

Mary Lou McFadden brought the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Public Works Department Heads present:

Tom Dolph / Streets Superintendent, Greg Parrish / Water Superintendent

Public Works Committee members present:

Mary Lou McFadden (chair), Laurel Kuczynski, Don Reinke, Ernie Summers, John Wall.

Scott Popp and Rick Remijas attended via Zoom.

Others present: Chief Swistek, Town Administrator

Approval of October 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes

S.Popp made motion to approve; E.Summers 2nd / a roll call vote was taken; all in favor

Water Department Field Report (Greg Parrish)

Last month, Greg did several emergency shut-offs due to frozen pipes during the extreme cold snap. Homeowners who leave for the season should take five minutes to turn their main water valve off. Doing this would help limit water damage from burst pipes. Tips regarding preventing frozen pipes are posted on the Water Department's webpage.

This month, monthly water samples have been performed and all meters have been read with no issues.

With the current mild weather, Greg and Austin have been able to do some locating for our GIS mapping on water mains and valve locations. Tom and Brent /Streets have been assisting.

Year-end financial reports are available now, allowing the Department to begin working on the 2022 water audit.

Austin is gathering the data and then will schedule it for validation. After validation, the audit is submitted to IFA (Indiana Finance Authority).

On a different note, IFA is requiring an asset management plan. Greg and Austin have been to multiple asset management classes and although complex, Greg does not think the task requires hiring an outside consultant. They will work on it and see what they can come up with first.

Greg has gotten two quotes on a retaining wall for the water tower. Woodruffs quoted \$70,877; this bid was for redi-rock (as installed at stop 21 and stop 23); this price isn't practical for this project. Jakab Falatovics Construction's quote to install a standard unilock retaining wall was 17,584. A parking space is included in the project. Greg's recommendation is to go with Falatovics; this money has already been allocated to Water's 2023 water tank budget, and we'd be ready move forward with this project. Chief Swistek recommended that the committee vote on this bid; with Town Council's approval next month, the project could begin in March.

Mary Lou motioned to approve Falatovics bid; Laurel 2nd. Roll call vote / all in favor.

Laurel asked a follow-up question about the water tower's security fencing; IDEM had recommended that this be addressed in the coming year; Greg will be looking into it after the retaining wall is done.

Supplies for the 2023 Lake Shore Drive upgrades project continue to come in; suppliers have not been able to give exact delivery dates (supply chain issues). Everything was ordered last year.

Streets Department Field Report (Tom Dolph)

The 2022-2 Community Crossing Matching Grant was awarded in December @ approximately \$186,000.

The project will be done this spring and summer; the bid timeline is next month or so. Tom suggests posting details on town website to give public as much notice as possible. Four streets will be involved, three of them at the fingers off Shorewood Drive. Crack-sealing on prior paving project will also be done.

The 2023-2 CCMG project will be submitted for a September/October deadline; the project must be reviewed to determine what funds will be available for it.

Stop 17 drainage project is still a work in progress.

Mary Lou asked Tom to continue with the Streets new business.

Tom addressed the alley repairs /paving projects that they would like to do; however, these projects are not included in CCMG funding; the project will have to be funded by Town; alleys at stop 22, stop 23, and off of Floral (between Belle Plaine and Oriole) need repair.

Public Works Old Business (Mary Lou McFadden)

At the upcoming Town Council on 2/6, a vote will be taken to approve the motion this committee passed 6-1 on 10/24 regarding stormwater and fire protection charges for vacant lots with and without taps. In her update, Mary Lou mentioned that Bob LeMay, Town Council president, doesn't agree with this committee's recommendation because he wants Town's leaf pickup to be charged also. It is unclear whether Bob was referencing all the vacant lots in Town or specifically the vacant lots with taps. Indeed, there continues to be confusion regarding the two types of vacant lots that were discussed by this committee at the 9/26 and 10/24 meetings, and again at this 1/23 meeting. The two types of vacant lots are: (1) vacant lots throughout Town that do not have taps and currently are not charged for any services; (2) vacant lots with taps that are currently charged for all Town/Water services even though they do not have active water service – historically they are charged just because there is a pre-existing tap on the property.

Regarding vacant lots without taps: In April of 2021, two *land-specific* charges were added to all Long Beach accounts. Town added a stormwater utility service and Water added a fire protection fee. Because these services are entirely relevant to both developed and non-developed properties, subsequently, the decision was made to create new accounts for all the vacant lots in Long Beach. The owners of vacant lots would be charged \$17.78 per month; i.e., Water's fire protection charge @ \$2.60 plus tax (total 2.78) and Town's stormwater service @ \$15.00. The Water Department emphasized that an ordinance addressing the charges for vacant lots was needed.

Regarding vacant lots with taps: After lengthy discussions on 9/26 and 10/24, and consultation with Karl Cender CPA, this committee voted to pass a motion to charge all vacant lot property owners uniformly for stormwater and fire protection, and to allow (but not require) the owner to add refuse/leaf pickup charges if they needed these services on their vacant lot. All other Town and Water charges would be added when water service was connected. At that time, a one-time tap fee would be charged. Karl Cender added that some communities also charge a one-time system development fee (to address the capital charge issue). If approved by Town Council, going forward, all vacant lots (with or without taps) would be charged the \$17.78 monthly.

During this 1/23 meeting, Tom Dolph asked for clarification regarding whether Town would be losing significant revenue by removing leaf charges from existing accounts; his concern is that in 2022, the cost of leaf pickup increased, and revenue loss must be considered. Chief Swistek agreed the increasing expense of leaf pickup must be addressed. John Wall requested addresses because he wanted to drive by the vacant lots that have taps.

To follow-up, the Water Department sent the addresses and descriptions of the customer's situations for vacant lots with taps to all Town Council members. Of the original ten lots, there are now only four of these lots: two lots were appropriately reclassified as vacant lots without taps, and four of the lots now have houses built and water service connected. The four remaining vacant lots with taps include Stop 31 (Shoreland Hills enhanced beach stop) that will never rake leaves; the abandoned site of the 2007 house fire on Nichols; the Oriole Trail lot that has no trees and thus no leaves; and the lot directly behind Hacienda Restaurant whose owner hires out all landscaping. The total annual revenue loss for removing the leaf pickup charge from these four vacant lots described above would be \$480.

John Wall questioned again in the 1/23 meeting, as he has each time the charges for vacant lots with taps have been discussed, if any of the vacant lots were adjacent to an owner's main property. Of the ten lots that have been reviewed for Town Council's consideration, only one lot (on Oriole Trail) is somewhat adjacent to an owner's home (it is down the hill on the flats below the owner's home). However, what may be relevant regarding adjacent lots are the number of Long Beach "single lot" property owners who have gone through the process at the La Porte County assessor's office to incorporate two to five lots into one address. These homes on large properties are charged a total of \$10 per month for leaf pickup, the same rate as the above-mentioned four vacant lots with taps.

Following the 1/23 meeting, Bob LeMay also questioned whether Water should add a fourth charge to the vacant lot accounts, i.e., the local capital charge. If so, the two additional charges Bob suggested (leaf pickup and capital charge) would add \$32.48 to the monthly charges, bringing the total charges for property owners of vacant lots to \$50.26. Bob's concern was that calculating a one-time system development fee would be unnecessarily difficult and even inaccurate. Mary Lou McFadden followed up with Karl Cender to request clarification regarding how the system development fee would be calculated. Karl responded by email as follows: *"It is actually a fairly straight forward calculation of taking the gross water utility assets less accumulated depreciation divided by estimated equivalent units that are existing and to be served to come up with a system development fee. If we feel the one-time fee would be too high, the Water Department can make a recommendation to the Town Council on a lessor fee. The fee can be calculated on a meter size or equivalent unit basis. We can assist with the calculations."*

Water Department New Business (Mary Lou McFadden)

Payment/Billing Adjustments 10.20.22 – 01.20.23: Lynne made billing adjustments to reverse late charges as allowed (due to USPS not delivering). There was one new request to waive late fees @ \$11.69.

Mary Lou motioned to approve; Laurel 2nd. A roll call was taken; all in favor.

Following the vote, Scott Popp asked if a small fee could be applied to customers who choose to pay by check/cash versus digitally; he asked what percentage of customers do not use direct payments (approximately 1/3). Mary Lou will check with Karl Cender and SBOA.

Anything from the floor - no comments from the floor

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by R.Remijas; L.Kuczynski 2nd. All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 a.m.

Next Meeting February 27, 2023