

UTILITY COMMITTEE
Monday, May 2, 2022
6:00pm

PRESENT: Members Turchi, Carroll, Hegy, Sikora

ALSO PRESENT: Director of Utilities Brian Rhodes, Sewer Utility Director Dave Piquett

Call to Order – Alderperson Turchi called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Hartford City Hall, 109 North Main Street.

Public Comment Period – None.

Update on Electric Service Interruptions and Water Main Breaks – Director of Utilities Brian Rhodes provided an update on the following:

1. On March 26, there was an outage at the airport. There was a truck driving behind the hangar buildings which struck a transformer. The truck did not cause the outage, but the line crew needed to de-energize the transformer in order to re-position the transformer on the pad. The police were able to apprehend the truck driver. This outage affected 6 customers.
2. On April 13, the line crew responded to an outage in the 4000 block of Highway U. The outage was caused by a loose fitting on the transformer. The fittings were tightened and power was restored. One customer was affected.
3. On April 11, the Utilities Department was notified of a water leak on Summit Street between Highway 60 and Mueller Road. The leak was on the Utility-owned portion of the service lateral. Repairs were completed the same day, and 4 customers were affected.

Presentation of the 2021 PSC Annual Report – Director Rhodes explained that the annual report is required to be submitted to the Public Service Commission. It reports on the financial health of the water and electric utility. He explained that the water and electric utilities are in a good position for the year. Debt continues to get paid down and rates of return are good.

Invitation to the WPPI Energy regional power dinners – Director Rhodes explained that WPPI hosts the regional power dinners to have communities and staff come together to discuss utility issues and things going on at WPPI. The Utility Committee is invited to attend this dinner.

Discussion and consideration of purchasing 600 water modules from Elster Solutions for a cost not to exceed \$51,072 and 600 bronze Badger meter chambers from Midwest Meters for a cost not to exceed \$85,140 – Director Rhodes is requesting these purchases for next year's replacement program. Due to extended lead times and projected price increases, it is important that these purchases be secured now.

MOTION by Alderperson Hegy, seconded by Alderperson Carroll to approve the purchasing of 600 water modules from Elster Solutions for a cost not to exceed \$51,072 and 600 bronze Badger meter chambers from Midwest Meters for a cost not to exceed \$85,140.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Discussion and consideration of replacing the privately-owned and utility-owned lead service laterals with Wood Sewer & Excavating in the amount of \$468,877 for the privately-owned lateral replacement and

\$112,136 for the utility-owned lateral replacement – Director Rhodes explained the city was awarded up to \$786,000 through a DNR grant to replace privately-owned lead service laterals. He also explained that the city used a different process to utilize these funds than last year. This year the city asked for bids for contractors to take over the entire program instead of allowing customers to choose a contractor from an approved list. The new format allows the city to save a considerable amount of money. The money saved would then go toward beginning to replace galvanized services in the city.

MOTION by Alderperson Carroll, seconded by Alderperson Sikora to approve replacing the privately-owned and utility-owned lead service laterals with Wood Sewer & Excavating in the amount of \$468,877 for the privately-owned lateral replacement and \$112,136 for the utility-owned lateral replacement.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Update on PFAS sampling for drinking water and wastewater – Director Rhodes explained that both water utility and wastewater are doing sampling for PFAS, sometimes referred to as a forever chemical. The water utility last sampled for PFAS in 2013 and the result was undetected. Since then, the DNR has offered a program for sampling drinking water. The testing is free, but if the results come back over the recommended level, the city is required to publicly notify of those results.

Director Piquett explained that wastewater was sampled by the DNR in May of 2021. The regulatory agencies have a combined enforcement standard of 20 ng/L for two specific compounds. The results of the 2021 sampling showed the city's sample was 14 ng/L. There will be more voluntary and mandatory sampling over the next 3 to 5 years.

Staffing updates for Hartford Electric – Director Rhodes explained electric utility is in a position to add a lineman next year. He stated that with the growth of the city and working with Slinger it is necessary to increase staff. He also added that the current line crew is aging and many are on track to retire at the same time. He is bringing this to the committee now because there is an opportunity to recruit a highly qualified individual for this position. Director Rhodes asked for feedback on adding a lineman in 2023 and the possibility for hiring this highly qualified individual before the end of 2022.

The committee was unanimous in the opinion that adding another lineman is in the best interest of the community, and there was no issue with potentially adding that person before year's end.

Update on Harrison Street project – Director Piquett explained that the project was sent out for bids and only one contractor came back with a bid. The bid was high and would put the project way over budget for sewer. Director Rhodes explained that this project is a carry-over project, which was originally budgeted for in 2019. This was offered as explanation as to why the bid came back high and over budget. It was also explained that the current project includes additions that were not budgeted for in 2019 and the budget was not adjusted as those additions were made. Director Rhodes explained there are three options that City Engineer John Griffin has proposed. The first is to continue the project as is. The second is to remove one of the additions, Troeller Court. The third option is to remove both additions, Troeller Court and Court Drive, and just work on Harrison Street.

Director Rhodes and Director Piquett also explained that while the bid was over what was originally budgeted, there are other funds available to cover the expense of completing the entire project. Director Piquett commented that there would be risks associated with only completing part of the project, including prices of materials and potentially hiring a different contractor that could give rise to other problems.

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Director Rhodes also explained that this discussion was to provide the committee with the information regarding water and sewer, as City Engineer John Griffin would be bringing the whole project to the next Common Council meeting for approval. The committee appeared to be in agreement that completing the entire project at one time would be best.

Adjournment – MOTION by Alderperson Carroll, seconded by Alderperson Sikora for adjournment at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Hetzel, City Clerk

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