



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, April 06, 2022

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Patrick Birkle – 1:09 p.m.
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz
Councilor Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Jacob Graichen, City Planner

Sharon Darroux, Engineering Manager
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Bill Monahan, City Attorney
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Robert Brawand	Peter Olsen
Lynne Pettit	Trenton Buster
Steve Toschi	Ryan Makinster
Steve Donovan	Amy Bynum

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 1 p.m.

VISITOR COMMENTS - *Limited to five (5) minutes per speaker*

None

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. **Water Systems Master Plan Update - *Peter Olsen & Trenton Buster with Keller Associates, Inc.***

Peter Olsen and Trenton Buster were in attendance to review the Water Systems Master Plan update. A copy of their presentation is included in the archive packet for this meeting. They reviewed the need, purpose, usage, supply, storage, demands for fire flow, etc.

Recommendations

- Repair existing 2.0MG reservoir and construct new 4.0MG reservoir
 - Reviewed reservoir location recommendations
- Continue with reported operations and maintenance activities at Water Filtration Facility
- Complete annual water audit to determine unaccounted for water
- Continue with reported flushing program
- Develop valve exercising and replacement program
- Inspect storage reservoirs every 5-10 years
- Continue with waterline replacement program
- Continue with water meter replacement
- Develop leak detection program and incorporate into waterline replacement program

- Continue to develop public education

Review of replacement program and staffing needs.

Council President Morten referred to the word "safe" in their Mission Statement. Safety is of the utmost importance and is one of the main reasons he is serving. The State Fire Marshal's Office has designated the Dalton Lake area as a catastrophic fire zone. It is full of dry brush during the summer. The fire department won't go there because there is not enough pressure in the fire hydrants and a fire truck could get trapped. New residential units are required to have an 80-foot turnaround for fire trucks. The City hasn't moved forward to increase pressure in that area. It's an unsafe place to live, in terms of fire, and what can happen if the winds blow towards Pittsburg Road, where there is a massive number of homes. He is disappointed that fire safety is not included in the report. Peter responded that fire flow demands are what drives the need and efficiencies in a water system. It is addressed in the report, just not at the level of fire risk. He appreciates the input.

Questions from Councilor Topaz

- Referring to fire danger, are they referring to one dwelling or multiple? Peter responded that it's based on one event.
- Can five fire trucks connect to five different hydrants at the same time and have the same service? Peter said you probably wouldn't have that anywhere.
- Councilor Topaz spoke about the industrial area and highly flammable businesses. What was the level of firefighting? Peter said it's 3,500 gallons per minute for a four-hour event. They work with the fire department to determine what is required.
- They use the term "membrane" in filtration. Is it a particulate membrane or soluble membrane? Peter would have to ask their Process Engineers that question. It's Pall membrane.
- If someone dumps a constant flow of soluble material in the river, how can the system handle it? Peter said that is not analyzed as part of the report.
- They put chlorine in the pumping areas. Do they analyze the level of chemistry when it gets to a residence? Peter said they did not do a chlorine dissipation analysis. They work with operators who do the testing regularly and know what the chlorine residual is throughout the system. If there is an issue, it may be in the storage reservoir or the system. The model that has been developed as part of their scope can be utilized to further analyze those things. Council President Morten asked if the chlorine would settle to the lowest point if it's not continuously moving. Peter said it would dissipate. Discussion of the smell of chlorine. Peter said if you can smell it, it is active in the water. Mayor Scholl pointed out that this is for the Water Master Plan. If they want more details, they need to discuss it with Engineering Manager Sharon Darroux or staff at the Water Filtration Facility.
- If a major main breaks during an emergency, will it compromise the entire system? Peter said there is an entire part of the report addressing that. The most vulnerable part is the Pittsburg Road line, which is recommended for replacement.
- A large reservoir was discussed. Does the system have any automatic pressure controls? Trenton said there is one in the Elk Ridge development.
- Are there maintenance schedules for control systems? Trenton said they recommend valve exercising. Peter added that they also recommend a regular flushing program. There are parts of the system that are very fragile and recommended for replacement.
- Talked about major water flows for industrial fires. How easy would it be to triple water flows for industrial areas? Peter said it's not easy at all. It would be very expensive to increase pipe sizes.

Mayor Scholl addressed future fires. They have a big water tank and water rights to the pumps at Boise Cascade. It's partially being used by Boise. There is a huge water filtration facility there. Could the City

look at that to alleviate a section of town? Peter said they could have a separate fire hydrant system. Mixing the systems becomes a risk.

