

VILLAGE OF MCFARLAND

**Public Utilities Committee Minutes**

Tuesday November 17, 2020 – 6:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Village Trustee and Chairperson Eric Kryzenske at 6:00 p.m.

Members present: Village Trustee Carolyn Clow, Chris Fredrick, Marc Nielsen, Mary Pat Lytle, Pauline Boness, Chris Reynolds

Staff present: Jim Hessling (Director of Public Works), Aimee Irwin (Assistant to the Director), Lee Igl (Streets & Utilities Superintendent), Andrew Bremer (Community & Economic Development Director)

2. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Discussion and action regarding the minutes from the Public Utilities Committee held on October 20, 2020.

- Motion by Eric Kryzenske to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Pauline Boness. Motion passed 7-0-0

4. BUSINESS

a. Discussion and possible action to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding Ordinance 2020-22, An Ordinance Amending Various Sections of the McFarland Municipal Code Including Chapter 47 Public Utilities, Chapter 56 Subdivisions, and Chapter 62 Zoning Relating to the Provisions of Storm and Sanitary Sewer Service.

- Andrew Bremer reviewed the updated policy from previously presented at the October meeting. Revisions were regarding authorization of the use of private septic and well systems within the Village. Bremer stated that the exceptions within the ordinance are not being changed but wording is being added for cross referencing within other sections.
- Committee members discussed the proposed policy. Chris Fredrick mentioned to members that there could be issues in the future with any new residences to the east of the Village given the 12 month timeframe to connect to Village utilities.
- Motion by Pauline Boness to recommend to the Village Board approval of Ordinance 2020-22, An Ordinance Amending Various Sections of the McFarland Municipal Code. Seconded by Mary Pat Lytle. Motion passed 7-0-0.

b. Presentation and discussion regarding current meter reading process and future options.

- Aimee Irwin provided a brief summary including that the current meter reading process needs to be reviewed due to equipment becoming obsolete and for increased functionality of the meter reading software. Irwin also stated that over half of the ERTs currently in the system are 50W. These ERTs continue to fail causing the need for visual reads or meter replacements. Staff provided information to the committee seeking direction for the future of meter reading along with how to handle the 50W ERT failure. Steve Dauster of Midwest Meter reviewed the provided PowerPoint presentation. The presentation reviewed the current software and equipment and various options for the future meter reading for the utility. Madi Hawkinson of Midwest Meter provided a sample view of the Beacon software which is one of the options for future meter reading. The Orion Reading software is hosted on Google Chrome which allows data to download once reconnected to Wi-Fi. The Beacon software is a cloud based software which allows for access anywhere.
- Pauline Boness asked how the utility would transition away from mobile drive-by reading. Steve Dauster recommends that the utility would move towards a hybrid option to keep the mobile reads in the system but move the other half to the new equipment to allow for the possibility of a fixed reading system in the future. Carolyn Clow asked if the utility would need to utilize two software programs at the same time during the transition. Dauster stated that once the future direction is chosen, the utility would only have one software. Chris Reynolds asked what the lifespan the Beacon software has. Dauster responded as the software is cloud based it can be updated routinely but there would be an ongoing subscription fee. Marc Nielsen asked what the estimated subscription cost would be per month. Dauster responded that the subscription fee is about \$5,000 per year. Carolyn Clow asked if pricing could be provided to the committee in full details with the future options that are available for the utility. Dauster stated this information could be compiled. Erik Kryzenske asked what staff's plan is regarding the 50W ERTs. Jim Hessling explained that given the pandemic, staff are replacing the ERTs as they fail if the resident is willing to allow staff in for replacement along with screening the residents.
- Chris Fredrick asked if there are other vendors available for meter reading and equipment. Jim Hessling responded that yes other vendors are out there and staff provided information from Midwest Meter given history with the Village. Fredrick recommended staff gather information about possible alternative vendors. Fredrick and Mary Pat Lytle recommend the top of the line option has a cost benefit analysis including staff hours and equipment costs. Carolyn Clow asked if staff had a replacement schedule

in mind. Jim Hessling responded that a schedule has not been concretely developed and there are companies that will come in and complete the change out process if necessary.

c. Discussion and action to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding the conventional rate case for test year 2021 for submission to the Public Service Commission.

