

UTILITIES COMMISSION MINUTES
June 25, 2018

A regular meeting of the City of Jackson Utilities Commission was held in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 4 p.m. on June 25, 2018 with the following persons present: Utilities Commission members Chairperson Gayl Berkner, Vice Chairperson Kevin Siepker and Mike Thurmer. Also in attendance were City Administrator Matt Skaret, MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Jeremy Boogerd, Water Department Superintendent Tony Oxborough, Street Superintendent Phil Markman and Recording Secretary Dave Maschoff. (Utilities Commission members Wendell Sohn, Joe Marthaler, Mike Schwartz and Ken Temple were absent.) (A quorum of the Utilities Commission was not present.)

Chairperson Berkner called the Utilities Commission meeting to order and noted a quorum of the Commission was not present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MAY 21, 2018 MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes from the May 21, 2018 Utilities Commission meeting. Hearing no additions or corrections, Chairperson Berkner declared these minutes approved as mailed.

Departmental Reports

Water Department

Water Superintendent Tony Oxborough described how the Water Department handled the recent heavy rains. He said they had to discharge into the Des Moines River for 12 hours at approximately 200 gallons a minute due to Lift Station Number 2 overflowing along with a combination of problems pumping into the river. He noted Water Department employee Ron Bezdicek worked through the night. Oxborough said he and other City employees also worked late into the night due to the vast amount of water.

Oxborough reported the City's lagoon ponds went up four inches in a day just from the rain. He said the ponds are at 5.8 feet. Oxborough said storage-wise the pond's capacity is only 6 feet. He said other communities are facing the same situation, so the State of Minnesota is talking about another discharge. Oxborough said the City has already done two discharges this year. He said the City would be out of compliance doing the extra discharge, but since many communities are in the same situation, it will probably be allowed. Oxborough explained they will be discharging into the Des Moines River which is currently at a very, very high level. He added any discharge will be diluted so it will be fine. Oxborough said Jackson is in the same situation as many other communities.

Oxborough said the lift station located at Torgerson Lane and Industrial Parkway had a hard time keeping up with the amount of water flow. He said the pond the water flows to was backing up and was flowing in the opposite direction. Oxborough said Ron Bezidcek noted it's the first time he's ever seen the ditches that full of water in the Industrial Park area in the 28 years he's worked for the Water Department. Oxborough said the water was almost crossing the street in that area. He said some of the overflow water coming into the City's system was also due to infiltration. Oxborough said the concrete structures on the manholes on Industrial Parkway are starting to deteriorate and the water flows in the sides. He said the manholes are in need of repair to prevent infiltration.

Markman explained overtime the gases and conditions causes the cement structures in the manholes to get porous. He said it's basically a closed system and if the manhole covers are vented, then you get that much more water infiltration.

Oxborough said it was a good thing one business on Torgerson Lane had a check-valve on their sanitary sewer line or their basement would have been full.

In other news, Oxborough reported Josh Gruhlke began working on June 25th as a Wastewater Maintenance Worker in the Water Department.

Skaret said over time the goal is to get Gruhlke licensed so he'll be able help out in other areas of the Water Department.

Electric Department

MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Jeremy Boogerd reported a MRES employee was in Jackson to conduct infrared inspections for large commercial accounts and overhead lines etc. He said a report was received and the Electric Department started to make repairs based on that report. Boogerd said they have a few repairs left to do for Pioneer and AGCO. He noted they will be replacing a switch that will affect several businesses around AGCO along with one of AGCO's buildings for a few hours on June 27th.

Boogerd reported the Electric Department has completed two small underground projects, one behind a business downtown and another behind the Crystal Valley Elevator.

Boogerd said the contractor began work last week on this year's underground electric project. He said the Electric Department has also been doing maintenance work from the winter and installing street light wire on Torgerson Lane. He said they are also getting some things ready for the new liquor store and another new occupant on Torgerson Lane.

Boogerd reported they replaced four relays in the downtown electric substation. He said the analog relays were updated to new digital relays. Boogerd said the digital relays can provide a lot more information and monitor such things as measuring how much electricity each circuit is putting out. He said four more relays will be replaced next year.

Street Department

Street Superintendent Phil Markman said the Street Department has started to patch streets between rain showers. He said they fixed one spot on Sherry Lane and Sayles Drive where there was a water main break. Markman said they also completed half a patch on Becky Drive and are waiting for the weather to clear up to finish that.

Markman reported Pearson Brothers were awarded the bid for this year's street seal coating. He said Pearson Brothers have done the seal coating in Jackson for the last three or four years and do a good job. Markman said the Street Department is fixing the streets to be seal coated so they're ready to go when Pearson's arrive.

