

**CITY OF GRAFTON
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF DECEMBER 2, 2019**

The regular meeting of the Public Utilities Committee of the City of Grafton was held in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Grafton, North Dakota immediately following the 5:30 p.m. Ways and Means Committee meeting, Monday, December 2, 2019.

Chairperson Chris West presided. Members present: Phil Ray, Brian Sieben, Mary Stark, and Greg Young. Others present: Chris Lipsh, Dave Fellman, Don Hutson, Shane Mohn, Nick Ziegelmann, Tony Dumas, Kevin Sevigny, Russ Geddes, and Todd Morgan.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

It was moved by Mr. Sieben, seconded by Mr. Young and carried to accept and order filed the Balance Sheets, Income and Expense Statements, and subsidiary reports for all Enterprise Funds for the month ending October, 2019.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Police Chief Dumas reported he is scheduled to purchase a patrol vehicle in 2020. The State bid for a 2019 Dodge Ram pickup is with Nelson Auto from Fergus Falls, MN. There is no State bid for 2020, however after contacting the supplier, Nelson Auto was informed the vehicle price from 2019 would increase about \$1,800 which would bring the total for 2020 to approximately \$28,700. Chief Dumas has been advised both Chevrolet and Ford utility plants are shut down and the Ram plant will be shut down as early as March for retooling. The Tahoes and Expeditions are over \$10,000 more than the Dodge Ram pickups. He was told if the City ordered a vehicle before the first of the year, Nelson Auto would hope to have it delivered by February or March. Fleet vehicles are built to order. The new vehicle will replace the 2013 Ford Expedition. The 2020 Budget includes \$36,000 for a new vehicle. It was moved by Mr. Sieben and seconded by Mr. Young to recommend the City Council approve the purchase of a 2020 Dodge Ram pickup with an estimated price up to \$29,000. All members were present and voted in favor thereof; Chairperson West declared the motion carried.

Chief Dumas reported they have been working with the Street Department and issuing parking tickets to clear the street for snow removal. In some cases, they were able to talk with people and they moved their vehicles, which was best for all involved.

Arlen and Frank Dolney, owners of 12th Street Bowl, have found a location out of town to store the vehicles stored at the business in violation of City ordinance; he will transfer them soon.

Power Superintendent Geddes reported they will not be doing any more underground work for winter. They are setting the 3-phase transformer for the McLeod Drain Lift Station. This winter they will be working at the power plant updating controls and equipment. Mr. Geddes reported they were fortunate to acquire lightly used parts from a plant that was shut down for salvage value from Minnkota. They will use some of the parts to repair the 3rd generator that started on fire during a cold spell.

Mr. Geddes reported the recent power outage on the south end was caused by an error when repairing the lines from an earlier outage. Grafton's power system is 100% underground; a lot of the underground wire is extremely old, and it needs to be replaced. There is also quite a bit of equipment above ground that needs to be updated also. While underground power systems have lots of benefits, they are much more difficult than overhead to troubleshoot so it takes longer to find problems and fix them. Mr. Geddes said compared to other communities, Grafton's power utility is very reliable.

The Street/Wastewater Department Superintendent was not present as the Department has been out moving snow all night. City Administrator Ziegelmann reported the generator for the Master Lift Station is set on the concrete pad but is not hooked to electricity yet. They are waiting until mid-December when the other three generators arrive, and they will all be hooked to electricity. This project is part of a pre-disaster mitigation grant. Mr. Ziegelmann reported about a week before Thanksgiving, the Wakeman Lift Station broke down. Interstate Power had to install 2 new pumps at a cost of \$23,500. They did determine the well itself is in good shape, but more work will need to be done next summer to complete the renovation.

Administrator Ziegelmann reported the Streets Subcommittee met and members were instructed to drive around the community and prioritize the roads that need to be repaired. Another meeting will be held following the January City Council meeting.

Water Department Superintendent Sevigny reported the Water Department has most of the Fall work complete. The Park District still has water into the comfort station, but staff is prepared to turn that off upon request of Parks & Recreation.

The Water Department is having a difficult time treating water due to alkalinity and total hardness. The chemical representative stopped in last week and said they are seeing this problem throughout the valley. Cost of production to treat the water will be high. They do not know what is causing it. They are hoping when the river freezes it will be better, but alkalinity and hardness at this time of year has been getting progressively worse over the last 5 years.

Chairperson West said he received a notice from the Corps of Engineers that dams are being released as much as possible due to the extremely wet fall and anticipation of spring thaw. Superintendent Sevigny said Fall is the most difficult time to treat water due to temperature changes, but that would not affect hardness. Mr. Lipsh questioned if the Grafton citizens will be seeing a difference in water quality. Superintendent Sevigny said the goal for softening is 140 pts per million and it is actually at 160 pts per million. Hardness is more than normal and treatment costs are more, but otherwise water quality is the same.

Superintendent Sevigny reported they are advertising to fill the vacant position in his Department.

Administrator Ziegelmann reported he and Mr. Sevigny received word Drayton is starting to look at a capital improvement project for their city. They are also looking for potential options for regionalizing their water source. They may be asking the City, as well as Walsh Water, to look at the feasibility of providing treated water to Drayton City.

NEW BUSINESS

Administrator Ziegelmann reviewed a proposal from Widseth Smith & Nolting for engineering and surveying services associated with electric and water meter replacement. He believes their estimate of \$800,000 is low and thinks it will be closer to \$1.1 million. We are waiting to hear how much the City would have to pay for the study if the City chooses not to proceed with the project. Mr. Ziegelmann expressed concern about the installation process; he believes a third party should do it rather than use City employees as they have other work that needs to be done. Widseth, Smith & Nolting will be invited to attend the City Council meeting next week for further discussion.

It was moved by Mr. Sieben and seconded by Mr. Young to recommend the City Council approve the application for permit to sell alcoholic beverages at a special event submitted by Grafton Co. d/b/a Extra End on Saturday, December 21st and Sunday, December 22nd from 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. for Demmy Dangles Cancer Hockey Tournament at the Centennial Center. All members present voted in favor thereof; Chairperson West declared the motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Unity Medical Center Foundation sent a thank you for the donation to their fundraiser.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Young, seconded by Mr. Ray and carried to adjourn the meeting.

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Chris West, Chairperson

Connie A. Johnson, City Auditor