

UTILITIES COMMITTEE MINUTES

OF APRIL 23, 2018

Municipal Council of the City of Vermilion
Municipal Complex, 685 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio 44089

In Attendance: **Vermilion City Council:**
Steve Herron, President of Council; Monica Stark, Council at Large; John Gabriel, Ward One; Frank Loucka, Ward Two; Steve Holoavacs, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; Brian Holmes, Ward Five.

Administration:
Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Tony Valerius, Service Director; Chris Howard, City Engineer; Amy Hendricks, Finance Director

Call to Order: Steve Holoavacs, Chairman, RESOLVED THAT this Utilities Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

TOPIC ONE: Update on Recycling, Rates, Etc. (Republic Services)

S. Holoavacs tabled this item to the May meeting as Dave Kidder was unable to attend.

B. Brady asked the mayor if he was aware of how long the city's contract was in effect for. T. Valerius believed it expires in 2020. B. Brady said a consortium was formed in Lorain County that they may want to look into. Mayor Forthofer said if council wants to exercise some alternative discussion with somebody else, then they can go to Republic voicing the areas they are dissatisfied with and point out areas of suggestive relief for a better contract. B. Brady said it might be worth seeing if there is a consortium and to review their rates, so they have something they can go to Republic with.

S. Holoavacs said they need to look at the recycling program and if they do it right it could save Republic Services money and the city money. They need to refresh the citizens on what is recyclable, so they don't use the recycled container as a second garbage can. He thought flyers or notices should go out to the residents on what can be recyclable. They need to be proactive by providing this information to the citizens on a regular basis. It costs Republic money to sort through the recycled material by hand.

F. Loucka said Huron had their own recycling center where people were dumping everything there, so the city gave up on it. He noted that plastic bags and plastic straws do not go in the recycling container.

TOPIC TWO: Adams Street Water Line (Funding)

Amy Hendricks explained the preliminary cost the city is responsible for after the matching grant comes into play is \$461,000. In discussions with the service director, the distribution costs internally are split between funds 601 (water) and 602 (sewer), so they used this scenario as fund 601 has very limited funds this year. Additionally, these

costs could fit under fund 605 (EPA fees), so they opted to prorate the costs equally across the three funds at \$153,666.67.

B. Brady said this doesn't make sense to her because how can they take a water line and fund it under sewer, and how do they determine this is an EPA mandated fee. The city told the residents that EPA fees were for EPA mandated projects. The water line doesn't fit into these funds and she doesn't understand how the city can justify this. She understands that distribution is split between water and sewer, but the distribution crew is not going to be doing this project; an outside contractor will be doing this job. She isn't buying into splitting this job between these three funds. T. Valerius said historically everything on the distribution side has been split equally between the two funds, whether it's with regards to the jet truck, repairs to distribution lines, collection lines, or sanitary lines. B. Brady said these are in house projects so she understands this. She said when they put in a sewer line, does the water fund pay for half of the project. She thinks they are deceiving the residents if they use the EPA fund for a water line. T. Valerius said the EPA has a problem with the city using one third of the water tower. They want the city to use at least half or three quarters of the water tower. They cannot raise the water tower to those levels because it builds up too much pressure and the distribution lines give a way and they have main breaks. This is why the EPA last year mandated the city to have a water line replacement program in place. This is the replacement program that the former engineer came up with last year in order to satisfy the EPA, and this program was submitted to them. This was a 25 year plan and it really wasn't good enough for the EPA; they wanted something that wouldn't take that long. They are mandating the city to get the lines fixed, so the city can utilize the water tower to where it should be able to be used. S. Herron said then in T. Valerius' position, this is an EPA mandated project. M. Stark feels that if the EPA is telling the city they need to replace the water lines, then she would feel okay using these EPA fees, but she doesn't agree with using the sewer funds for this project. She questioned if it was feasible to pull additional monies from the EPA fees to cover the sewer portion since the EPA fund is healthy. A. Hendricks thought this was a possible way to go; if they have \$230,000 in the water fund then they can push more to the maximum, and then pick up the difference from the EPA fund. S. Holovacs asked the finance director to get back to council if this is feasible. S. Holovacs said he would like to know on a monthly basis where the water fund stands, so they don't have to take the project costs out of the sewer account. T. Valerius said they can look back to see how they paid for the new water line on Liberty that was put in 10 or more years ago. S. Holovacs thought it was paid through the water fund because they were fixing the street.

TOPIC THREE: Water Tower Stem Repairs

Amy Hendricks said there is a heavy EPA impact on the recommendation to repair the water tower stem, so all those charges can come from Fund 605 (EPA fees). M. Stark asked if it is fair to say that an EPA recommendation is strong enough. T. Valerius said the EPA has mandated the city to have the stem replaced by September 23, 2018.

J. Gabriel said he agrees with B. Brady's comments on the sewer portion, but would the City be doing the project if the EPA wasn't mandating them. Therefore, he thinks the

EPA fund is fair use. He said if they don't use the EPA funds for water line repairs, then sure enough they will force a water rate increase and nobody wants to see that. They almost have to be glad the EPA fund is available and healthy enough to help pay for some of these jobs.

S. Holovacs MOVED; S. Herron seconded to authorize the administration to have plans prepared. Roll Call Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

TOPIC FOUR: **Wastewater Treatment Plant – Bar Screen Replacement**

Amy Hendricks said she is funding the costs for this project out of Fund 602 (Sewer).

F. Loucka MOVED; M. Stark seconded to authorize the administration to go out to bid for the Bar Screen Replacement Project in the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Roll Call Vote 7 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

TOPIC FIVE: **Televising Storm Sewer**

S. Holovacs said at the last meeting Mayor Forthofer had made mention that through an Erie County Commissioner they had offered to televise the storm sewers. However, the pricing done by the engineer prior to this offer had included televising and recording, so they had documentation. Would Erie County provide the same so the city had documentation? Mayor Forthofer said he would check with them, but he was pretty sure they operated the same way.

S. Holovacs adjourned the meeting after no further discussion came before the committee.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk
