

## **Minutes of the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee for Tuesday, November 8, 2011.**

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Simmons at 7:00 p.m. Present were Aldermen Wilkins, Bormann, Angell, and Orsini. Also attending were Lynn Behrns, Mike Forsee, Phil Hoffman, Mark Mustain, Police Chief Larry Dudgeon, Joe Bellamy, and James Smith. Mayor Grenke participated by telephone, but did not cast any votes.

Those present participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Comments from Citizens

No one in the audience had comments.

### Water and Sewer Department

Committee reviewed the activity report and future work schedule for the Water and Sewer Department. Forsee reported that he had completed the few repairs necessary on the overland flow field.

Forsee presented a bid tab sheet for a variety of fittings and supplies for the department. Water and Sewer Supply's bid of \$5,899.67 was quite a bit cheaper than HD Supply. The bid will be placed on the regular Board agenda for approval.

Behrns reported only one response to his ad for surveying services. Staff is recommending that surveys be made of the three ponds used by farmers to store wastewater effluent for land application. The survey would yield an accurate measure of the holding capacity of each pond. This information will be needed for the next renewal of the NPDES plant permit, particularly since Jeff Sims has been enlarging the capacity of his pond. Time is important, since the ponds are all near empty. Mark Robertson was willing to do the work for \$95.00 per hour. He believes that, with the help of a water department employee as a rod man, he can do the field work for the Sims pond in just over a day, and all three in three days. Bormann is recommending that a rough plat of each site also be created. The time estimate and resulting cost is more than Behrns would like authorize. He suggested that the surveys and calculations be done now, to be used in the permit renewal process. The plat for Sims could be done next budget year, and the other two before the permit application is due. Wilkins moved that Behrns be allowed to proceed with the survey work in the manner described. Bormann seconded the motion. On roll call vote, all members present voted in favor, except Angell, who abstained.

Forsee and Behrns reported that the water crew had used the City's small boat to survey the depth of the sludge in the treatment lagoons. The primary cell of the Northeast plant had sludge built up to about 5 feet around the influent pipe, but averaged a depth of 12 to 18 inches for most of the cell. Staff believes that this means that the City will not have to make sludge removal (which is very expensive) a priority for the next two or three years. Measurements also showed only about six inches or so of sludge in the Northeast storage cell and in both cells at the Northwest lagoons.

### Electric Department

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

Mustain reported that the stock of decorative street lights is low, because several had been hit by vehicles. He asked for quotes from the original vender for two poles and four globe fixtures. The total bid from Crescent Electric of Columbia was \$4,611.60. Mustain asked for permission to order the materials quickly because of a long lead time for delivery Bormann moved that the City purchase the poles and fixtures from Crescent Electric for \$4,611.60. Orsini seconded the motion. On roll call vote, all members present voted

in favor and the motion passed.

Orsini asked about replacement of a street light on the corner next to City Hall. Mustain said he would do the work when the sidewalk is replaced. Decorative lights could also be added on North Rollins. For now, the only firm plan is to add one on Singleton Street when the Baptist Church replaces sidewalk.

#### Streets and Sanitation

Committee reviewed the activity report and future work schedule for the Street and Sanitation Departments. A round of pot hole and utility cut patching will come as soon as the crew completes the ramp construction on Hickman Street.

Behrns reported that the City of Columbia had raised the landfill tipping fee from \$32.50 per ton to \$36.00 per ton, effective October 1. This will force an increase in Centralia's trash rates, probably of more than \$1.00 per household per month. Even then, Centralia's residential rates will be approximately the same as Columbia's. Behrns suggested it would be best to make the change with the next budget. Angell disagreed, saying the City did not need to fall behind by an additional \$10,000 in the next six months. Behrns was directed to do a close look at the Sanitation budget and prepare for Board consideration an ordinance that would pass along the new costs sooner.

Work on the Miles Street ditch is finished for the year, except for that of the Electric crew installing new underground conduit for power, cable, and phone wires to service four residences on the west side of the ditch.

