

City of Benton

Commissions Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2023

Committee Members:

Steve Lee, Chair - Present

Judd Hart - Absent

Frank Baptist, Vice Chair - Present

Evelyn Reed - Absent

Ann Spencer-Cole - Present

Shane Knight - Present

Jeff Morrow - Present

Bill Donnor - Present

Steve Brown - Present

Jeff Hamm - Present

Staff Liaison: Toby Hirscheider – Present

Council Member Lee: We will call this meeting to order and take role starting on my right. Jeff Hamm, Steve Lee, Shane Knight, Judd Hart, Toby Hirscheider, Tom Farmer, Bill Donnor, Evelyn Reed, Ann Spencer-Cole, Steve Brown, Frank Baptist.

Council Member Lee: OK, first order of business do we have any information from the PUC?

Council Member Knight: Mr. Chairman, we have two items tonight before director Todd Pederson gives his report on downtown water, I will let the committee know that we do have an open seat on the PUC that's currently being advertised. Director Ferrell has announced his retirement from the Commission and his seat is now open and the PUC has made a motion and it passed to go ahead and begin to advertise his spot to be filled, so if we know of any candidates, please direct them accordingly to the PUC for their consideration.

Council Member Morrow: What if someone applied before?

Council Member Knight: Mr. Morrow that individual will need to reapply they'll need to resubmit.

Council Member Morrow: Inaudible

Council Member Knight: The other item that we have is Todd has a report to give us all and the water lines and things downtown so I will turn the floor over to our PUC director.

Todd Pederson: What we're going over is as you all know in 2022 y'all provided \$3,000,000 in ARPA funds for several projects associated with the water department. The first project that was done was rebuilding our sludge basin system. It is I would say a about two weeks from being completed the second was the upgrading of one of the clear wells which has started the outside has been repainted and we are waiting we think about mid-November we will be taking down that tank because we got to make sure that we were able to serve our customers by taking one of those million gallon tanks down at our clear well to continue to have water for our citizens the third

item is upgrading the water distribution lines into our Main Street area and downtown area as you all know some of these lines in this area date back to 1915 so just to give you all an update so we know how much money is left over and we've come up with a plan that we think is going to be able to serve that whole area very well just to give you all an idea our water plant is located right there I highlighted in pink the 16 inch water line that comes down crosses up under the Interstate comes along the South side comes down over into here this into this area near Carpenter and then over and then comes down bird the 16 inch excuse me comes down and cuts over to airline and comes down over the years because of some of the requirements by the state where we're having to replace lot lead and lines we've started to expand and to do some things with internal funds we've extended a 12 inch line down bird across Jackman back up to I think it's gun is where we stopped along the river OK. The last part of that was just done this last year if you all know we were down there middle in front of what's the name of the elementary school Ringgold thank you we were down through there long all amongst the street department too all in the same area tearing up the same street all at once and we were like I said got to where in that area I highlighted is a green highlighter just showing what we've done we've also made some improvements in this area also helping flows in this area and again reducing service getting the old gooseneck services that have lead in them and we have got to this point so with the extra money that we've been allotted we McClellan came to us and we got a proposal to tap the 16 inch line on dog going up there with names UH7 no it's not severance no that's where I live starts with an S severe thank you we're going to tap that 16 inch line run down severe all the way to market down to market to market and river OK that is about how much monies we have left on the proposal will get us with the monies that we've been allocating each year uh for upgrade and maintenance of our water system we're going to go and extend where we stopped up to that point so it just went away and I didn't do that OK on your mat we're going to extend it we're close to the end we're going to extend the water line from gun up to basically river and market that'll give us a complete loop around that whole system of a 12 inch water line and will give us the necessary flows into that area as we bounce the beer we're going to have taps off of that to eventually extend down to some of these all other areas into here so where we can continue to remove those older lines that have older services that are with lead the other thing is I know John has been waiting to do an overlay of that knowing that we're coming down through there so once we come through there lay this out get out of that street and well they'll be able to come back and overlay but this is going to give us the necessary flows to this downtown area I know that if the Fire Chief was here he could tell you there's some issues with flows into this area based on these lines are so old and they have sediment as they might be a 12 inch line but they might only have a four inch hole in the middle because of calcium build up over 100 years.

Council Member Donnor: Inaudible

Todd Pederson: That is correct. Object is replacing we're not putting a parallel line we were actually laying we're going to lay a new line and every new resident along and new customer and customer that is off that line will get a new service also through that whole area that's what the way we've been handling all these through this whole area is we're replacing as we increase the line and then we're abandoning the old line.

Council Member Morrow: Are they getting new meters?

Todd Pederson: No not a new meter it's just we will as they're laying the line we tap that line and directional board over to where the meter is and then hook on to their existing meter.