- This item was conducted out of order and completed first under business.
- Jodi Dobson with Baker Tilly stated that the handout included with the packet is the same handout provided at the October meeting suggesting a 36% increase. Also included with the packet is the complete rate case file that would be filed with the Public Service Commission (PSC).
- Carolyn Clow asked what the next steps would be for the rate case. Jodi Dobson stated that if the committee recommends approval then the Village Board would review and approve if applicable. After approval the rate case would be filed with PSC which will review the rate case, likely seek additional data or ask questions about the information presented. The PSC then will recommend any changes they see necessary. Dobson stated that the PSC review process would likely last six months.
- Marc Nielsen asked how the current rates will be increased with the overall rate increase suggested of 36%. Jodi Dobson stated that the 36% is the overall recommended increase and the PSC will recommend how each rate area would increase (base and usage) based on their findings. Marc Nielsen also commented that it was the wish of the committee to absorb credit card charges within the rates structure. Jodi Dobson stated that the rate file could be adjusted with additional information regarding current customers utilizing this payment method and likely the PSC will use comparison data from similar sized municipalities for their recommendations.
- Motion by Eric Kryzenske recommending approval of the conventional rate case for test year 2021 to the Village Board on the condition that the application is updated to include the credit card charges within the rate structure. Seconded by Carolyn Clow. Motion passes 7-0-0.

d. Presentation on recent sewer cleaning conducted by Green Bay Pipe & TV.

- Lee Igl provided a summary of the sewer cleaning that was recently completed for approximately one-third of the Village. Igl also presented a short video example of the sewer televising that was conducted.
- Mary Pat Lytle asked if the concerns found in the provided video leads to increased transport and cost to MMSD. Igl responded that yes these deficiencies cause increased transport. Pauline Boness asked what could have caused the pipe separation that was shown. Igl stated that several items may have caused the separation such as freeze and thaw or poor road conditions at onset of construction. Marc Nielsen asked if we could

accelerate the completion of the remaining part of the Village. Igl stated the plan is to begin the next portion early in 2021.

e. Discussion and possible action to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding a sewer repair on Highland Drive.

- Jim Hessling provided background regarding a possible sewer repair on Highland Drive. This concern was found during Green Bay Pipe and TV's recent sewer cleaning and televising. It is estimated to cost between \$20,000 to \$30,000. Lee Igl reviewed the video of the pipe on Highland Drive.
- Chris Reynolds asked how often the utility is completing repairs such as the one under consideration. Jim Hessling stated this is the first known correction action that could be taken that he is aware of. Pauline Boness asked Berquist if it would be more advantageous to replace the pipe over lining and if tree roots could damage the lining. Berquist stated that the lining is structurally sound on its own and provides good protection against roots. Chris Fredrick asked if any upsizing will be occurring in the near future for this pipe. Berquist responded that this area is set with the only upsizing occurring on Exchange Street. Berquist also added that the lining as a 25 year lifespan and is a cost effective approach to the concern. Carolyn Clow asked about the estimated cost for the lining. Igl responded that staff are gathering final cost estimates but overall estimate is \$20,000 to \$30,000 with the work being completed in one day. Berquist added that if the Village was to replace the road and pipe that this would be an estimated cost of \$100,000. Chris Fredrick asked if completing the lining in this area would damage other areas of the system downstream. Berquist responded that the other portions of the system appear to be in good shape and he would not anticipate additional required changes in the near future.
- Motion by Chris Fredrick to recommend to the Village Board the lining of the pipe on Highland Drive. Seconded by Pauline Boness. Motion was amended by Chris Fredrick for the lining not to exceed \$30,000. Pauline Boness agreed to this amendment. Motion passed 7-0-0.

f. Presentation of the Public Works Monthly Report from the Director.

- Jim Hessling provided an update on public works activities in the Village for the month of October 2020.

5. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE

- a. Tuesday December 8, 2020.

6. ADJOURNMENT

- a. Motion to adjourn by Mary Pat Lytle at 7:48 p.m. Seconded by Chris Fredrick. Motion passed 7-0-0.

Introduction provided by committee member Christopher Reynolds via email received 11/19/2020:

“I have been a public servant for the 40 years of my professional career. I can't help myself , I have to be involved in a level of government in some way. Considering the current dysfunction of the federal and state governments, why not local government where decisions directly affect people's lives. I have been fully retired for about two years, and lived in McFarland for the past four years. As a volunteer committee member I hope I can contribute in some way. Thanks for this opportunity, to help advise the village on important infrastructure issues.”

Respectfully submitted by Aimee Irwin