



Utilities Commission
Commission Meeting

Minutes

July 6, 2022
8:30 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Brian Ball	City Engineer	Present	
Richard Dzik	Safety Service Director	Absent	
Tom Marshall		Present	
Mike Miller		Present	

Others in attendance: Emily Platt, Consultant; Todd Hill, Clerk of Council; Matt Starr, Mayor; Tammy Woods, Council Representative; Andrew, Upper Gilchrist Estates.

MINUTES APPROVAL

- Utilities Commission - Commission Meeting - Jun 1, 2022 8:30 AM

RESULT: **ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER: Tom Marshall
SECONDER: Mike Miller
AYES: Ball, Marshall, Miller
ABSENT: Dzik

ADJUSTMENT JOURNAL

- June Adjustment Journal
- Motion to Approve the June Adjustment Journal.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mike Miller
SECONDER:	Tom Marshall
AYES:	Ball, Marshall, Miller
ABSENT:	Dzik

NEW BUSINESS

Knox Cattle Company Dam

Added at the meeting by Mr. Ball.

Mr. Ball said Judge Wetzel is having 2 public participation sessions. The first one is today at 4:00 PM at the Woodward. The second one is tomorrow at 6:00 PM also at the Woodward.

Public Utility Department CIP Discussion

Mr. Marshall said we are focused right now on the Water Plant and the critical needs were presented to Council last meeting including the lime sludge lagoon which is going pretty well. The EPA came out and did an inspection and they were happy with how we were doing things. We are working with several farmers who are interested in the material. It will take a few more weeks to get the lagoon emptied out. Another project we need to get moving on are the lime silos; they are in really bad shape. We would like to do a turnkey replacement. If anyone wants to come out and look at those, you are welcome to. One of them is completely inoperable and the other is on it's last leg. That's about a 1.5 million dollar project that we will see coming down the pipe very soon.

Ms. Woods asked how old they are.

Mr. Marshall said they are over 20 years old. The other thing is the clarifier tanks are in very bad condition. We've had them studied many times; they are beyond their useful life. The west tank is currently inoperable. The last thing we can do is sandblast, clean, and recoat the steel mechanism that turns around to collect the lime sludge. If we get that done, we are hopeful we can put that tank back into service. Right now we have the RFQ language complete for that project and we expect to get that out and advertised right away. The other project is the recarbonation panels. This is a much easier project, the cost is around \$200,000. One of the existing panels is completely gutted; they are using it for parts for the other one. Other things going on, we need to inspect our water tanks and our clear well.

Ms. Woods asked an estimated cost for tank replacement. Mr. Marshall described in more detail how the recarbonation works and the plan for the future.

Mr. Ball summarized the projects as the right now, critical need and the longer term projects. Mr. Ball, Mr. Marshall, and Ms. Woods discussed the plan to eliminate the recarbonation tank in the future and the costs associated. Mr. Ball said the cost would be demolishing what is there and replacing it with a pipe. Mr. Marshall said we are looking at about \$7.5 million.

Mr. Starr asked if the new system would use gravity or would there be a pump.

Mr. Marshall said we are proposing to use the conveyance system we currently have pumping the material up to the existing tanks until we can put in new tanks at ground level. Then the system will work on gravity.

Mr. Miller asked if the entire \$7.5 million plan had been presented to Council.

Mr. Marshall said not yet. Right now there is a firm, Hazen & Sawyer, that is working with the city to evaluate all of the alternatives and come up with a recommended solution. We think what we are talking about is the recommended solution but we need to do due diligence to make sure.

Ms. Woods asked if someone would be available to discuss this at a committee meeting at the next Council meeting. Mr. Marshall said yes. She requested about 20 minutes for that.

Mr. Ball asked Mr. Marshall about any immediate needs that are not under contract.

Mr. Marshall said he has worked with Terry and there is money for all of the immediate needs projects.

Ms. Woods asked about the other lime lagoon and how long it may be before we need to take care of it.

Mr. Marshall suggested we start on that next year and we need to budget taking out some per year. He is working with Brian now on a 20 year plan for water & sewer so we can lay all these costs out.

