



Sammy Rich, City Manager
Mike Hackett, Director
John Boyd, Assistant Director
WATER AND SEWER DIVISION
Customer Service Department
Bryan Parris, Director
Operations Department
Brandon M. Cook, Director
Water Reclamation Facilities
Jeff Hill, Director
Water Treatment Facilities
Wayne Stanley, Director

WATER AND SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING
City Hall, 601 Broad Street, Sam King Room
Thursday, February 3, 2021
9:00 AM

PRESENT: Chairperson Jim Bojo
Commissioner Craig McDaniel
Mr. Sammy Rich, City Manger
Mr. Mike Hackett, Water & Sewer Division Director
Mr. John Boyd, Assistant Division Director
Mr. Bryan Parris, Customer Service Director
Mr. Jeff Hill, Water Reclamation Director
Mrs. Jacquelyn Turpin, Water Reclamation Assistant Director
Mrs. Toni Rhinehart, Finance Director
Mr. Doug Walker, City of Rome Public Information Officer
Mr. Andy Davis, City Attorney
Mr. Frank Beacham, Brinson Askew and Berry

VISITORS: Mr. Bill Ziebertz, Stantec
Mr. Ralph Abernathy, Stantec

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Jim Bojo welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES

No changes to the October 7, 2021, minutes were suggested. The minutes were approved by common consent.

Minutes prepared by: Bryan Parris, Customer Service Director
Water and Sewer Committee/ Commission Minutes, February 3, 2022

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mrs. Rhinehart reported there were no financial reports ready at this time.

Announcements

Mr. Hackett announced that Mr. Jeff Hill, former Assistant Director of Water Reclamation, has been promoted to Director. Mr. Hill introduced Mrs. Jacquelyn Turpin to the committee as the newly promoted Assistant Director of Water Reclamation.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairperson Bojo asked for an update on the West Third project. Mr. Hackett stated our most experienced crew was working on the project and everything was going well so far and anticipates that the project will be completed as planned in about eight months. Chairperson Bojo asked if he could get a ballpark price of the project. Mr. Hackett replied around 1.2 million.

New Business

Mr. Hackett introduced Bill Zieburtz with Stantec to the committee. He explained that Mr. Zieburtz has worked with the city for years with our rated studies and was here today to discuss current findings. Mr. Zieburtz explained water and sewer utilities, especially in overhead cost. He went on to show how our past practices of multiyear rate plans of 2.5% with an occasional skip had worked well in the past. However, this plan would no longer meet the city's financial need due to the major cost of infrastructure, upgrades and increased operating costs associated with those upgrades.

Mr. Zieburtz stated that the model to be presented provides for long term financial performance targets. The model showed the change in capital infrastructure needs for the Reverse Osmosis Project at Water Treatment along with a 3% escalation applied to annual operating cost, Etowah Intake and Transmission Main Project, and a summary of other notable capital projects.

In conclusion, the model showed to meet the Division's Financial needs in coming years would require a 2.5% increase in years 2022 and 2023, a 15% increase in 2024, a 19% increase in 2025 and a 3% increase each year after for the next 6 years.

Commissioner McDaniel asked if once the Etowah Intake was upgraded, is there an assumption we will move more to the Etowah rather than the Oostanaula. Mr. Hackett replied no, once Reverse Osmosis was in operation, it would not matter which source was used. He stated that we need to continue with the Etowah upgrade and will likely stay on the Etowah as long as the demand can be met and that we will always need the Oostanaula to ensure the division can meet any demand needed in the future.

Both Chairperson Bojo and Commissioner McDaniel expressed extreme concern with such a high-rate increase in years 2024 and 2025 and asked if the model could be ran again spreading those increases out.

Mr. Zieburtz adjusted the model and introduced an option of a 9% increase in years 2022 through 2025 and then 3% for the next 6 years.

Chairperson Bojo and Commissioner McDaniel agreed this was a better option. While still a large increase, it is understandable when considering the expense that The Division is facing in the coming years.

Commissioner McDaniel made a motion to take the revised recommendation to the full commission. Chairperson Bojo seconded the motion to presented to the full commission in a possible called meeting or in an early caucus.

OTHER

None

Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned

Respectfully submitted

Mike Hackett, Director
Rome Water and Sewer Division