

UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING
February 24, 2020

A regular meeting of the City of Jackson Utilities Commission was held in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 4:00 p.m. on February 24, 2020 with the following persons present: Chairperson Gayl Berkner, Vice-Chairman Kevin Siepker, Jenna Schwartz, Mike Thurmer, Joe Marthaler and Matt Madden. Also, in attendance were City Administrator Matt Skaret, MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Jeremy Boogerd, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough, City Finance Officer Deb Mitchell and Recording Secretary Dave Maschoff. (Utilities Commission Member Mike Schwartz was absent.) (A quorum of the Utilities Commission was present.)

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Chairperson Gayl Berkner called the Utilities Commission to order and noted there was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 27, 2020 UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING

Chairperson Berkner asked Utilities Commission members if they had an opportunity to read the minutes from the January 27th meeting.

With no indication that Utilities Commission members had the opportunity to read the minutes, Chairperson Berkner said they would be considered at the March 30th Utilities Commission meeting.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Water Department

Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough reported the iron filter at the Water Treatment Plant was cleaned for the first time. He said they plan to clean the iron filter once a year. Oxborough said cleaning the filter may help with water quality.

Oxborough reported there was a recent watermain break at Sherry Lane and Sayles Drive. He said it was a quick, easy repair.

Oxborough noted the Water Department personnel assisted the Street Department in plowing snow.

Oxborough said he met with the engineers of the Number 4 Lift Station to explain concerns about the amount the Lift Station is currently pumping and what it should be pumping. He said the engineers will get back in contact with him.

Oxborough explained he's throwing away old files at the Water Plant office to make space for new files.

Berkner thanked Oxborough for the tour of the Water Plant and said it was very interesting. She said it was interesting to see the new water storage tank.

Electric Department

MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Jeremy Boogerd reported the Electric Department has been doing Covid maintenance by sanitizing all of the Department's trucks and all of their equipment.

Boogerd said they have been cleaning and organizing the shop and cold storage. He said 10 old transformers that were taken down from the poles during the underground electric project needed to be tested. Boogerd said the tests indicated two transformers will be need to be disposed of. He explained T&R Electric Supply Company will come and pick the transformers and the City will pay to properly dispose of them.

Boogerd said during the past week, the Electric Department has been starting to remove poles and lines from back yards and along the street on North Highway. He said hopefully in a week or two all the electric wire along North Highway will be taken down. Boogerd said the electric poles will still be there until the ground thaws and the Electric Department can install new street light poles.

Boogerd said he had a meeting with Engineer Greg Mitchell of Bolton and Menk along with City Administrator Matt Skaret and Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough regarding the South Street and North Highway projects. He said there will be some electric equipment that will need to be moved as part of that project.

Boogerd reported one of the Electric Department staff attended metering school in Marshall. He said the Electric Department has also been doing some street light maintenance and tree trimming. Boogerd noted the weather is starting to warm up so the Electric Department can get a few more things done.

Street Department

Skaret said Street Superintendent Phil Markman was unable to attend the Utilities Commission meeting because his father had a doctor's appointment in Sioux Falls.

SOUTH STREET AND NORTH HIGHWAY PROJECT – RELOCATING ELECTRIC METERS

Boogerd explained there are some poles and transformers that are located in the radius of the curb on South Street. He said the current curb on South Street going down the side streets is more like a 90-degree angle and the new type of curb is more of a rounded, gentler curb for the snowplow to carry snow around. Boogerd said the new rounded curb is also set up for wider streets if it's ever decided to widen the side streets in the future.

Boogerd said with that there's a lot of poles in the way so a plan was developed. He explained there are five houses where the Electric Department can just move the meter from the pole to the side of the house and eliminate those poles. Boogerd said there's also a bunch of older poles on South Street and a lot of those poles could be removed and the area cleaned up if the electric service is buried. He said there would be 15 houses where the electric service could be buried and a new meter socket installed.

Boogerd explained the Electric Department is going to work with the contractor on that. He said there's a few instances where the contractor is going to lay two-inch pipe across the road and bury it like they would a water or sewer service line. Boogerd said that way the Electric Department wouldn't have to bore under the new street.