#### Other

Behrns displayed copies of the new set of building codes. They have already been adopted by Boone County and the City of Columbia. Centralia has previously desired keep its codes consistent with the others, to encourage uniformity and make it easier for local builders and building inspectors. Pursuant to State statute, the codes must be advertised as available for inspection for 90 days before the City conducts a public hearing. Behrns was not able to detail the changes made between the present and proposed codes. Committee thought that having a representative of the county inspectors present at the time of the hearing would be good. The changes could then be detailed for both the Board and for citizens. Behrns will try to schedule the hearing before the April elections.

Behrns reported that no one had responded to an advertisement placed to solicit a builder to upgrade the restroom at the front entrance of City Hall. To make it ADA compliant, two walls must be moved and a handrail extended. A warning fire alarm is also required and wiring would be done by the Electric Department. Behrns was finally able to garner a quotation from Kurt Kelly to do the work according to plan. Kelly would do the work himself, so prevailing wage rate would not be an issue. The work must be done before February or the standards are more rigorous. Angell moved that Kelly perform the remodeling work for \$5,325. Orsini seconded the motion. On roll call vote, all members voted in favor.

Dudgeon briefly described his policy of not calling out the Fire Department with EMTs when the only need is removal of taser barbs from a prisoner. Dudgeon also thanked the local electrical workers union for running everything smoothly and without incident during the just-completed contract election.

Forsee told Orsini that the department was affixing numbered brass plates to the fire hydrants so as to have a uniformity of the hydrants in Columbia and on other local water systems. The tags will allow clear identification of inoperable hydrants by firefighters.

Mayor Grenke asked that the City staff look into a process he had described to him. An acquaintance said that it was now possible to reduce trash to fuel and help the EPA in reducing air pollution. Orsini describe a plant in Carthage which she thinks is similar. There are several problems in its operation. Grenke will email some information about the process to Behrns.

Dudgeon and Bellamy presented reasons why the City should acquire a trained dog for drug and law enforcement purposes. Bellamy said that he had already identified persons and firms willing to donate more than \$5,000 toward the project. Bellamy has also identified a source of free dog food and veterinary care. To have a dog would require a dedicated and modified patrol car. Behrns has checked with the City's insurer and was told that a police dog would not cause rates to increase, but that there would be no coverage unless the City adopts a strict set of policies and protocols. Behrns also noted that court decisions arising from the Fair Labor Standards Act would require recognition of home care of such a dog to be considered working hours. There would have to be a clear understanding of how much time was spent working at home. This time would have to be paid at overtime rates or the shift hours reduced to a point where total hours were forty per week. Bellamy spoke to the recent increase in drug activity and the need for tools to search stopped cars for contraband. A dog might increase arrests for a while, but could reduce incidents in the long run. Committee discussed details and future policies at length. Members were particularly concerned with reports from Chief Dudgeon about the pressing need to replace patrol cars. Most felt that the matter needed more study. Do any other small cities employ dogs? How can the City meet long term expenses, and how much would they truly be? Several aldermen suggested cooperative use of dogs from other agencies when required. Bellamy suggested that mutual aid was often not available. Angell wished there was a way to "test drive" the process. Does the dog imply an increase in total work hour expenses? Is the expense worth the hypothetical outcomes?

Officer Bellamy left the meeting and the Committee continued to weigh the pros and cons of the proposal. An informal straw poll showed that the aldermen want more information and considered replacement of patrol cars as a more pressing need. Finally, Orsini moved that the Board consider acquisition of a dog inappropriate at this time. Wilkins seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

Behrns reported that employee health insurance rates for the coming year would be increasing for the coming year. If the City absorbs the increase, there will not be money for any raises except those resulting from longevity. The union has been informed and might look at trading coverage for some sort of modest raise. The general health of City employees is such that no other major carrier can beat the rates of Alliance. Behrns also suggested that, starting with the new union contract, the City pay only for one half of the insurance bill for spouses of new employees or for spouse of present employees who are added to Centralia's coverage.

Committee members wanted staff to remind all full-time employees of the total amount the City spends for benefits for each employee.

The Committee adjourned at about 9:20 p.m.