There was discussion about the EPA inspections and potential for a violation if things aren't repaired. Mr. Miller suggested explaining all of this to City Council.

Mr. Ball wanted everyone to be aware that we have been systematic in our approach to these issues, prioritizing massive loss of water and underground reservoir since 2016 because that is how the EPA wanted things prioritized. We are at a point now where we need to focus on the Water Plant.

Mr. Marshall said the lead time on the silos is one year so if we start on them tomorrow, it will be one year before they are done. He thinks the panels are around 24 weeks.

Mr. Marshall discussed the criticality of working on these projects now. We don't have redundancy. We have one of each and if something goes wrong with any of those, we shut down the process.

Mr. Miller asked if City Council understands the priority of it. Ms. Woods said they know.

Mr. Ball stressed the timing; some of these things cannot be done in November or December.

Mr. Marshall discussed the multiple lift stations in the city and the lack of a backup generator. He described how Lee Henthorn took a generator from lift station to lift station during the last storm to pump them out. This had to be done for 48 hours straight.

Permitting Process Workflow

Mr. Marshall said in the interest of time, he recommends deferring this topic until the next meeting.

Upper Gilchrist Estates: Private SMS Utility Application

Mr. Ball gave a short recap of the Private SMS Utility and indicated that Andrew from Upper Gilchrist Estates would be the first applicant.

Andrew spoke about the problems with HOAs managing these systems and expressed thanks that the City has created the framework to enable this type of arrangement. He said they plan to officially apply tomorrow and he mentioned the letter by Brian stating that until the turnover, the developer would be responsible for maintaining the system/facilities.

Mr. Ball asked about the plans for the portion that is not part of the plat.

Andrew discussed possibly transferring ownership of those tracts to the City.

There was some discussion of how this arrangement will work. Mr. Ball said the homeowners would pay water, sewer, the public stormwater, and then they would pay a fourth fee which would be this private SMS fee.

Ms. Platt said she did a 25 year timeline for this one based on the style of detention ponds they are. She described the calculations she made to arrive at the monthly fees for each of the benefited properties.

Mr. Ball asked the results of her calculations.

Ms. Platt said \$40 per month. That is for 4 ponds. Again, not all the ponds are finalized so it will be one of those situations where it will be updated as those are finalized.

Andrew asked if that \$40 was per lot.

Mr. Ball said yes, per address per month. He said in Andrew's subdivision everyone was on one lot but we have some old zoning where some people are on 2 or 3 lots.

Ms. Platt spoke about the fee and how she calculated in future costs as well to make sure there is enough money for the 25 year maintenance when that 25 years comes.

Andrew said it is probably about the same as an HOA would charge if not competitive.

Mr. Ball and Ms. Platt discussed some of the particulars of billing and the fund accounts.

Mr. Marshall asked for the spreadsheet on that. He also spoke about the limitations of the utility billing software and discussed the office's recommendation against including this fee in the utility billing.

Ms. Woods said she thought we discussed at a prior meeting doing this on real estate taxes for that reason. Mr. Marshall agreed. They both thought the discussion was finalized.

Mr. Ball said it was not and there are several things that need to be decided but today we need to decide if we are going to allow Upper Gilchrist Estates to enter this program and then the rate will actually be voted on in the planning commission meeting that is later this month and then hopefully by next meeting, we can make a decision on the billing.

Mr. Marshall said many of them already think they made a decision so he would like to enter a motion.

Mr. Ball said why don't we start with a motion to accept the developers application and then we will do Mr. Marshall's motion second.

Mr. Marshall said he would take on the task of talking to the County Auditor and comparing the price of in-house vs. County collection.

Mr. Miller said he would like to discuss the billing part. He doesn't really understand that except that the billing system doesn't bill by address or parcel.

Ms. Woods said she thinks the issue is that with billing it through the utility, people have the option of not paying. You also have the option of not paying your real estate tax with that attached but there is a better chance of that being collected.

Mr. Marshall said that is it, bottom line, but also the software that the City Auditor uses is problematic with respect to parcel. It is already a problem for our utility office staff billing for stormwater and this would add another.

Mr. Miller said he sees that.