Councilor Chilton said they mentioned unaccounted water that can be improved by 18% and the average is 10%. Was that a part of their note with developed protection program? Is that something Public Works can investigate? Peter said leak detection, documentation, hydrant flushing, and meter replacement are all important. Public Works is already addressing it.

Councilor Birkle thanked them for their report. He concurs with addressing fire safety issues.

Council President Morten said they drained the reservoir several times. Does that factor into the high percentage Councilor Chilton referenced? Peter said yes.

2. System Development Charges (SDCs) Update - *Steve Donovan with Donovan Enterprises, Inc.*

Finance Director Brown reported that the goal at the end of the presentation is for Council to give direction on how to move forward. No decisions need to be made.

Steve Donovan reviewed the SDC report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- SDCs are one-time fees on new development, which are paid at the time of development.
- SDCs are intended to recover a fair share of the cost of existing and planned facilities that provide capacity to serve future growth. It cannot be used for repairs or replacement.
- Single family residential units pay approximately \$13,614.
- Reviewed limitations of SDCs for infrastructure funding.
- Reviewed the breakdown of increasing SDCs to approximately \$18,811.
- Reviewed SDC rates for other cities.

Mayor Scholl asked when the rates were last adjusted. Steve said it was done in 2017. They were only increased a small percentage because they didn't have updated master plans.

Council President Morten asked how it affects storm with the apartment units being built. Steve agreed that there will be a lot of water runoff. Brown said the large development already paid for their permits, at the current rate.

Steve recommends raising rates on July 1st to \$18,811 to pay for growth. They can choose not to raise rates and have rate payers pay for growth.

Councilor Topaz talked about stormwater. What happens if the City raised the roads and changed the landscape, so the water from the impervious surface no longer flows into the City, but the City flows into them? Does that affect SDCs? Steve responded that there is still localized flooding and water quality issues.

Mayor Scholl asked if he has projected future costs going up. Steve said no. It's a snapshot every five years. They need to adjust for inflation, which they have not been doing. They've used the numbers in the master plan, which is the best guess at the time.

Mayor Scholl said the City plans to put a park on Ross Road. They acquired adjacent property to extend sewer and water through there. Could they factor that project into SDCs for that area? Steve said yes. As long as there's nothing there now and they're building for future growth, you can do it. Mayor Scholl asked if SDCs could be used to pay for repairing deficiencies that are due to growth put on existing lines. Steve concurred that it could be partially paid for with SDCs for growth.

Discussion of the Urban Growth Area. City Planner Graichen explained that they approved the housing needs analysis a few years ago. It confirmed that they had sufficient land at that time. They cannot expand their Urban Growth Boundary.

Council President Morten talked about the storm SDC tripling. That is a huge surprise. He wonders why that was not accounted for in the budget. Mayor Scholl clarified that Council President Morten is referring to rates. Steve said it's a function of the Capital Improvement Plan and is attributed to serve growth.

Councilor Chilton knows this will be a heated topic. She would like to see what the potential results could be in the rate study. What are users paying for?

Councilor Topaz said the sewer system is inadequate. If there's a new federal or state rule about what the system needs to handle, is that considered new or a repair? Steve said it would be paid for by the rate payer.

Council President Morten asked Brown what effect the stormwater will have on the budget. Brown responded that stormwater SDCs will not have a budgetary effect because it doesn't affect operations. They will be reviewing utility rates and updated master plans for operations and maintenance in May. They know where the deficiencies are now and where they should be. The deficiencies are caused from years of past predecessors not increasing rates. It's a difficult budget year. They can put their head in the sand or start making upgrades.

Councilor Birkle agreed with the need to communicate this well with the public. If he were a developer, he would not want to see these increases, but he would not want to take it on as a resident.

City Administrator Walsh talked about rates being the significant contributor to repair and replacement. They couldn't charge enough to pay for all of it.

Mayor Scholl pointed out that predecessors didn't plan for the future. They must be proactive for future growth. The sewer is sufficient for now. He has talked about sharing a sewer with Scappoose between the two. NW Natural even said they would help with laying pipes. Columbia County Commissioners agreed to collect SDCs from properties outside the City UGB. Steve said utilities is all about scale. When they developed in the 1950's and 1960's, they had industrial development subsidizing residents.

Councilor Chilton wants to have a more secure plan in place for utility rates to make sure they're not in this situation again. Council President Morten agreed. Predecessors did not go forward because they got pressure from builders and the economy did not help facilitate building at that time.

