

### **March 14, 2011 Public Hearing on Proposed Wastewater Project and Special Council Meeting**

The Ashby City Council held a Public Hearing followed by a Special Council Meeting on March 14, 2011 at Ashby City Hall. The purpose of the public hearing and meeting was to discuss the proposed wastewater project. Mayor Thomas Grover called the public hearing to order at 6:30 p.m. with council members George Jordan, Jim Rylander, Jim Karl and Ronnie Jaenisch present. Also present were Val Martin – Clerk/Treasurer; Thor Tollefson, Public Works; Matt Cederberg, Police Officer and Richard Walton, City Attorney. Visitors were Jeff Kuhn from WSN and 20 community residents.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Grover turned the public hearing over to Jeff Kuhn, engineer from WSN. Jeff explained the proposed wastewater project. The Preliminary Engineering Report describes the need for the project as follows:

- High wastewater flows to the ponds.
- Because of the high wastewater flows to the ponds, the City has been found to be in noncompliance with the MPCA permit in several instances.
- The collection system (sewer lines) is in poor condition throughout the community. The original clay lines were installed in 1953 and 1954.
- The main pumping station has issues – it is beyond its life cycle.

The ponds were found to be in good condition but there is a need to replace the fencing around the ponds. Because the collection system is in poor condition, there is a high amount of inflow and infiltration of clean water going out to the ponds. The project would help correct this issue. A second phase of the project, should the inflow and infiltration continue to be a problem, could be to replace individual service lines. Sump pumps may also be contributing to the problem. Residents need to be reminded that their sump pump must be discharged outside and not into the sanitary sewer.

Funding was discussed. Several applications were submitted. USDA Rural Development will probably be the funder. Their projected funding for the project is \$476,000 grant and \$1,014,000 loan interest loan. The loan would run for 40 years at 3.375% interest rate. A possible new sewer rate for the project was presented. It includes an additional \$10 user rate plus an additional \$1.50/1000 gallons on the usage. Please note that sewer is not metered and the usage is based on actual water meter readings. With this scenario, an average household will be looking at the following increases in their sewer rate:

- If you use 2000 gallons per month, your rate would increase \$13.00 per month.
- If you use 5000 gallons per month, your rate would increase \$17.50 per month.
- If you use 10,000 gallons per month, your rate would increase \$25.00 per month.

There was a request to look at the assessment policy and possibly assess a portion of the project to property owners receiving new service. The council was in agreement that they will take a closer look at this option. It was noted that, although we are looking at replacing sewer lines, the city as a whole will benefit due to the reduction in inflow and infiltration.

Someone asked if their personal service line can be replaced during the project. The contractor would typically not do it while working on the project as they have to follow timelines stated in the project documents but it is a possibility that the contractor on the project or another contract could come back and do this type of work.

Another resident asked about those streets that have sewer lines – will they be repaired? Rural Development will only pay for the cost of what needs to be torn up for the project. In some cases, only a portion of the street will be done. If there is an interest from the property owners, the whole street can be repaired with the additional cost being assessed to those residents. Some residents from Cedar St. asked that the City look at this a little closer. It was noted that the majority of the lines are in alleys and only a couple of streets will be affected.

There was a unanimous consensus from the people in attendance that the project needs to be done and the different options for payback need to be looked at.

Jordan made a motion to move forward with the project. Jaenisch seconded. MCU

Adjourn 7:25 p.m.

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Valerie Martin, Clerk/Treasurer