Council Member Morrow: Inaudible

Todd Pederson: What happens is because of state regulations you country lay the whole line you put in all the services you pressurize the whole line and when I say put in the services the services if you would have went if we go down river some of the services are just sitting there up out of the ground kind of stubbed up out of the ground uh ready to be connected so you pressurize that whole thing check your pressures make sure it's holding that they've done all their work properly you then have to test that water and it has to pass the testing by the state two consecutive days that it's back T&E coli free before you even start kicking acting it so once we get all the testing back for safety purposes plus pressure testing then we come one at a time disconnect on our side of the meter and connect on our side of meter yeah it's slow but that's the only way to do it.

Council Member Lee: That looks awesome really and that uses up all that money?

Todd Pederson: I think when we were looking at the cost estimate we will have about 50 grand left of the 30 million what did I say can I get 30 million I tried didn't.

Council Member Lee: Are we able to give them more money where they can put more lines in these new lines in in the central part of the city because all the all the crops and complaints about water has been in the center of the city.

Council Member Donnor: Inaudible

Council Member Lee: I'm saying I mean there's still 3 million or so or whatever not 30 not that you have that we have.

Todd Pederson: As we were going down like this ask the year just in the summer before the school year we actually ran from about I think it was from Jackman up past Ringold all the way up to gun and that line if you can drive down there now the the street looks really bad there's a patched area I think on the east laying down the center and they laid that line and then they went in there and did those services and

ran them through So what you do is as you do that line you get to a point you then pressure you put water on that line.

Council Member Morrow: Inaudible

Todd Pederson: I am not getting anything positive or negative.

Council Member Donnor: Inaudible

Todd Pederson: I think the biggest thing is fire flow.

Council Member Knight: Right and all those water lines the normal resident not going to see an issue pressure wise up or down what you're looking at is if a fire department has to tap those lines and pull off of it the amount of counter pressure on a below grade line will collapse the line because the pressure that they're pulling off of it with these new lines it will be able to sustain that pressure if they pull off of it because of the upgrade in the materials upgraded in the capacities so it will maintain and hold those pressures.

Mayor Farmer: Inaudible

Todd Pederson: Yeah, it's volume of flow low and as Mr. knight said I mean a single house with a three-quarter inch line they got enough volume there because if they have a four inch this is for Fire Protection of those if something happens down there or any in this area thank you for the availability of the funds because it does help.

Council Member Morrow: Inaudible

Todd Pederson: Also, I'll tell you what I'll give somebody my number because then you can call me and ask me anything, anytime.

Toby Hirscheider: I can give them our number.

Todd Pederson: OK she has my number and those again if you just contact me if you'll have any issues, I'm available OK I appreciate y'all thank you.

Council Member Lee: Thank you kindly. Moving on to A&P, the only thing that I can think of is that we did fill the vacancy.

Council Member Brown: Yeah, we filled the vacancy two months ago, uh really nothing else going on and we're still.

Council Member Lee: We're still in the waiting period study for the property that A&P purchased at the 114, other than that nothing unusual. Now planning and zoning.

John Parton: The only thing we have that's going before council is the rezone or sorry the conditional use approval for the solar farm um and that was approved by planning.

Council Member Knight: Is that in a school zone?

John Parton: remained that part was not parcel was not rezoned to school when rezoned those two parcels out there it's still a zoned C2 commercial I believe OK and so it was proved as conditional use in that and I think outstanding opportunity it allows for them to provide electrical service so the electrical service but also to that can be a living learning lab for students out there to work on solar field related connectivity and programs.

Council Member Knight: So my question would be and I get it this is great but would it be more beneficial to go ahead and extend the school zone to inform that way it would have greater eligibility for future grants and things like that so is that something we may want to look at once we grant the conditional use we need to come back and look at extending that school zone to encompass this solar farm.

John Parton: Sure, we can do that.

Mayor Farmer: Inaudible

John Parton: Yeah. we started construction on the elementary school, and we discovered that it we had not changed that over to a school zone so we rezoned that last year late last year, is current nestled in between behind the CTE and the schools thank you.

Toby Hirscheider: I'll talk about this next part, the handout on the commissions list you guys have put out a there's an updated of all the departments and commissions names emails phone numbers if you guys need to get in touch with anyone after hours on emergency basis and that's kind of like also the chain of command list I have them in that order so you guys have that and then I also put out a updated/revised December calendar and please notice that we moved the tree lighting ceremony to Thursday November 30th at Owens Mooney park because our Panthers will be in the state playoffs on December 1st and we want to be able to have all of our citizens to be able to go to both and we've got many, many, many events throughout December so any of them that you guys want to come out and connect with the citizens, I welcome you and I hope you do come out.

Council Member Lee: We are adjourned.