

**UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING**  
**January 30, 2023**

A regular meeting of the City of Jackson Utilities Commission was held in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 4 p.m. on January 30, 2023 with the following persons present: Utilities Commission Chairman Kevin Siepker, Vice-Chairman Mike Schwartz and Commission members Joe Marthaler, Jenna Schwartz, Sandy Phillips and Dennis Hunwardsen. Also attending were City Administrator Matt Skaret, Water/Waste Water Superintendent Tony Oxborough, City Finance Officer Deb Mitchell and Recording Secretary Dave Maschoff. (Utilities Commission member Sara Mix, Street Superintendent Phil Markman and MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Tony Nitchals were absent.) (A quorum of the Utilities Commission was present.)

**OPEN THE MEETING**

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Chairman Kevin Siepker called the regular meeting of the Utilities Commission to order.

**APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 28, 2022 UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING**

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Siepker asked if there were any additions, corrections or issues regarding the minutes of the November 28, 2022 Utilities Commission meeting. Hearing none, Siepker declared the minutes approved as mailed.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

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**Water Department**

Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough reported work continues on installing new AMI water meters in homes. He said the Water Department received 216 antennas for the new water meters and they are down to 100 remaining as installations continue.

Oxborough said the Water Department staff were working on projects up until the end of the year. He said since the start of the new year, the Water Department staff has focused on installing AMI water meters.

Oxborough said the Water Department has had two water main breaks so far this winter. He said one water main break was behind the elevator and the other break was on River Street at the end of Bob Grunewald's driveway.

Oxborough said currently the frost level is at 43 inches deep. He said water line problems start to show up when the frost level reaches around 47 inches deep. Oxborough said most residents have problems with their water lines when the frost reach 48 inches.

Oxborough said SEH will be returning with a report on the City Water Plant's media filter.

Skaret reported the Minnesota Department of Health gave their approval for the City to move forward with the Water Plant's Media Filter Replacement/Rehab Project. At the next City Council meeting, Skaret said authorization will be sought from the Council to solicit bids for the project. He said the Media Filter Project is anticipated to get underway during the upcoming construction season.

## **GIS PROPOSALS**

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Skaret noted the Utilities Commission has talked about GIS on and off for the past couple of years. He said the Commission had heard a general presentation in March of 2022 from engineering firm SEH about what GIS is and how it can be used.

Skaret said the City also received quotes regarding GIS proposals from two other engineering firms.

Skaret explained there's a number of reasons the City is looking at having a GIS program. He said one of the reasons is because there's a new requirement being implemented that requires cities to have a physical inventory of their water service lines and which ones are made of lead. Skaret said the City will be required to keep an inventory of service lines, particularly those made of lead. He noted as Water Department personnel have been installing new AMI water meters, they have been doing an inventory on what type of material resident's water service lines are made of such as copper, lead, PVC or plastic.

Oxborough said he would estimate 95 percent of the water service lines are copper coming up through the basement floor.

Skaret said the City has to inventory the water service lines and the City needs a data management system in order to do that.

Skaret noted the City has paper maps. He said the City is trying to get away from paper maps because papers get destroyed or lost. Skaret said some things aren't even on paper maps but sometimes they're in people's heads. He said a lot of cities are going to GIS mapping, particularly on getting the water, sewer and storm sewer lines mapped. In addition, Skaret said the GIS mapping can also show the intake structures. He said all the information can be put on computer and it will show how deep the intake structures are, what the direction is and the diameter of the pipe.

Skaret said the GIS system will better enable the City. He explained the GIS mapping will allow the City to show developers where infrastructure is located. Skaret said the GIS will make it a lot easier to look up information rather than having to rummage through a bunch of paper maps or go out into the field and do some eyeballing and guesstimating on where things are at based on what can be seen from above.

Skaret said the City received GIS proposals from three engineering firms. He said implementing a GIS system is something the City has budgeted for this year. Skaret said engineers from Bolton and Menk gave a GIS demonstration to City Department heads a few weeks ago.

