

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES
SEWER PROJECT UPDATE
Wednesday, February 5, 2020

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business.

Mayor Frank Janakovic called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Reverend King offered the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Janakovic and Councilmembers Capriotti, Arnone, Mock and King introduced themselves for the record. Absent were Councilmembers Britt and Vitovich.

Elizabeth Benjamin, Esquire, City Solicitor; Robert Ritter, Finance Director/Acting City Manager; John Trant, Interim City Manager; Michael Kerr, GJWA; Jared Campagna, Public Works Director; Don Buday, EADS Group; Steve Sewalk, EADS Group; Brandon Palmer; Deborah Grass, Act 47 Coordinator; Steve Goldfield; Ed Schmitt and Bruce Graham, Gibson Thomas Engineering were also present.

Steve Sewalk, EADS Group, **provided an overview of the sewage construction project. He indicated the loans closed out through PennVEST included Hornerstown Phase One, Hornerstown Phase Two/Walnut Grove and Roxbury.**

Open loans included Woodvale/Prospect, which was anticipated to close soon. Michael Kerr, GJWA, inquired as to the amount of the open loans that were anticipated to be closed. Mr. Sewalk referred to information contained in the packet for further discussion of the open loan amounts.

There was discussion regarding the Roxbury sewage construction project and improvements to Franklin Street in that area now that the bond expired. It was noted that PennDOT would be conducting a paving project in that section of Franklin Street, and it was suggested that Plainfield Avenue be incorporated into that project.

Mr. Sewalk commented that most projects had generally come in under budget from the original loan amount.

He stated the Oakhurst Project would be tentatively closed in March; Moxham Phase One in April; Morrellville in May; Cambria City in June; Eighth Ward/Moxham Phase Two, still a few items to work out with the contractor; and Horner Street later in the summer. Mr. Sewalk indicated that Kernville was still under construction.

Mr. Sewalk noted Fairfield Avenue and Old Conemaugh were bid out and grant offers were received, \$5.2 million for Fairfield Avenue. A resolution regarding the matter would be on the next Council meeting agenda.

The sewage construction project for the Central Business District would be next on the list, and a resolution regarding that matter would be on Council's March meeting agenda. Mr. Sewalk commented the downtown project could start towards the end of 2020 or spring of 2021. Mrs. Mock suggested that the utilities coordinate during the project. Mr. Sewalk reminded Council members that many basements in the City came out in through the sidewalk, and that would need to be addressed.

It was noted that Council should be made aware that trenchless work done in the City would result in ineligible paving costs. There was discussion regarding those costs. Mr. Sewalk referred Council to information regarding paving costs expended to date for further discussion.

The Miscellaneous Category was a cleanup project that could be estimated to be from \$2 to \$7 million. Mr. Kerr inquired if the budgeted amount of \$7 million from this account was enough to go back over the projects. Mr. Sewalk did not think there would be a problem.

Pressure testing percentages were reviewed. Mr. Sewalk noted that 40 percent of the customers have been pressure tested.

Mrs. Mock requested a report listing the status of each project.

Mr. Sewalk referred to trenchless under slab piping and information regarding an ordinance for piping materials for further discussion. He noted the IPC (International Plumbing Code) indicates the use of schedule 40 pipe under slab in a building. There was discussion about the different acceptable methods used by contractors.

Mr. Sewalk suggested that the 2018 IPC be adopted. Ms. Grass commented that under the City's Recovery Plan, the use of old codes was an issue. Mr. Sewalk explained that all contractors performing sewage construction needed to utilize a camera. Mr. Kerr commented that this type of "push camera" does not have the same degree of accuracy as the ROV used in the standard method of inspection of lines.

Don Buday, master plumber, commented that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recently adopted the 2015 IPC Code. He stated the rules were completely different between boroughs, townships, and a third-class city such

as Johnstown. The outlying boroughs and townships were not required to follow the IPC. There was discussion regarding an amendment to the code.

Ms. Benjamin explained that with a distinction between the Plumbing Code and a provision in the City's ordinance, the ordinance would prevail. She questioned whether the 2018 Code would even need to be adopted.

Mr. Buday commented that a liner would be sufficient if installed correctly, but 90 percent of the houses in the City have cast iron and cannot be slipped. It was noted that some homes in the City with cast iron pipes were slipped, inspected, and approved. Council would review the ordinance attached to the agenda regarding the matter.

Mr. Sewalk referred to pressure testing enforcement for further discussion. Mayor Janakovic commented that Council had not moved on enforcement of fines and did not like the ordinance. He requested that the matter be deferred pending negotiations.

Mr. Sewalk referred to flow monitoring information for discussion. He explained that once an area was completed, the City would be required to install meters to determine if the flows were within the allowable flow followed by a lateral camera test or pressure test. Mr. Sewalk explained that there were roughly 12 or 13 overflows left and active at different points.

Bruce Graham and Ed Schmitt were present on behalf of Gibson Thomas Engineering for discussion of a revised contract that would be on Council's February 12, 2020 agenda.

Mr. Graham noted the City originally signed an agreement with the City for a detailed inspection that phased in with EADS in trying to keep everybody's best interest at point. He noted, although the group has respect for EADS, their position was to represent the City in tracking and reviewing the work being conducted to assure good practice and cost savings. Mr. Graham and Mr. Trant reviewed the contract and noted an overlap that would have to be eliminated. Gibson Thomas submitted a revised addendum to the contract. Mr. Trant commented a resolution concerning the matter would be on Council's agenda for the next meeting.

Mr. Sewalk referred to the rate ordinance information in the packet for further discussion. He commented that when Mr. Ritter estimated operating expenses for 2021, it would take approximately \$1.25 a month increase to meet expenses. Mr. Sewalk explained that this increase was necessary, but there would be a good chance that by the time it finishes its entire loan obligations,

the debt load would be lower, which may result in not needing the \$1.25 increase. The operating expenses could be reduced. There might also be a sale. In which case, this ordinance would have no effect whatsoever; because the owner of the system would have a different ability to pay operating costs. There would be further discussion regarding this matter in the future as well as what effect applying for PennVEST funds for the downtown sewer project would have if a sale was made prior to application.

Ms. Benjamin explained that the ordinance would be implemented as of April 15, 2020, and there will be public reaction.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7:19 p.m.