Mayor Scholl said this is big and shocking. He talked about development costs increasing. The big one will be the utility rate increase they discuss next month.

Brown said staff was reactive for a long time. With new staff, they see the importance of being proactive. The benefit needs to be communicated well with the public.

3. Discussion regarding Sanitary Sewer Deficiency & Development - *Sharon & Jacob*

Engineering Manager Darroux reviewed the city's sewer lines. They fixed about 20% of the sewers in the early 2000's as part of the Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) project mandated by DEQ. Now they have a capacity issue. A full master plan was done last in 1989. That's 33 years that they have been using the very old plan, which did not account for growth. Over the last couple years, they have been working with Keller Associates to update the Water and Wastewater master plans. The Wastewater Master Plan was adopted in November. Population has almost doubled in size since 1989. She pointed out the sewer lines that are at capacity and where potential overflows could occur on the map, a copy of which is included in the archive packet for this meeting. For example, the Comstock property would flow into the line on Sykes Road. It's at capacity. The main issue is the interceptor on 4th Street that runs from Godfrey Park over to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The 1989 master plan even said there were capacity issues. Councilor Topaz interrupted to say that the City has had problems with him on the sewer and the fact that they got rid of stormwater on that very thing. Mayor Scholl pointed out that is not relevant to the master plan. Sharon went on to talk about the known problems with undersized lines. There has been a lot of new development connecting to existing lines, which doesn't have capacity. Mayor Scholl recommends

redirecting from 2nd Street through the Riverfront Development and the Olde School to take pressure off 4th Street. Darroux added the only adequate trunkline is on Millard Road. There are multiple lines that are inadequate.

City Planner Graichen reviewed three options:

- Do nothing and assume that SDCs and utility rates will take care of it, and address issues as they happen.
- Require a fee that is in addition to SDCs for anyone tapping into these systems. Steve explained that other communities do this. You can add a condition for developers to pay a fee in-leu-of building a system. The City is under capacity. There is no SDC eligibility. Most communities borrow money to fix these issues. Basin six is the highest priority. To improve basins four and six, would cost approximately \$10.2 million. Only \$460,000 could be used from SDCs to fix that. Basin five would need to be improved about two years after that. They would continue to take on debt. Residential users are currently paying about \$46.95 for sewer. If they borrow the money for the two projects in these phases and they use cash reserves in the sewer fund, they will have to raise rates 8% per year for the next five years to get to \$68.90. It would fix the problem and serve growth. After those five years, it will need to go up again to keep up with an aging system. Sewer systems are a corrosive environment for metals. Councilor Topaz asked if it would be cheaper to put in a whole new system. Darroux said repair is much cheaper. They may have to at some point. They already have a blown-out trench. Councilor Topaz said a new system could go somewhere else for treatment. There are sewer systems that pre-date 1913. Steve said they don't have a treatment problem. It's a collection problem. Councilor Topaz argued that the sewer system was installed 30 years ago. New rules have been implemented during that time. Steve pointed out that they are still operating under a valid NPDES permit. Councilor Topaz said that Art Leskowich, who is with the Army Corp of Engineers, talked about some problems coming up with the treatment plant. Darroux emphasized that the issue is with the collection system. They could put treatment plants all over, but if the pipes aren't adequate it will back up through manholes into streets and backyards. Steve said it can be fixed, accommodate growth, and serve the environment with the rate increase. Darroux said they could be fined by the State if they don't fix the problem.
- Prohibit or delay development. It's not easy and there are processes to follow. Steve confirmed that it has been done by other communities. Councilor Chilton pointed out that it still doesn't fix the problem.

Discussion ensued about future trunkline locations. Mayor Scholl suggests they add a line from Bings to the Fairgrounds, with a big trunkline at Chad Davis and Don Danielson's development and run down Gable Road to alleviate the Sykes Road line. Peter pointed out that it would still not fix the existing problem.

Darroux is seeking direction from Council on which option they prefer.

Councilor Chilton suggests they halt building until they know how to handle the problem. Mayor Scholl disagreed. Graichen explained that they can't just make a motion to do that. It's a process with notice to the State and a public hearing. Mayor Scholl went on to say they are aware of the problem. Staff is working on a solution. He is in favor of in-leu-of fees to allow development to continue. Brown said if they do the in-leu-of fee they don't move forward with the debt service. It was clarified that they can do both. Mayor Scholl wants to direct staff to look at 4th Street coming down Columbia Blvd. to include 2nd Street. Council President Morten suggests tying it all in with the Waterfront Development while it's trenched. Everything is gravity fed to where they want it.