As for a general cost, Boogerd said there will be a few houses the Electric Department will have to bore electric service to. He said about 250 feet of boring would cost approximately \$2,000. Boogerd said all of these houses will need an electrician. He said City Administrator Matt Skaret, Engineer Greg Mitchell and himself discussed that this is a street project and we're moving these residents' electrical services and kind of forcing them to do it. Because of that, Boogerd said the City would hire the electrician for the conversion. He said the City could seek quotes for the conversions if they need to. Boogerd said with the houses involved, he's estimating the cost for an electrician would be roughly \$6,000. He said the total put into the secondary to convert all these houses is about 1,400 feet which is estimated at \$2,300 to \$2,500. Boogerd said the footage for the contractor to install pipe with the road project is estimated at 400 feet and that cost should be available when the City receives the bids for the street project. He said he's not sure what the contractor would charge to install the pipe. Boogerd said the contractor would have to purchase the pipe and then install it. He explained the Electric Department will push a wire through the pipe and trench out the last 50 feet to someone's house.

Skaret said approval is being sought from the Utilities Commission on relocating the electric meters. He said the thought had been discussed some time ago regarding the City's AMI project where some electric meters had been built around over the years and were inside a structure. Skaret said the Electric Department wants to move those electric meters to the outside. He noted it had been talked about that since it was the City requiring the meter to be moved, that it should probably be at City expense. Skaret said here again, the people aren't asking for their electric meter to be moved, it's just really more of the City's request because the City wants to take down and eliminate the pole.

Berkner asked if there would be any cost to the homeowner.

Boogerd said the only cost he could see for the homeowner would be if the homeowner wanted to upgrade their electrical service. He said for example if the homeowner wanted to upgrade from having screw-in fuses to breakers or wanted to upgrade to more electrical service than they currently have. He said that would be a cost to the homeowner.

Siepkner said there would be no cost to the homeowner up to the meter socket.

Boogerd said that was correct. He said the Electric Department would essentially be replacing like for like.

Skaret asked the Utilities Commission members if they were OK with that plan.

Berkner asked if the Commission should vote or have a consensus on the plan.

Skaret said the Utilities Commission should have a motion.

THURMER/SCHWARTZ moved and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the City Council to approve certain Residential Electric Meter relocations from wooden street light poles for the 2020 Street Improvements at the City's expense.

STREET LIGHTING – ALUMINUM OR WOOD POLES

Boogerd explained the same utility poles he was just talking about have street lights on them. He said obviously the City is not going to get rid of the street lights.

Boogerd said the utility poles will be replaced with a new street light pole. He explained there are two options. Boogerd said the current utility poles can be replaced with a wood pole. He said a 30-foot wood pole costs between \$250 and \$300. Boogerd said some new poles would have to be purchased and some poles taken down from a different project could be reused.

Boogerd said the other option would be to install aluminum poles similar to those seen on Springfield Parkway and North Highway. He noted the spun aluminum poles look really nice. Boogerd said the aluminum poles cost approximately \$650 to \$750 each. He noted the street light head would be replaced and could work on either a wood or aluminum pole. Boogerd said a smaller 60-watt street light head is \$112 and the medium size 72-watt street light head is \$210.

Boogerd said what he and Skaret discussed and what they are asking is if the Utilities Commission wants the wood poles or the aluminum poles.

Berkner asked Boogerd what he would prefer.

Boogerd said it doesn't matter to him.

Berkner asked about aesthetics.

Boogerd said the aluminum poles probably offer the better aesthetics. He noted the aesthetics of the aluminum poles on Springfield Parkway and North Highway. Boogerd said the South Street neighborhood currently has all wood poles. He asked if the Utilities Commission wanted to continue to upgrade the City with aluminum poles as we go or just leave the street lights on the existing poles.

Berkner asked how long does a wooden utility pole last?

Boogerd said a 30-foot wood pole may last 50 years if no one runs it over.

Marthaler asked how long an aluminum pole would last.

Boogerd said probably forever.

Siepkner asked if the aluminum poles are susceptible to corrosion.

Boogerd explained the aluminum poles are coated on the bottom and are galvanized. He noted the price difference between the wood and aluminum poles is \$500 but when broken down over the course of the next 50 years it's not that much.

Berkner said she liked the look of the aluminum poles.

Madden concurred with Berkner.

Boogerd said he was going to do a cost analysis, but pointed out there are also decorative fiberglass poles that look like aluminum that may be \$100 less and would be acceptable and aesthetically pleasing.

SIEPKER/MARTHALER moved and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the City Council to approve replacing wood street utility poles with aluminum or fiberglass poles for the South Street Project.

Siepkker asked Boogerd if the new street lights would be LED.

Boogerd said they would.

I & I SEWER SERVICE LINE – CAMERA SERVICE LINES

Skaret said this item on the agenda is more for informational purposes.

