

**UTILITIES COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**OF FEBRUARY 8, 2021 @ 6PM VIA ZOOM**

**In Attendance:**     **Vermilion City Council:** *Steve Herron, President of Council; Monica Stark, Council at Large; Emily Skahen, Ward One; Frank Loucka, Ward Two; Steve Holovacs, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; Brian Holmes, Ward Five*  
**Administration:** *Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Chief Stempowski*

**Call to Order:**     Frank Loucka, Chairman, RESOLVED THAT this Utilities Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

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**TOPIC ONE:**         **VOL Sanitary Laterals**

T. Valerius said the city has inflow and infiltration issues throughout their sanitary sewers. Last year the city had flow meters installed at 16 different locations; mostly in the VOL area to determine which streets have the most storm water infiltration. As part of the MPDES permit renewal, the EPA is wanting to know specifically what the city is doing and what the city will be doing about the I/I issue. He asked council's permission to prepare a bid package, so they can go out to bid for a street or more to remedy the laterals throughout the area. He said they can either quote it to where the city can fix all the laterals in the right of way and then install a cleanout, or they can quote to fix all the laterals in the right of way and have a lateral camera shoot up the private laterals and inspect each residence's lateral and determine if their lateral is leaking I/I or has issues. If this is the case, then they can determine how they will treat this and if they should have the contractor fix it at the time, or if they send a letter to the homeowner telling them it needs to be fixed. He said the EPA is demanding they do something, so they will need to pick a street or two to fix.

B. Brady asked if they investigated the few issues, they were not sure about when they televised it last time. She said it could be big infiltration problems that might be repairable without going to this extent. T. Valerius said there is an area on Rowland where another manhole was discovered and a possible section of main that was not videoed initially. They will have a camera crew investigate this in the next week or so. B. Brady asked the finance director if the City could set up a utility area using PACE financing without it being a long-term assessment. A. Hendricks said she would need to do additional review to see what they could be eligible for. B. Brady said if it extends the payments without the city doing an assessment. G. Fisher thought the PACE was assessment based. B. Brady said it would be individually billed, but it was a way to spread it out on their taxes. She did not think the city went through the assessment process. She asked the finance director to investigate this because she did not think some of these people would be able to pay for the costs upfront. F. Loucka said an assessment process would

be spread over 20 years. B. Brady said the assessment process is expensive for the city, so she was trying to find a way to mitigate this because they are thinking about doing one street at a time. A. Hendricks said she would work with Tony on some of this information and will bring it back to Council in March.

S. Holovacs said when they do the selection of the streets, how will they make this determination. He also asked if the administration has the information from the second round of flow metering. T. Valerius said they do have this information and said the streets they do will be up to Council. The streets were ranked after the flow metering was completed, and Rowland was ranked number one and then Cummings. He said Rowland is a half of a street, so maybe they can do one and half streets, so they can see what the prices come out to be.

B. Brady reminded Council these will be major street cuts and there will be major street repairs involved. C. Howard confirmed it will be an open cut across each street, so there will be a lot of damage to the existing street.

Homer Taft of 3972 Edgewater addressed the two ways to go to bid and he assumed initially it might be cheaper not to put in a cleanout, but over the long term if they need to video all the private laterals, then they may want to consider this now. With regards to assessment, VOL did get assessed for lining its sewers and he would understand if the private laterals were a matter of assessment, but he would hope that the public repair was not a matter of assessment as this would not be fair. If they are tearing up streets, then they need to look at water lines and the base of the streets, so they do not keep reinventing the wheel.

F. Loucka said he would not agree to an assessment of the public area, but he would agree to a cleanout that the city would put in and an assessment or funding for the private residences as this is private property, and the city would fund the main sewer line. S. Holovacs agreed with this statement and any resident along these streets should have a cleanout. He thinks they should get pricing from a contractor because they are equipped to work a full day.

Drew Werley said this sounds expensive, so maybe they should reconsider the large amount of funds the Main Street Beach road is going to cost the roads department and sewage and stuff.

