

Minutes of the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee for Monday, December 2, 2013.

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Bormann at 7:00 p.m. Present were Aldermen Magley, Simmons, Lee, and Angell. Also attending were Lynn Behrns, Phil Hoffman, Mark Mustain, Mike Forsee, and James Smith. Mayor Grenke participated by phone, but did not cast any votes.

Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Comments from Citizens

None.

Street and Sanitation Department

Committee reviewed the activity report and future work schedule for the Street and Sanitation Department. Lee inquired whether the cleanup on Switzler Street was complete. Hoffman said that most of it was. A few small punch list items remained—less than a day's worth. It will be spring before replacement grass can take hold. The yard drain at Chief Dudgeon's house had been moved north so as to be more effective. Bormann said the final product drives very smoothly. Behrns said that Hubbell/Chance had conveyed no complaints.

Behrns presented a new draft of an ordinance which sets forth standards and requires a permit for persons and firms performing excavations within the City's street and alley rights-of-way. The latest draft would require a final surface of eight inches of concrete on any paved street, whether concrete or asphalt. Committee members were satisfied with this version. Behrns will place the ordinance on the agenda for the next regular Board meeting.

Behrns told Smith he would check records and give Smith an estimate of the total cost for Switzler Street.

Electric Department

Committee reviewed the activity report and future work schedule for the Electric Department. Smith asked for more information on item dealing with street light repairs. Mustain said that several lights along Highway 22 were caused by failure of a photo-eye switch. This work was done quickly, since the City had a spare part on hand. The other lights were out because of bulb problems, and also corrected quickly.

Behrns presented a draft ordinance that would increase electric rates by 8%. Behrns based the need on budget projections that he presented latter in the meeting. The new rates are effective for the base charge, the unit charge per kilowatt hour, and each class of dusk-to-dawn lights. This will be the first increase in five years. The increases would take effect on January 1, so customers will first see them on the bills mailed around the first of February. The need for the increase comes from the higher distribution charges implemented by Ameren Missouri and a drop in revenues of more than \$170,000 brought about by very mild spring and summer temperatures. The City cannot plan on that loss being balanced by more extreme temperatures in the future.

Several aldermen thanked Mustain for information he had put in the agenda packet concerning the strength of radio signals from remote read utility meters. The material did not indicate any worry of health affects from the radios' electromagnetic radiation.

Water and Sewer Department

Committee reviewed the activity report and future work schedule for the Water and Sewer Department. Forsee gave details about several recent leaks in water mains and service lines.

Behrns reported that actual expense just for the materials needed for new water taps now exceeds the charge of the tap fee. (Sewer tap fees cover no materials, only the time for inspections.) The present cost of water tap and meter materials exceed \$400. Behrns said he will recommend a new water tap fee of \$500.00 to cover materials and also labor and equipment use. This is still low compared to many other Cities. This new fee would be included in a more general update of the Public Utilities chapter of the City Code. Behrns expects to present the changes about March of next year.

As May Arise

Behrns present draft summaries of the budgets for the various utilities.

The drafts represent maintenance of existing levels of staffing and effort. In addition, the water fund would again transfer \$30,000 to the General Fund. The department would purchase a hand-held, hardened meter reading recorder, since the present recorder is near the end of its useful life. There are carryover funds for replacement or repair on one water well, if necessary, and additions to the reserves for the other two wells. Funds would be appropriated for several valve and main projects. In particular, \$12,800 is shown for the insert installation of a 12" valve near Hubbell's East Street facilities. This valve cannot be put in by staff and service should not be interrupted. It would be desirable to repair the aerator at the water plant, to prevent corrosion. Finally, the repair/replacement of the pump and sled at the lime ponds is postponed from this year to the next budget.

For the sewer fund, \$45,000 is shown for another sliplining project, although it is more likely that it will be held in reserve and used for a large (and more economical) project in 2015. A new transfer switch is needed for the lift station at the Northwest Sewer Lagoons. The old switch is functionally obsolete. The City will also have up to \$42,800 for reserves to cover repair or replacement of the effluent irrigation system to the farmers.

The electric fund would transfer only \$60,000 to the General Fund, since the proposed rate increase would carry an corresponding increase in the gross receipt tax. The largest special expenditures are the debt service payments on electric substation and money to cover some repairs to City Hall (the Water & Light Building). The budget also includes the replacement of a pole trailer and possible installation of buried casings and conduit under the railroad tracks for future circuit connections to the Wilson Street Substation. The replacement/depreciation reserve is increased by \$50,000. No draws on those reserves are expected for several years.

The requirements for post closure reserve have declined slightly, so that reserve balance is lowered. The replacement of the damaged trash truck because of fire was handled by insurance proceeds and fund balance. Therefore, the pattern of building up fund reserves for eventual replacement of the primary trash truck is reset. The nest truck should be in daily use until the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Behrns believes that no changes in water, sewer, or trash rates are needed for the coming year.

The budgets will be further updated and presented to the Board at meeting in January and February.

The Committee adjourned at about 8:00 p.m.

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