Mr. Marshall said he thought this had been decided and he isn't sure what the push-back is.

Mr. Ball said real estate taxes are billed in arrears and for this situation he thinks that is okay. Emily will need to check and build in the collection fee from the County Auditor. Previous Council felt that we needed to collect the money immediately so we could start doing projects but that was a separate discussion. Mr. Ball said he is open to putting this on the County tax rolls and to a motion or further discussion.

Mr. Miller said we need to figure out the best way to make sure these fees are being collected and the easiest way right now.

Mr. Marshall discussed the option and gave his recommendation of collecting these fees through property taxes.

Mr. Miller asked for assurance that the City does follow through with placing liens on property when bills aren't paid.

Mr. Ball said at least once a year, stormwater past due bills are assessed.

There was a consensus that some investigation and research is needed. Ms. Platt will work on this before the planning commission meeting.

- Motion to Accept the New Stormwater Development into the City as Proposed.

Mr. Ball said there are no additional motions on this but it has essentially been referred to committee to prepare a presentation for Municipal Planning Commission and at the next meeting we will hopefully vote on the exact process for collecting it. Mr. Ball thanked Andrew for changing his schedule and coming to Commission today.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Tom Marshall
SECONDER:	Mike Miller
AYES:	Ball, Marshall, Miller
ABSENT:	Dzik

OLD BUSINESS

Policy Changes-Pool Credit, Septic Discharge, and Utility Deposits

- Pool Credits

Mr. Marshall said we want to change the pool credit policy a little bit. Right now it's hard to tell how much to credit.

Ms. Woods clarified that this is if they are filling a pool at their residence.

Mr. Marshall said this is kind of an administrative thing.

Mr. Ball said they typically show up on the adjustment journal so that is the only time Commission needs to see it.

Mr. Marshall explained some on how pool credits work.

Mr. Ball asked if there was a recommended new policy.

Mr. Marshall said we can defer this. The season is over anyhow; people have already filled their pools.

There was a discussion of how the deduct meters would work or potentially having someone read the meters before and after filling.

Mr. Ball said we will get a recommendation that will probably be a change to the Rules & Regulations.

- **Septic Discharge**

Mr. Marshall said we want to raise the rate on septic discharge. Again, though, we don't have a recommendation at this point but we've done some calculations and our current rate doesn't cover the cost of treating the discharge that we are receiving.

Ms. Woods asked when the last time was we upped the rate.

Mr. Ball said 2018; it was a small adjustment that probably wasn't commensurate with the 2017 wastewater rate increase.

- **Utility Bill Deposits**

Mr. Marshall said the recommendation from the Utility to the Commission is to implement a \$100 deposit to open an account. Staff did research and consulted other utilities to arrive at this recommendation. What do we need to do to make that happen?

Mr. Ball asked if this was for water and wastewater or does it include stormwater as well.

Mr. Marshall said he was thinking it would be water and wastewater.

Mr. Ball said there shouldn't be any need for a deposit if you have a stormwater only bill. So, all new customers would be \$100 each water and wastewater or either. And that could be processed through the iworq system and collected with permits.

Mr. Marshall said that is not the way it should work in his opinion. It should be all new accounts like it works with electric or gas. When you open up an account, you pay a deposit.

Mr. Miller clarified that it would be whoever opened the account whether it is a landlord or a tenant.

Mr. Ball explained that when someone gets a new permit, they will pay those fees and then they will also pay a deposit to open a utility account.

Mr. Marshall said he doesn't know the process to get this through.

Mr. Ball said that would be a question for Rob. The Safety Service Director has authority over the rates for water; City Council has authority over the rates for wastewater. It's not really a rate so we could have a motion and vote on it.

Ms. Woods said if Commission goes ahead and votes and then if Council needs to Monday, they can. It is a definite assist to landlords who have had issues with tenants.

Mr. Marshall said it is a typical thing to do.

- Motion to Approve the Institution of a \$100 Utility Deposit on New Water/Wastewater Accounts.

Ms. Woods asked if someone would get with Rob to see if it needs to go to City Council.