**S. Holovacs MOVED**, M. Stark seconded to authorize the administration to go out to bid to fix all the laterals in the city right of way and end it with a cleanout in the right of way, and to launch a camera up each private lateral to determine its condition to see if it needs repaired as well. Discussion: C. Howard said when they had the sewer lines televised, they had a problems because a lot of the laterals were 6" at the main line and it went back so far and it was a 4", and the company couldn't launch the camera up the 4", so this is a concern because they couldn't go all the way up to the house with a lateral launch. He said Rowland had 10 laterals

and Cummings had 36 laterals and some vary to 4". He said they could ask a company to see if they can launch down a 4" pipe, which is important to know. He said they can get a length on the private side to the house, so they have a price per linear foot per parcel, so it makes sense to get a price for everything. S. Holovacs and M. Stark revised their motion to reflect all comments by the administration. Roll Call Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## **TOPIC TWO:Recycling**

F. Loucka shared information on items that are included in the recycling programs. He said plastic bags, bubble wrap, and plastic wrap are not part of the curbside recycling program. Plastic bags require a separate process for recycling. He said recyclables should not be sealed up in plastic bags because they will just end up in the landfill and it defeats the purpose. He said to please place all items loose in the container. There are many places to take recycled bags – Giant Eagle, Kroger, Target, Home Depot, Lowes, Best Buy, Walmart, and Meijer. He said plastic bottles and containers and only plastics with triangle symbols 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 are presently acceptable. He said number 3 is PVC and number 6 are polystyrene, which is more commonly called Styrofoam and, these plastic containers are for number 1 and number 2. He said red solo cups go in the trash. He said aluminum cans remain a very popular item for recycling. He said Republic advises "When in doubt, throw it out". The items should be empty, clean, and dry. It is also more effective to not crush plastic bottles.

## **TOPIC THREE: 2020 Update on Water and Sewer Plants**

T. Valerius reported the water plant has six employees – four operators, one maintenance mechanic/relief operator, and one superintendent. The water plants average usage in the winter is about one million gallons a day and, in the summer, they see around 1.4 to 1.5 million gallons, which averages around 1.2 million a year. He said last year they re-erected the new fence at the water plant around the Clearwell just north of the French restaurant. Currently they are upgrading the SCADA system at the plant, which upgrades all the computer systems, pump controls, water, and chemical levels, records all the turbidity, which is an important part to upgrading the water plant. They have two filters they want to rebuild inhouse and they will hire a consultant to help them, but they can save money doing it this way. They also want to enhance the security systems at the water plant with additional cameras, intercom, and locks.

He said the wastewater treatment plant has six employees – two operators, two maintenance mechanics, one lab tech, and a superintendent. Last year they did a lot of work at the plant. They rebuilt two of the secondary tanks and replaced the bearings and drive shaft chains, and the flights. They had some air line repairs, which supplies the plant with air for the aeration system. They finished the bar in the back and implemented the new chemical feed systems, so they do not have to

worry about chemicals freezing anymore. They updated a lot of the lab equipment. This year they would like to install two air lift pumps and upgrade the SCADA system at the WWTP as soon as they finish at the Water Plant. This will upgrade all the alarms at the lift stations as well. They want to install rails on the secondary tank, and they need to have a full service done to the centrifuge. As part of the city's EPA requirements for the MPDES permit renewal, the city has hired an engineer to perform a feasibility study to inspect the entire WWTP to determine if it has exceeded its useful life expectancy. The plant was built in 1964 and a plant this size usually has a major upgrade every 20 years for it to run properly and stay up with EPA requirements. The plant was built in 1964 and it had a major upgrade in 1983-1984, but since then they have only done some small improvements, so it has been 40 years since they have done anything major to the plant, so the feasibility results will be provided upon completion.

S. Holovacs asked the service director where the city is with regards to capacity at the WP and WWTP. Are they at 60 percent – 70 percent and will this report tell them some of this information? T. Valerius believed the report will hit on this, but in talking with the operators, the city is reaching its capacity. He said the plant is a 2.5 million and he said the study should show the recommendation to improve it.

B. Holmes said when they did a tour of the facility several questions came up and they addressed the screening, and he hoped the study would address this. He asked if this was updated. T. Valerius said they got a new bar screen probably two years ago. B. Holmes asked if the city is continuing to have waste haulers come in and if they are charging them. T. Valerius said this is correct with no issues.

S. Holovacs asked if the infiltration of storm water affects the plant to the point where it is putting it to capacity. T. Valerius said it is putting it over-capacity when they have I/I issues.

F. Loucka adjourned the meeting upon no further discussion.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

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