Skaret said the City's new engineer, Troy Nemmers of Bolton and Menk and John Shain, Principal GIS Project Manager at Bolton and Menk were joining the Utilities Commission meeting via Zoom. He explained Shain is a GIS Specialist and the GIS System is basically a system that Shain designed and manages out of the Mankato office of Bolton and Menk.

Skaret said since it's been awhile since the Utilities Commission has had a GIS demonstration, it would be good to have a refresher. He said Shain is joining the Utilities Commission meeting via Zoom to present an overview of Bolton and Menk's GIS system. Skaret welcomed Shain to the meeting.

Shain thanked Skaret for the introduction. He said he's been with Bolton and Menk for 23 years. Shain said he manages the GIS team which consists of 23 individuals within Bolton and Menk.

Shain said the GIS team at Bolton and Menk currently manages roughly 100 or so web-based GIS applications for different entities within the upper Midwest, mainly in Minnesota and Iowa.

Shain continued his presentation showing the features and benefits of the web-based GIS application that's offered by Bolton and Menk. Using the Smart Screen in the City Council Chambers, Shain showed the Utilities Commission members examples of the web-based GIS application and how it could be used by the City of Jackson. He provided examples how the GIS application has been used by other communities to map streets, utilities, compiling an inventory of water lines, along with providing other features such as visual inspections of manhole structures. Shain said the GIS system can also provide real-time information of who the taxpayer is of a particular property. He noted, in addition to mapping the location of streets and utilities, the GIS system can also contain historical information about when water or sewer lines were installed and related information. Shain pointed out how the maps and information stored in the GIS system can be brought up through either a smart phone, a tablet or a web browser by anybody who has access to the system. He also showed how information in the GIS system can be edited and added onto. Shain noted information, such as the different zoning areas within the City, can also be included in the GIS system.

Shain said if the City chose Bolton and Menk to implement the GIS system, they would begin data collection this summer.

Siepkner asked what the cost would be to implement Bolton and Menk's web-based GIS application.

Skaret said the cost for Bolton and Menk to do the data collection and get the GIS program started is just under \$40,000.

Siepkner asked if City staff can add things to the maps and information once the GIS system is up and running.

Skaret said once the initial data is completed, City staff can add and edit information onto the system as the City does more projects going forward.

Oxborough explained initially, engineering students gather all the information to be entered into the GIS system. He said City staff can then build off that system.

Skaret said the biggest challenge and most time consuming will be the initial data collection.

Oxborough said having a digital platform of the City's utilities would be helpful. He pointed out all the information would be located in one place. Oxborough noted a lot of the maps for the Water Department have already been scanned into a computer so digital copies of that information could be provided in the data collection for the GIS system.

Jenna Schwartz asked about the annual subscription cost for Bolton and Menk's GIS system.

Skaret said there would be an annual subscription cost for the ArcGIS Online which would be \$1,000. He said there would also be an additional cost for each user who would have access to the System.

Oxborough said Bolton and Menk noted it's allowed to have one user account per City Department.

Phillips asked if there would be an annual fee for Bolton and Menk to manage the GIS system.

Shain said there is no set annual fee for Bolton and Menk to manage the GIS system. He said all subscription fees will be paid directly to the Esri Software Company.

Siepkner asked if the City's electrical system would also be included in the GIS System.

Skaret said there was an extensive discussion about that. He explained the City uses a different engineering firm for the electric system, but that data can be inputted into the GIS system proposed by Bolton and Menk.

Shain concurred with Skaret that the electric information could be included and updated in the proposed GIS system from Bolton and Menk.

Mike Schwartz said as a real estate agent, he can go on the Beacon website and find where property lines are located for property in Martin County. He said he can see where the GIS System would be very beneficial for the City Departments.

Siepkner asked Skaret what action was needed by the Utilities Commission.

Skaret said a motion was needed for a recommendation from the Utilities Commission to the City Council to accept Bolton and Menk's GIS proposal.

Marthaler asked what the City had budgeted for a GIS system.

