

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL WORKING SESSION
BUHL CITY HALL
8/8/2024

Thursday, August 8, 2024

6:30 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER by Mayor Carter at 6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Councilors: Hadrava X Kealy X Loeffler X Towner
Mayor: X Carter

Administrator: X Jeffries
Finance Manager: Thronson

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Motion by Kealy to approve the agenda as presented.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. BUSINESS:

A. Discuss CIRSSD I&I Analysis Plans.

It is very valuable to continue to investigate any sources of wastewater which may be inadvertently getting sent to the CIRSSD treatment facility.

There is no question that when there is precipitation (primarily rainfall), the volumes of wastewater delivered to CIRSSD rises sharply – often times almost instantaneously.

Collection and analysis of historical data continue to indicate these efforts are valuable and worthwhile.

Flow testing and smoke testing are two (2) activities which have been previously identified as worthy of further study.

Minnesota Rural Water Association (MRWA) indicated and advises the fall of the year is the best time to conduct smoke testing; this initiative is still on the plate and on schedule for this fall.

One main goal will be to attempt to eliminate that there is any potential for cross connection(s) in the wastewater collection and distribution system.

The Administrator will continue to work with the MRWA to accommodate and conducting this testing in the fall of 2024.

Flow testing may or may not be warranted – this will depend on what may be discovered during smoke testing.

Televising of the collection system – perhaps city-wide – was also discussed –

Partnering with other municipalities (through MnWARN?) as a possibility was also discussed.

Smoke testing is a highly recommended next step in this I & I study.

On a related note, the Administrator gave an update on the situation surrounding the civil defense (tornado) siren – it appears there are hardware issues on the command center side – parts are on order and will be installed when received -

B. Discuss Municipal Refuse Collection Contract.

The contract between the City and its waste management contractor, Waste Management, Inc (WMI), expires at the end of 2024.

The Administrator has met with WMI to revisit the status of this agreement and determine the next course of action; WMI indicates they are interested in continuing to service the city –

The city will reach out to other nearby collection providers, however it is anticipated that continuing to contract with WMI may be the best course of action the city can realize –

Other potential service providers include: 1) City of Chisholm; and 2) G-Men Environmental Services.

The Administrator is of the general impression that WMI may be in the best position (manpower, equipment, etc.) to continue to service the needs of the City.

General discussion continued with regard to billing specifics and container management.

It was noted that there are two (2) days a week where Chisholm currently does not currently collect municipal solid waste.

Discussions regarding part-time residents (snowbirds) and how the solid waste collection service(s) should be managed ensued.

The Administrator will extend an invitation to the City of Chisholm as well as to WMI to solicit a proposal for Buhl's municipal solid waste collection and disposal.

C. Discuss Municipal Law Enforcement Contract.

Municipal law enforcement services are provided to the City of Buhl by the City of Chisholm.

This contract (3-year term) will expire at the end of 2024.

The Choices the city has are:

- 1) Renegotiate and re-up the current arrangement;
- 2) St. Louis County Sheriff; or
- 3) Other potential providers.

There does not appear to be any other desirable partners to provide these services.

Nothing specific has been received from the City of Chisholm to date.

It was noted that, since coverage is such an important element, Chisholm is in the best position to provide these services on a regular basis with the best anticipated response times.

It was also noted that Chisholm's new public safety facility is a shorter response time to Buhl than the previous facility across the street from Chisholm City Hall.

The (average) number of hours of coverage that have been provided was discussed.

General discussion of public safety performance matters (parking, vehicle licensing, blight, noise, etc.) ensued.

These issues will be discussed during contract renewal conversations, as well as Buhl's expectations of these services.

The Administrator will reach out to the Chisholm Police Department and continue these discussions for the present and the future.

D. Discuss Buhl Water Company Contract.

The City has been a party to an agreement with Buhl Water Company since October 1986. This agreement was amended in 2004 with a 20-year term.

This amended agreement has expired as of April 1, 2024.

Among other things, the addendum gave:

- 1) Exclusive rights to Buhl Water Company for purchasing water for resale and bottling purposes; and
- 2) Protection of utilizing the name "Buhl Water".

It appears at this time that neither of the above provisions remain in effect, and that the agreement in its entirety has expired.

There was no communication received prior to April 1, 2024, regarding this agreement or its future.

The Administrator will work with the City Attorney for a review and an opinion on the above.

E. Water Tower Project Scope and Schedule.

The Administrator maintains that a series of public sessions to discuss the options with regard to the future of Buhl's water storage and distribution ("water tower") would best serve the public benefit, and encourages the City Council to consider holding a sufficient number of sessions during the remainder of the year.

The City has now received the final structural analysis of the support system of the existing elevated water storage tank, and it is anticipated that the findings may suggest that the existing facility could render another 40-50 years of service if certain remediation activities are undertaken, followed up by periodic and routine maintenance.

These public meetings are suggested for late September/October so that preparation of bidding documents may be prepared for distribution in November and potential vendor selection in December 2024.

An ongoing preventative maintenance program should absolutely be a part of any long-term operating protocol, and should be addressed in the bidding documents.

It was noted that historic preservation may be an item which needs to be addressed regarding the disposition of the current tower.

The timing of required activities as it effects all parties involved was discussed; it was concluded that public meeting dates should be set as soon as practicable in order to better set the remaining development initiatives.

A discussion of the total volume of water storage, both currently as well as into the future, was undertaken. Please note that the working storage volume being used is 300,000 gallons, which is sufficient for all needs presently being evaluated.

The installation of an emergency generator set and transfer pumps was noted, as this will be required to obtain and operate the system at a 300,000 gallon effective capacity.

Also discussed was the Buhl Business Block – preliminary plat anticipated by end of August, which will then require approval for final plat preparation; and

The Community Center (Curling Club) – needs a rental policies guidance document establishing the rental process prepared for staff and lessors.

5. ADJOURN:

Motion by Kealy to adjourn. Supported by Towner. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.


Brandin Carter, Mayor

ATTEST:


Tony Jeffries, City Clerk