second street yet? Not that area, but that's where slip lining comes in to help because we don't have as many problems when a street is overlaid with sewer, because it's deeper. What we have is a problem with our older lines. And when they overlay streets, they run rollers over them. If they turn a vibrating 50 ton roller on, it becomes a 200 ton vibrating roller, and that creates a lot of down pressure. And then we end up with a water main break two weeks after they just overlaid a street, and we're digging in a big old hole into the street and tearing out the street

Other

None

Old Business

None

Next Scheduled Meeting Date

The next scheduled meeting date is Tuesday December 26, 2023.

Adjourn

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

Prepared by: _____
Theresa Lamke
Water/Wastewater
Administrative Assistant

Adopted and Approved by the Board of Public Works:

Date: _____ Signature: _____
Secretary