

Minutes of the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee for Monday, December 7, 2009.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Simmons at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Grenke, Aldermen Hensley, Bormann, and Orsini. Also attending were Lynn Behrns, Mike Forsee, Phil Hoffman, Mark Mustain, Steven Oberman, and Matthew Hensley.

Those present offered a moment of silence in remembrance of the attack on Pearl Harbor and then recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Water and Sewer Department

Committee reviewed the activity report and future work schedule for the Water and Sewer Department.

Behrns noted that the City will soon solicit bids on the rehabilitation of the Well #3 site, probably before the end of this month. A contract approval may be possible in January. The project is still looking like it will fall well within this year's budget target, although the costs may be shifted to the next budget year.

Forsee told Orsini that calcium buildup at the water plant was limited and removal was part of the regular annual maintenance routine. He also said that repairs on the hydrant at Columbia and Highway 22 were going slowly. He is waiting for odd-sized parts to be sent.

More of the older water meter radios are going bad. The Water Department is replacing them while they are partially under warranty, but the vendor is still slow in delivering the substitutes.

Forsee reported on problems with pump on Well #4. The motor has burned up again, and tests show it drawing too much power. The well has been checked by Flynn Drilling (their report was distributed to the Committee). The City may have to replace the motor or realign the shaft. Until then use is being limited and we will rely on Well #6. Behrns said we are delaying a fix until the #3 well is finished and we are assured of its cost. The rehabilitation of #4 will be included in the 2010-11 Budget.

Behrns briefly highlighted projects for the preliminary budget: besides finishing the well repairs, moneys for some line replacements are being carry over from this fiscal year. Before the line work, the water crew will concentrate on valve and hydrant repairs and replacements. One of the department pickup trucks needs to be replaced. Because it tows the jet cleaner equipment (and will tow the vacuum excavator), we intend to up size to a 1-ton model. Purchasing should go through the MoDOT truck contract, as most of their vendors have extended last year's contracts at the same price for a second year. Since water fund reserves are now at minimum prudent requirements, Behrns expects to continue the pattern of small rate increases started last year. Rates may go up by 5% in April, but the current charge is still very low and the increase should amount to less than a dollar per month per residential customer.

The same conditions will apply to the sewer fund for the first time since the sewer user charge was implemented in 1985. Reserves have been drawn down; and to accomplish maintenance needs, such as slip lining another two blocks of old sewer main, we should start regular, but small annual increases. Even then, we are only talking about realizing less than \$10,000 in new revenue for the year.

Electric Department

Committee reviewed the activity report and future work schedule for the Electric Department.

Mustain told the Committee that no comments pro or con have been received since he replaced the street light at Allen and Gano Chance with a brighter fixture. If complaints ever do come, his next step would be to try

the same change to the light at Central Street.

The new transformer for the Wilson Street Substation has been delivered and is in place on the new foundation. Next Monday, the City should receive bids for the express feeder circuit and most of the parts for the new switching assembly. These will be items on the next Board agenda.

It has been decided that our Electric Department will try their hand at the assembly work at the substation. Fifteen years ago, a different City crew had performed the erection of the Substation on Jefferson Street. Our engineer is preparing a work plan and schedule and the Department will work on the drier, warmer days throughout the winter.

Mustain noted that our electric meters have been more reliable than the water meters and only two or three (out of 1700) go bad each month.

The early budget for the Electric Fund allows for the continued debt service soon the new substation. Funds for the major overhaul of the existing substation will roll to the next budget year. The electric department has a pickup that is 12 years old and should be replaced, and Mustain would like to acquire a recording power analyzer for trouble-shooting problems for customers with three-phase services. Despite lower power sales because of the mild summer, Behrns still thinks that no electric rate increase will be necessary before 2012, and our next power supply contract.

Behrns reported that an RFP for such a contract (now only two years off) is out and the responses will be analyzed next month. There may be a contract presented by late spring, if the likelihood of national power over-supply continues for a few more months.

When a vender is selected, Centralia will have to band with the other wholesale cities or with MPUA to hire a consultant to do the analysis and tracking to enable us to file for Auction Revenue Rights on the Prairie State Project. If filed properly by next August, the ARR's will be given to us without charge. The ARR's are the basis for acquiring Financial Trading Rights as a hedge for getting power to us through the MISO transmission system. The City could alternatively sell them, but then we would have no hedge and likely lose money during periods of transmission congestion. A contract for consulting services will be need in a few months.

Street and Sanitation Department

Committee reviewed the activity report and future work schedule for the Street and Sanitation Department. Behrns had received a complaint from a customer about the policy for when to charge trash fees. Long-standing practice has been that trash fees are charged when water service is on. (Electric service does not correlate with occupancy, since customers keep minimal heat to protect pipes.) Reestablishing water services guarantees that the City is informed of returning "snow birds". The customer had asked for Board meeting times, but was not in attendance.

Hoffman told the Committee that he will be working on a continuing drainage problem in the mid-block of Sappington as soon as the weather is favorable. Behrns and Hoffman told the Committee that a culvert pipe had been removed from the ditch at a house on Bruton. The customer had not paid for the pipe and the house was vacant and in foreclosure. Policy has since been changed to require advance payments for the materials on such projects.

The contract for engineering on the SRTS grant has been approved by MoDOT. City Attorney Beck and an attorney for the City of Columbia have worked out language for use of the COLT right-of-way. Several

aldermen thought the new language still allows too much discretion for unilateral work by COLT, but agreed that we have achieved as much as we can.

Other

Oberman reported that a boy scout may be able to help build a ramp for accessibility at the gazebo in the City Square. This would be his eagle project. Aldermen generally favored the project, but would like to see plans before final implementation.

As May Arise

Mayor Grenke noted that he and Behrns will be attending a meeting with Boone County Community Partnerships in Columbia on Tuesday. He hopes they can offer help on economic development and accessibility concerns.

An alderman inquired about an instance of police arriving before firefighters to an EMS scene. Another committee member said that a dispatcher had reported that equipment limitations in this case meant that the Patrol officer heard a radio message before the tone-out signal could be sent.

There were no further items to be presented, and the meeting adjourned at about 8:20 p.m.