Markman said there are two trees to take down in Ashley Park. He said the summer park help has been keeping up with mowing the best they can with the rain we've received.

Markman said the Street Department has also been working on the alleys by grading and hauling in material and getting them shaped up. He reported the alleys they did last year held up very well through the winter. Markman said they are putting recycled asphalt on the alleys instead of gravel and it has really worked well. Markman said he's received compliments from residents on how well the alleys have held up through all the wet weather and how well they look.

Markman said once the weather cooperates, the Street Department will complete street patching. He said they have repaired six or seven storm sewer intakes that were bad. Markman said they are fixing them as they go and are making a list of the storm sewer intakes that need a total rebuild.

Siepkner asked what's happened to the street signs.

Markman said the street signs have been replaced with new reflective street signs. He said the signs have been updated and are now located on the same poles as traffic signs which cleans up the intersections by having less poles. Markman said once all the street signs are replaced, a decision will be made on what to do with the old street signs.

Siepkner noted the need for residents to put their address numbers on their houses.

Skaret said the City will need to start a campaign to get residents to put address numbers on their homes.

UPDATE ON THE TORGERSON LANE WATER MAIN EXTENSION PROJECT

Skaret said basically the Torgerson Lane Water Main project is completed. He said there were difficulties encountered with the project.

Oxborough explained the project was scheduled to be completed in eight days and it took 14-and-a-half days. He noted problems included the contractor being short of staff, having inexperienced workers on the project, along with other matters that occurred during the project.

Skaret explained the contractor is claiming additional costs because of the extra supplies they needed to use and the extra work that went into the project. Skaret said the contractor's claims are under discussion. Skaret noted the City imposed liquidated damages on the contractor because of the extra time and inspections it needed to complete the project.

Thurmer asked how the Torgerson Lane Water Main Extension Project is being paid for.

Skaret said the project is being paid for out of the City's Water Fund.

Thurmer said years ago the cost of the project would have been assessed back to the property owners who are benefiting from the improvement.

Skaret said it becomes a point of where you draw the line of who's benefiting directly and who's benefiting indirectly. He said it's a public benefit.

Oxborough explained the installation of the water main extension project was part of the rate study that was done for the Water Department. He said the Torgerson Lane Water Main Extension Project was a part of the ground storage tank project. Oxborough explained it's a looped system so it will actually increase the water flow for fire protection on Torgerson Lane and for future development. He said the JEDC (Jackson Economic Development Corporation) owns most of the property around that area. Oxborough noted the proposed new building that's going to be constructed along Torgerson Lane is already going to benefit from the water main extension.

Thurmer recalled the downtown Jackson renovation project in the 1980's and that everything was assessed to the downtown property owners. He noted interest rates at the time were at 16 to 17 percent. Thurmer commented if you have property downtown you pay dearly for everything. He pointed out when there's a water main project in a new development it gets billed to the lots that will benefit from it. Thurmer said the water main project on Torgerson Lane ties into the lots in the Industrial Park, nothing downtown.

Skaret said the Torgerson Lane Water Main Extension Project benefits the City as a whole.

Thurmer commented the improvements to downtown Jackson in the 1980's benefited the whole City. Thurmer said he hears complaints from residents about who's paying for improvements. He said he asking what the City Council's policy is today regarding assessments for improvements. Thurmer said he would like the Utilities Commission to be informed on what the City's assessment policy for improvements is today.

Skaret said he would need to find out what the City's special assessment policy is. He noted a project like the Torgerson Lane Water Main Extension Project is looping the water system and improving the City's water system as a whole.

Thurmer noted the Circle Drive project was all paid for by the City which included water, sewer, streets, curb and gutter. He said the improvements weren't even assessed to the owners. Thurmer said the Utilities Commission needs to have feedback about projects as a Commission.

Markman said he doesn't believe the improvements to State Street, Benjamin Street, Circle Drive and Fairview were assessed to any homeowner along those streets. Markman noted the City has also stopped assessing for seal coating on the streets.

Berkner said the Utilities Commission needs that information regarding the City's assessment policy.

Skaret said he would look into whether the City has a special assessment policy.

Thurmer said he would appreciate that.

UPDATE ON THE NEW WATER STORAGE AND WATER PLANT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Skaret said things are moving forward on the new water storage and water plant improvement project. He said July 12th is the date when bids will be received for the project. Skaret said the bid date was moved back to allow for more contractors to submit bids. He explained moving the bid date back at this point doesn't really have a detrimental effect on the project.

Skaret said the City has been working through some of the logistics with the neighboring property on getting easements and accommodating the adjacent property owner's needs because they will be directly impacted during construction.

Skaret said he thinks everything is worked out now and paperwork is being finalized. He said the project is coming together nicely.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

David A. Maschoff, Recording Secretary

