

WORK SESSION

A work session was held by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Norfolk, Nebraska, on Wednesday, May 16, 2012 beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers Conference Room, 309 West Madison Avenue, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Mayor Sue Fuchtman called the meeting to order.

Roll call found the following members present: Mayor Sue Fuchtman and Councilmembers Brenneman, Clausen (5:48 p.m.), Coy, Lange, Merrill, Murren and Saunders. Absent: Fauss.

Staff members present were City Administrator Shane Weidner, City Attorney Clint Schukei, Public Works Director Dennis Smith, City Clerk Beth Deck, Wastewater Plant Superintendent Todd Boling, Water & Sewer Director Dennis Watts, Operations Manager Gary Miller, and Finance Officer Randy Gates.

The media was represented by Greg Wees, Norfolk Daily News; and Eric McKay, US92.

Also present were: Roger Protzman (JEO); Terry Johnson, (NDEQ); Mark Fitzgerald (Attorney for SID #1); Vince Knight (SID #1); Bill and Marie Nielsen; and Dan and Judy Wilson.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Norfolk Daily News, and notice of the meeting was given to the Mayor and all members of the Council prior to the meeting.

The Mayor presided and the City Clerk recorded the proceedings.

The Mayor informed the public about the location of the current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted and accessible to members of the public.

Roger Protzman stated JEO conducted two different sewer system studies: one for the Norfolk Regional Center and one for Stanton County SID #1 (Woodland Park). Protzman distributed fact sheets for each of the sewer system evaluations (attached hereto). The fact sheets include objectives completed; findings; and recommendations.

JEO found some deficiencies with the pipes, leaks around manholes and a storm water inlet in one location that was cross-connected with the sanitary sewer system in the Norfolk Regional Center sewer system. The State of Nebraska has authorized JEO to begin design work on the improvements with completion in 2012. Total cost of the improvements is \$287,050. Once the improvements are completed, Protzman feels the flow from the Norfolk Regional Center (NRC) will be in the normal range of 25-50 gpm.

Nielsen questioned whether storm water is causing the extra flow into the sewer system.

Protzman indicated the storm water may be causing the extra flow since flows spiked from NRC during the last 4" rain in April.

Protzman stated only about 20% of the SID #1 system was analyzed because of a limited budget. A major find was a large leak by a manhole and storm inlet structure but repairs have been made. Another major problem was a leak around a tree trunk. JEO stated the SID #1 system is in fairly good condition overall but Protzman indicated sump pumps are always a major issue.

The Saturday, April 14, 2012, storm contained a large amount of rain plus hail and the SID #1 flow peaked at 413 gpm. The flow on April 14, 2012 from the Regional Center was over 300 gpm for 3 hours (the contract has a limit of 125 gpm). The total contract limit for SID #1 (which includes the Regional Center) is a maximum of 625 gpm and the system peaked at over 700 gpm on April 14, 2012. Staff contacted the Wilson's, Nielsen's and Gubbels to let them know of the excess flow and the property owners shut off valves to their homes for approximately 6 hours. There wasn't any sewer damage to the properties because of this preventative measure. However, without notification to the property owners and use of the shut off valves there most likely would have been sewer backups in the homes.

Protzman indicated the SID #1 is heading in the right direction but JEO needs more data to test the entire system. Protzman also indicated NRC should be able to stay under 125 gpm once the improvements are made.

Watts explained the rain/hail storm on April 14 was very unusual and three other lift stations on the City's system also had problems. City staff walks the entire system twice a year to check for deficiencies. The system could have had an additional 1,200 – 1,300 gpm from that storm but the average daily flow in a normal week is only about 300 – 400 gpm. The NRC averages 15 – 20 gpm and the SID #1 averages 50 – 75 gpm, or about ¼ of the total flow on a normal day comes from the NRC and SID #1.

Smith explained sewer systems are designed for 100 gallons per person per day with a 2 ½ times peak factor because of fluctuations throughout the day. All systems have potential for leakage so a peak of 250 gpm per person per day is used. Other contributing factors are the various businesses and industries on the system.

Nielson stated the City provides the service and feels there should be some liability/responsibility for damage caused to the citizens' homes.

Weidner explained the City's system can accommodate 2 ½ times the average flow. Weidner stated the City needs to look at flows, need capacities, impact on system, and whether or not the City's system has room for capacity above and beyond what is allowed in the contract with SID #1.

Fitzgerald interprets the contract differently and said the SID #1 has the responsibility to be a reasonable customer but can't make promises not to exceed the 625 gpm. Fitzgerald stated the City has the responsibility to provide a safe system to citizens.

Schukei explained that no matter the interpretation, flow rate is flow rate and the industry standard is to engineer and build a system that has an increased capacity of 2 ½ times the average flow. The SID #1 contract has the standard 2 ½ times the average flows built into the contract and SID #1 & NRC exceeded the 2 ½ times average flow on April 14, 2012.

Weidner questioned what the sewer system evaluations mean to Nielson and Wilson if the daily maximum flows allowed by the contract with SID #1 are met once improvements are made as recommended by JEO.

Nielson feels this is a hardship on citizens but said City staff has been a great help. Nielsen stated insurance companies may not want to provide coverage in the future because of the known problem.

Wilson stated NPPD will fix TVs, electronic equipment, etc., if their system fails. Wilson and Nielsen feel the City of Norfolk should do the same.

Vince Knight, SID #1, stated the City of Norfolk has been very proactive with citizens and the SID #1 is pursuing some repairs to the system. Knight feels confident that SID #1 has good control of the system now even though there is room for improvement.

Weidner stated the City of Norfolk doesn't want to be backed into a corner because of increased flows from NRC and SID #1. The contract with SID #1 has specified flows so the City's system isn't compromised. Norfolk staff is confident in the design of the sewer system.

Weidner questioned whether the citizens could install septic systems.

Terry Johnson, NDEQ, said septic systems can be installed if Title 124 Rules and Regulations are followed.

Weidner brought another option forward at the suggestion of Public Works Director Dennis Smith. Weidner questioned whether the homeowners would consider installation of a lift station system in their homes.

Watts distributed a drawing (attached hereto) and explained the system essentially raises the sewer service elevation. Cost for the parts is approximately \$2,000 (\$1,200 for the pit unit and \$600 for electrical). Other options are: SID #1 insurance coverage; City of Norfolk insurance coverage; do nothing and monitor; or installation of septic tanks.

Nielson likes the lift station option but doesn't feel homeowners should have to incur the expense.

Councilmember Coy feels the lift station will only push the problem upstream.

Weidner stated the City is looking to partner with SID #1 and the State of Nebraska to look at long term solutions to help the homeowners.

Vince Knight stated SID #1 is doing everything possible to maintain the system and reduce infiltration and flows. However, the State of Nebraska has not been represented at any of these meetings and they should be part of finding a solution for the homeowners.

Smith stated the SID #1 is responsible for the NRC system according to the contract.

Vince Knight will present the information and lift station suggestion to the other SID #1 board members.

Weidner stated City staff will talk to the Gubbels' (the third homeowner), review the lift station suggestion, and continue to monitor the system to see that improvements are made. Weidner will contact the state to discuss the issue and have a follow-up meeting to discuss the issues further.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Sue Fuchtman
Mayor

ATTEST:

Bethene A. Hoff
Acting City Clerk

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