Skaret said he saw an interesting article in the most recent issue of the League of Minnesota Cities magazine. He noted the Utilities Commission has talked a lot about I&I (inflow and infiltration) in the past. Skaret said I&I is a serious problem for the City of Jackson. He pointed out there have been several times over the past few years where there have been extremely heavy rains that's caused the City's sewer system to be overloaded with clean water. Skaret said because of that, the City has had to bypass the Lift Stations which is bad for a number of reasons. Skaret said the City of Jackson is on the MPCA's (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency) radar and have been written up about that. He said the City is taking proactive measures. Skaret said Oxborough and his staff have been working really hard at identifying sources of I&I. He also noted the size of the force main was increased as part of the South Highway improvement project which is improving the flow of the sanitary sewer line which is good.

Skaret explained I&I has so many different potential sources such as sump pumps, cracks in resident's service lines that allows ground water to enter the system, leaks in the manhole covers, illegal connections and so many other possible sources.

Skaret said when the City does their AMI metering project, they are planning to do a sump pump inspection. He said that should also help to curb the I&I problem.

Referring to the article in the League of Minnesota Cities magazine, Skaret said when a home or business is sold in the City of West St. Paul, the City requires the person selling the property to have the sewer line televised before the property is sold. He said the seller is required to make the repairs to the sewer line if needed before the sale of the property is finalized.

Oxborough pointed out service line insurance is available. He said insurance is always a good idea and would be a good way to pay for service line repairs if they were needed.

Oxborough said during the upcoming reconstruction of North Highway and South Street, the connections from the old to the new sewer lines could also be checked and residential sewer lines checked with a camera. He noted that's what the City of Blue Earth does when they have a reconstruction project.

Berkner asked if the City of Jackson owns a camera.

Oxborough said the City does not.

Skaret said the cameras can be very expensive.

Oxborough said there are less expensive cameras on the market but at the same time you would want to get a camera that would last. He said there are cameras available that can record while you inspect a sewer line.

Berkner asked if approval was being sought from the Utilities Commission to purchase a camera to televise the sewer lines.

Skaret said not at this time. He said it's certainly something that can be looked into.

Regarding I&I, Oxborough pointed out in 2018, 60 percent of all the water that was pumped out to the City's lagoon ponds was rain water. He said there was more rain water pumped out to the ponds than sewage. Oxborough noted the City pays more money to pump rainwater out to the ponds than they do sewage.

Jenna Schwartz asked if there's a standard that cities try to meet regarding I&I or is it up to individual cities.

Oxborough explained the reason the City's ponds are 113 acres in size is because the City knew they had an issue with I&I. He said the primary are the two large ponds which was an expansion in the 1980's. Oxborough said the reason the ponds were built as large as they were is because rainwater gets into the sewer system. He said it was known there was a I&I problem already back then.

Other:

Mike Thurmer with question about sewer extension

Thurmer asked about a February 18th City Council agenda item regarding a sanitary sewer extension request.

Skaret said that had to do with the City's Sanitary Sewer Extension Project. He explained June 30th, 2020 was the date that was set for the Sanitary Sewer Extension Project to be completed according to the grant and loan agreements that the City had through PFA. He explained the project consisted of hooking up 26 residences to the City's sanitary sewer. Skaret said there are about 20 residences hooked up so far. He said there's one last leg of the project to complete which is the river crossing down on Petersburg Road and then completing the sanitary sewer going up the rest of South Highway 71. Skaret said there are about six properties left to be connected to the sanitary sewer line.

Skaret explained the high water in the river the past couple of years has held up the completion of the project.

Skaret said the PFA is aware of the situation with the high-water levels in the Des Moines River. He said he's been in communication with the PFA and their recommendation was to apply for an extension which the City did. Skaret said a one-year extension was requested. He said his latest correspondence indicated the PFA might be able to do a two-year extension so the City doesn't have to ask for another extension a year from now. Skaret said hopefully the Sanitary Sewer Extension Project will be completed this year, but with the weather you never know.

Thurmer thanked Skaret for the explanation.

AMI PROJECT UPDATE

MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Jeremy Boogerd reported 36 electric meters have arrived that will be the first meters to be installed as part of the AMI project. He said an official from the company contracted to install the AMI system will be in Jackson on February 27th to assist the Electric Department in installing the first meters and getting equipment set up with a laptop computer.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the Utilities Commission meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

David A. Maschoff, Recording Secretary