Mr. Ball said yes.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Tom Marshall
SECONDER:	Mike Miller
AYES:	Ball, Marshall, Miller
ABSENT:	Dzik

Water Plant Project Update

OTHER

ADJOURN

- Adjourn Motion

Mr. Miller Made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Marshall, second and the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 AM.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mike Miller
SECONDER:	Tom Marshall
AYES:	Ball, Marshall, Miller
ABSENT:	Dzik

Rick Dzik, Chairman

Kristen Goldner, Recording Secretary

ADJUSTMENTS
JUNE 2021

Account #	Amount	Name	Address	Leak Credit Y or N	Reason	Date of Credit
01.18.2	(\$104.00)	Vicki Fitzgerald	206 E. High St.	N	Credit for Storm Overcharge per Brian Ball	05/27/22
18.143.1	(\$274.68)	Beeline Services	5-7 N. Norton St.	N	Meter was pulled by Land Bank but account kept billing-Inactivated & waived those bills	06/01/22
Multiple	\$ 3,200.00		Non-payment fees for May shut-offs	N	June 2022 Non-payment fees-80 shut-offs	06/07/22
Multiple	\$27,624.52		Bulk Water/Septic Discharge	N	May 2022 Bulk Water/Septic Discharge Fees	06/10/22
01.21.9	(\$110.00)	Heidi Phillips	302 E. High St.	N	Credit for Storm Overcharge per Brian Ball	06/13/22
02.23.3	(\$98.00)	Daniel/Sandra Smith	207 E. Vine St	N	Credit for Storm Overcharge per Brian Ball	06/13/22
33.99.2	(\$534.71)	Tim Nelson	201 Crystal Ave.	N	House was demo'd & services capped-credited back to that date & made account inactive	06/28/22

Communication: June Adjustment Journal (Adjustment Journal)

Any Adjustment over \$500 goes to Water/Wastewater Commission

Summer/Pool Credits: Other Practices

1. Delaware: Offers a one-time pool fill credit on the wastewater portion of the bill. They ask the customer to call them after filling a pool and tell them when they started. The Utility then looks at the consumption remotely and makes the adjustment on the wastewater consumption.
2. Coshocton: Offers a one-time wastewater credit for pools. An employee reads the meter before the customer starts and again after the customer is done. If the customer's account is in arrears, no credit is given.
3. Westerville: Does not offer a billing credit. Instead, routes customer to other options; they can rent a hydrant and fill pools from the fire hydrant or they can buy bulk water from the plant.
4. Wooster: Does not offer a billing credit. Instead, they require a deduct meter which they sell to the customer along with a transmitter. The customer is responsible for getting a plumber to prepare everything and then the Water Department charges for an employee to finish the install. They also require pools to be emptied into a storm drain based on EPA requirements, not on the ground. If it is to be emptied on the ground, the customer has to furnish test results showing there are no harmful chemicals in the water.
5. Bucyrus: Does not offer any credit or other option at all.
6. Newark: Does not offer any program for this.

Septic Discharge Fees-Other Practices:

1. Delaware: Charges a flat \$0.06 per gallon.
2. Newark: Charges \$4/100 gallons for residential waste disposal & \$10/100 gallons for non-domestic waste disposal. They also charge a \$7.50 administration fee per manifest. RV holding tanks are \$5/RV.
3. Coshocton: Pre-charges before dumping: 1-3000 gallons residential is \$100, 1-3000 gallons commercial is \$200. Any amount over 3000 gallons is not accepted without pre-approval. Camping trailers are \$10.

Utility Bill Deposits: Other Practices

1. Delaware: Charges a \$100 deposit to all new customers.
2. Newark: Charges a \$50 deposit for owner & a \$125 deposit for renters. They also charge a \$15 activation fee for all customers. After one year with a perfect payment history, they release the deposit.
3. Coshocton: Charges a \$35 application fee for all customers but no deposit.
4. Westerville: Charges a \$100 deposit for renters, no deposit for owners.
5. Wooster: Does not charge any deposit.
6. Bucyrus: Charges a \$180 deposit for renters up to 62 years old, \$50 deposit for renters over 62 years old, and \$0 deposit for owners.