Skaret explained the City had actually budgeted quite a bit more than the \$40,000 for the Bolton and Menk GIS proposal. He noted the cost for the other two proposals that had been submitted were considerably more expensive. Skaret said he thinks it's handy having Bolton and Menk 30 miles down the road at Fairmont verses having a company 100 or 80 miles down the road. He also said Bolton and Menk is familiar with Jackson already and has a lot of the City's system information already on file. Skaret said he thinks Bolton and Menk's proximity and their knowledge of Jackson plays a big role in being much more affordable.

Hunwardsen asked if all three proposals submitted were all for the same thing.

Skaret said they were. He said it's about as apples to apples as you can get.

Hunwardsen noted the big difference in the costs between the three proposals.

**JOE MARTHALER/MIKE SCHWARTZ moved and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the City Council to accept the GIS Proposal from Bolton and Menk.**

Skaret thanked Nemmers and Shain for attending the Utilities Commission meeting and their presentation.

Shain said it was their pleasure to attend.

## **SNOW EMERGENCIES AND TRASH PICKUP**

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Commission member Mike Schwartz outlined situations this winter where Waste Management has or has not come to Jackson to pick up garbage when City Snow Emergencies have been declared. Schwartz noted while his trash cans were out on the street ready to be picked up, a snowplow struck them dumping trash all over that he had to pick up. He noted other residents have experienced the same situation.

Mike Schwartz said Waste Management needs to make an announcement earlier that they won't be picking up the trash on the regular trash day because a lot of residents set their trash out the night before on Wednesday evening. He said he asked to have Snow Emergencies and Trash Pick Up put on the Utilities Commission agenda. Schwartz said he would like to have contact made with Waste Management to see what can be done about making an announcement earlier if they aren't going to pick up trash on their normal Thursday pick up day.

City Finance Officer Deb Mitchell explained Waste Management determines whether they are going to pick up trash in Jackson based on the road conditions and if visibility is poor. She said Waste Management stated that they're not going to send their trucks out if visibility is where you can't see the road. Mitchell said on the day Schwartz was referring to, Waste Management explained they didn't know until that morning how bad the weather and road conditions were going to be and that's when they decided not to pick up garbage. Mitchell said none of the City Office Staff knew Waste Management wasn't going to pick up garbage that day before they arrived for work. Mitchell said Waste Management had put an announcement on the local radio station, and they called City Hall at 7:30 a.m. when the office staff arrived that they wouldn't be picking up garbage that day.

Mike Schwartz pointed out that by that time the garbage had already been set out on the street the night before. He said the snowplows are out working at 5:30 a.m. to 6 a.m. so that damage is already done. Schwartz said he was frustrated as the snowplow went by and knocked over the garbage can and it seemed like the plow driver didn't care.

Skaret noted his garbage can has also been knocked over by the snowplow in the past, so the plow drivers don't discriminate.

Phillips said her garbage can didn't get knocked over, but it was covered up with snow. She said she was hoping Waste Management would see her garbage can.

Jenna Schwartz asked where the Waste Management trucks travel from.

Skaret said they travel from Fairmont.

Mike Schwartz said he was wondering if the City could do something and contact Waste Management about possibly making the announcement earlier that they aren't going to pick up trash so residents don't set their trash containers out and possibly get them knocked over by the snowplow.

Siepkner said he thinks the biggest issue is telling the snowplow drivers to watch for the garbage cans and don't plow them over. He noted that was a problem in the Twin Cities as well where a couple blocks of garbage cans got knocked over by snowplows and it made the news.

Hunwardsen said people will then complain about the snow that's around their garbage cans if the snowplow plows around them. He noted when it's going to be stormy, he just doesn't put the garbage out and waits to have it picked up the following week.

Mike Schwartz said that's probably what he's going to do from now on.

Siepkner said the snowplow drivers could be told to be more careful.

Skaret said he doesn't know if the snowplow drivers try to knock the garbage cans over.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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With no further business, Chairman Siepkner asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**JENNA SCHWARTZ/SANDY PHILLIPS moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Utilities Commission meeting at 4:43 p.m.**

Siepkner thanked everyone for attending.

Skaret noted the next Utilities Commission meeting would be held on February 27<sup>th</sup>.

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**David A. Maschoff, Recording Secretary**



