



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
Johnny Massingill, Director
Water Treatment Facilities
Wayne Stanley, Director

WATER AND SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING
City Hall, 601 Broad Street, Sam King Room
Thursday, March 4, 2021
8:30 AM

PRESENT: Chairperson Jim Bojo
Commissioner Sundai Stevenson
Commissioner Wendy Davis
Mr. Sammy Rich, City Manger
Mr. Mike Hackett, Water & Sewer Division Director
Mr. John Boyd, Assistant Division Director
Mr. Bryan Parris, Customer Service Director
Mrs. Toni Rhinehart, Finance Director

VISITORS: Mr. Doug Walker, Rome News Tribune

CALL TO ORDER

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

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES

No changes to the February 5, 2020 minutes were suggested. The minutes were approved by common consent.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mrs. Toni Rhinehart reported the major difference in the 2021 and the 2020 was due to an additional payroll in 2020. The City has 32 funds and water is an enterprise and in many ways is ran like a business and therefore is required to set aside funds to cover any bond payments. Mrs. Rhinehart stated to keep a good rating and ensure loan eligibility the

Minutes prepared by: Bryan Parris, Customer Service Director
Water and Sewer Committee/ Commission Minutes, March 4, 2020

City likes to keep three to six months total operating expenses in reserve. Commissioner Davis asked what is required and what do we have? Mrs. Rhinehart and Mr. Hackett responded presently about six months.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Hackett presented the committee with highlights of 2020 projects beginning with PFAS update. He stated we are currently conducting pilot tests with 12 vendors using 18 different technologies to determine the best solution for the Division to continue meeting guidelines and maximum PFAS levels. Vendor are looking into each water source separately as well as a blending of sources for this solution. Hackett expects the testing will be completed in April of this year.

Mr. Hackett reported the roof replacement of digesters one and two had been completed and number three had begun. He also stated the roof on digester three is much larger than the one and two and therefore has much more weight, around 100 tons and would likely require the use of two cranes to lift the new roof into place. He said roof three should be completed in April and work would begin on roof four at that time.

Mr. Boyd reported to the committee the Horseleg Creek Sewer System Replacement was going well. This is a 1.1-million-dollar project to relocate the sewer main from the river's edge to the street, consisting of a new forced main and two lift station. The first lift station was built on a platform to ensure it was high enough to avoid flooding. The station will also have a backup generator so the station will continue to operate during power outages.

Mr. Hackett then moved onto 2021 projects beginning with the AMI system (Advanced Metering Infrastructure). All infrastructure is in place and some 600 meters have been installed, most are residential accounts. As the project moves along all meters will be replaced. All locations where the meter has been replaced will be monitored daily for high usage, low/no usage, reverse flow, and tampering by the Billing Department. The system will also have the ability to contact customers as well via email when one of these issues are detected.

Permits for The River Art District project, partially funded by a matching ARC Grant, will include approximately 4,000 feet of new 12-inch water and 8-inch sewer main have been submitted. Mr. Hackett stated he did not anticipate any issues with the permits but it does take some time to get these approved. Chairperson Bojo asked if this project could interfere with other project going on with the bridge. Mr. Rich said he did not foresee any problems but it would require some careful planning. Commissioner Stevenson asked how long this project would take? Mr. Hackett replied about four months.

The final update given was the Etowah Raw Water Pump Station project. This project will make the Etowah pump station the same scale as the Oostanaula pump station with a 30 MGD capacity. The design, by Insite Engineering is 95% complete. Approvals from Norfolk Southern, Army Corps of Engineers and EPD are pending. Commissioner Davis asked if funding for this project was in the budget. Mr. Hackett replied some of it was in the budget and we are working on the rest which could likely come from pending law suits.

NEW BUSSINESS

Mr. Hackett reported new projects for 2021 will include a rate study, which we complete every three years.

Leak Detection- the new AMI system will include installation of source meters which will show how much water goes into a particular area which can then be compared to billing of customers for the same area to identify leaks in water mains.

Tank Painting- the annual contract will continue and includes painting and other maintenance of both inside and outside of a set number of tanks each year.

OTHER

Mr. Rich informed the committee in the last Joint Services Committee meeting he presented County Manager Jamie McCord with the wholesale water and sewer rate study prepared by Stantec. Mr. McCord asked for some time for the County to review the study and then discuss further. Commissioner Davis said she thought we were going to be deciding on this rate today. Chairman Bojo stated that was the plan but we should give the County a bit of time to review the rate study as the County was just giving the study. Mr. Rich said we would give them a couple of weeks and then revisit.

Chairperson Bojo advised that he along with Commissioners Davis, Cochran, and McDaniel had been approached by several local developers seeking a reduction in water and sewer tap to increase development in the City. Davis questioned if it was necessary to charge the developer for the tap fees when the developer is the one who installed the mains and services. Mr. Hackett responded that we call these tap fees but that is really the wrong term. These fees are in place to prevent rate increases to rate payers due to additional operating costs across the entire system when these new developments are tied on. There were suggestions of a credit back to the developer once a property sold or something like a TAD credit. Additional information was provided by the Division to justify the charged amount as well. Chairperson Bojo asked Mr. Hackett to look into this further to see if there was any mutually benefitting way to reduce these cost and tasked Commissioner Davis to work with developers to do the same and then revisit once both sides had come up with their best solutions.

Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned

Respectfully submitted

Mike Hackett, Director
Rome Water and Sewer Division