Mayor Scholl reported that staff received a call about the Comstock property that was recently annexed. They found out that they can't develop until the City allows growth. Graichen recommends Council give clear guidance tonight during their work session action items.

Councilor Chilton asked about relief funds from the government. Has any of it been allocated for streets or stormwater projects. Brown said they have allocated \$400,000 for water and sewer infrastructure. However, that infrastructure is intended for the Industrial Business Park.

Council President Morten asked if there is additional Federal money available. Steve said yes. The money will be allocated to the states and predicated to the neediest first, based on median household income. They may be in a good position with their household income.

Steve said they need to discuss the fee-in-leu-of concept. He suggests they obtain advice from their attorney.

Break - 3:19 p.m.

4. Discussion to Initiate Vacation of Right-of-Way by Motion related to the Public Safety Facility - *Jacob*

City Planner Graichen reviewed his report and map. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. Graichen said this is their opportunity to get rid of the 7th Street right-of-way shown on the map. It needs to be done through a vacation. He needs a motion and approval at tonight's meeting for the Council to initiate the vacation process. There will be a public hearing in the future.

5. Review "If I Were Mayor..." Student Contest Entries

Four posters, three essays, and two digital presentations were received. A copy of the submittals is included in the archive packet for this meeting. Ballots were distributed to the Council. The winners will be announced at tonight's meeting.

6. Report from City Administrator John Walsh

- Tonight's agenda includes the fireworks contract. It's a \$20,000 show.
- Council received a request for a leak adjustment. It exceeds the administrative adjustment amount allowed. Councilor Topaz asked how the leak was discovered. Walsh was not sure. A decision will be made at tonight's meeting. These come up occasionally. Council can make a policy revision to allow Finance Director Brown to make the adjustments if they would like to see these less often. Mayor Scholl announced that the gentleman requesting additional time to pay did pay his bill in full last month.
- The Riverfront Development RFQ closed on Friday. They received two responses from very qualified firms. He would like to schedule an opportunity for developers to come in and present to Council. He distributed a tentative schedule, a copy of which is included in the archive packet for this meeting.
 - Special Session for presentations from developers on May 11th at 4 p.m. It will be open for the public to attend in-person, or watch via Zoom or YouTube, but he recommends not allowing public comments. The proposals will be distributed electronically to Council, three Planning Commission members, citizen-at-large Al Petersen, Associate Planner, Public Works Director, Engineering Manager, and himself. Discussion about adding more at-large members. Consensus to add Parks & Trails Commission Chair Carmin Dunn and Superintendent Scott Stockwell, or a designated School Board member.
 - Special Session for deliberations on May 18th
 - There will be a later opportunity for public comment
- Public Safety Facility update
 - Good progress on design
 - Fill and grade portion is almost ready for permitting. Saving money by doing it in-house.
- Riverwalk, Columbia View Park re-design, and street design update

- Funding and construction are moving along well
- A couple months delayed on the Columbia View Park re-design. Council President Morten talked about the Parks & Recreation Division working on the Parks Master Plan. He encouraged good communication. Walsh agreed. It's essentially the change in scope for the play equipment. It will be moved towards Cowlitz Street. Council President Morten would like to share that information with the Parks & Recreation Commission when it's available. Councilor Chilton asked if the Parks Master Plan is complete. Council President Morten said no. They are still in the brainstorming phase.
- The events audit is being wrapped up. He received the tourism draft contract back from the attorney yesterday. They are calling it an Independent Contractor Agreement. There are no red flags from the audit yet. It explains why the City should not be in this business. He should have both ready for review at the next meeting.
- Working to reignite the Central Waterfront project. There is available money from the State Legislature. The project also has potential to create revenue.
- Dock update
 - Installed kiosks. The fee is less important than the tracking and enforcement.
 - Working on a camera system
- Call to action from the Senate and House for directed spending requests
 - Milton Creek Bridge
 - Technology upgrades for the public safety facility and fire station
- Armstrong accepted an offer from Dansons
- Meeting internally with Columbia River Fire & Rescue to identify needs. They are looking to relocate the fire station on the other side of the highway to a centrally located property.
- Library screening interviews on March 28th. There were seven interviews and two will return for an in-person interview on April 18th.
- There are challenges with the City budget and meeting infrastructure and public safety needs

ADJOURN – 4:16 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl

Rick Scholl, Mayor