

**COMMON COUNCIL  
WASTEWATER COMMITTEE  
MARCH 7, 2022**

The City of Noblesville Wastewater Council Committee met pursuant to public notice on Monday, March 7, 2022 in the administration conference room at the Wastewater Utility. Mark Boice, Mike Davis, and Dan Spartz were present. Greg O'Connor was absent.

Also present were City Clerk Evelyn Lees, Deputy Mayor Matt Light, Wastewater Utility Director Jonathan Mirgeaux, and Wastewater Utility Assistant Director Karrie Hutson. City Attorney Lindsey Bennett attended electronically via Microsoft Teams.

Mr. Spartz called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

Mr. Mirgeaux stated he met with Mr. Spartz earlier for a high level overview. He stated in the past, the committee met as needed once or twice per year, but this year the committee plans to meet quarterly. He stated his department has an open door policy, and he welcomes visits and questions from the Council.

2022 Budget

Approach to Future Budgets and Project Prioritization

Mr. Mirgeaux stated he has reviewed the current budget, and he plans to take a different approach or style than in the past. He stated he plans to include more definition. He noted he prepared two capital budgets for Citizens Energy in the past. He stated his goal is not to underspend on capital assets, but to reinvest savings wisely to add value. He stated in the current budget he plans to move some funds to where there are needs. As an example, he referenced a recent study on biosolids. He stated he would like to implement recommendations of the study that were not budgeted. He explained one improvement, to replace the aged solids belt press with screw presses, would require an up-front investment, but would be more efficient and pay for itself over time. He noted the current supply chain environment involves very long wait times for equipment orders to arrive. Therefore, the impact of replacing equipment after it breaks can significantly impact utility operations and lead to much higher overall cost compared to replacing equipment proactively. He stated he plans to make thoughtful, wise priority decisions. He noted he is working with Baker Tilly to make sure that the Utility's bond rating is protected.

Indiana Transportation Museum

Mr. Mirgeaux stated the Stormwater Utility has been providing a cash bridge to fund cleanup of the former Indiana Transportation Museum site, which has been ongoing for nearly five years. He stated there has been a court judgment in the City's favor, so now an agreement is being negotiated to reimburse the City for its costs. He noted while the City is confident it will be reimbursed at some point, no one knows exactly when that will be. He stated the City has a bid for approximately \$3.3 million for primary construction to remediate the site, and there will be additional costs in the future. He explained a resolution will be presented to the Board of Public Works and Safety at a special meeting tomorrow specifying funding for the construction

contract. He stated the resolution also specifies how costs will be shared if there is a shortfall in reimbursement. He stated the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) ties in to the site, because the pollution there could affect water quality in the area. He stated for this reason, the MS4 utility will be responsible for ten percent of the cost. Mr. Light added the remediation work must be completed regardless of any legal settlement or reimbursement. He stated the work needs to begin immediately in order to avoid affecting the Babe Ruth baseball season at Forest Park; to avoid the nesting season of the Indiana brown bat; and to continue with construction and use of Hobbs Station at the park. Mr. Mirgeaux stated the resolution provides transparency for the public to see how the funding will be used, which is always good.

### Evaluating Banking & Lockbox Services

Mr. Mirgeaux stated utility and trash fee payments are currently sent to a lockbox in Detroit, Michigan, because it was the lowest price. Mr. Boice added he frequently hears from constituents who want to know why their bills are sent so far away. Mr. Mirgeaux explained Baker Tilly urged him to focus on a bank that provides the best service, rather than just the lowest price. He stated he has not been happy with the current bank's service, and he has contacted them about a local lockbox. He stated he has also contacted three other local banks. Mr. Light added they are also investigating updating payment options for customers. Mr. Mirgeaux agreed. He stated updates should be expected in the next two months.

### Issue – Sump Pumps Connected to Curb Drains

Mr. Mirgeaux informed the committee of an issue that they may hear about from some constituents. He stated in developments approved from 2000 to 2007, sump pump drains were connected to underdrains below the curbs. He stated street tree roots can clog the drains and cause problems for the sump pumps. He explained because the sump pump drain pipes are made of corrugated plastic, the utility can't clean the roots out of them without destroying the pipe. He stated the issue is complex with no simple answers, and the utility will work with other departments to find solutions. He stated the Planning Department has provided a list of the neighborhoods most at risk. Mr. Light explained the City wants to take a proactive approach, rather than waiting for problems to occur. He stated they hope to educate the residents about the risk so they will know to contact the City if a problem occurs.

### Ongoing Major Projects

#### Lift Station 2

Mr. Mirgeaux stated Lift Station 2 is currently the second largest lift station, but once it is renovated, it will be the largest, serving into Wayne Township. He noted heavy development is expected in Wayne Township in the near future. He explained the cost of the project was estimated at \$10 million, but due to the economy and supply chain issues, the cost estimate has increased 30 percent. He stated he does not expect prices to come back down. He stated because of supply problems, contractors are having difficulty with project deadlines. He stated they are inflating bids to hedge their risk. He stated he is working with the Legal Department to see if the Utility can take some of the risk off of bidders without leaving room to manipulate the public,

low-bid process. He stated one consideration could be to extend completion deadlines to give contractors flexibility in obtaining their materials and equipment.

Lift Station 9

Mr. Mirgeaux stated a new lift station will be built a little north of the current one. He stated the contract should bid this year.

Other Business

Mr. Light asked for the current status of staffing at the Utility. Mr. Mirgeaux replied there are three vacancies in collections. He stated two vacancies have been filled in billing. Ms. Hutson added two additional positions were added at the treatment plant that have not been filled yet. Mr. Mirgeaux reviewed the challenges in filling positions and potential solutions.

Mr. Light expressed appreciation for Mr. Mirgeaux as the new director. He stated he and Ms. Hutson make a good team.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.



---

DANIEL SPARTZ, COMMITTEE CHAIR



---

EVELYN L. LEES, CLERK  
CITY OF NOBLESVILLE