Minutes of October 14, 2021

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 12:30 p.m. but due to technical issues was called to order again at 12:52 p.m. in City Hall on Thursday, October 14th, 2021. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on October 13th, 2021.

Members Present: President Rosenberg, Commissioners Robinson, Herbst, Gehin, Force.
Others Present: Eric Lindman, Scott Boers, Valerie Swanborg, Dave Erickson, Nate Miller, Toni Vanderboom. Via Webex: MaryAnne Groat, Debra Ryan, Tonia Westphal-Clark Dietz, Amrou Atassi- CDM Smith

1. **Discussion and Possible Action Awarding a Proposal for the Development of a Lead Service Line Replacement Program.**

WEBEX TECHINICAL ISSUES- MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:52 p.m.

Robinson questioned if there would be a reduction in the contract if the Commission or the City was doing the ordinance and how they would engage others.

Atassi replied saying the effort is to identify ordinances you may want to consider and encourage participation in identifying Lead Lines and providing input but drafting would be referred to the city's attorney to write up the ordinances. There would be an outreach strategy that starts with the stakeholders to help identify the best strategies to reach residents. This may include flyers, town hall meetings or library events based on what the best communication plan is for your community. We could include the implementation plan to provide a roadmap to exceed the goals outlined with you.

Force questioned if the $20k differential for inventory of the lead service lines is a repeat of what we've already done.

Boers replied it is not a repeat. We followed up on lead service line inventory mentioned from the last meeting and those numbers were just provided to Lindman.

Lindman states there are 13,763 residential properties, of that number the ones built 1970 or earlier are 10,723.

Boers added those are our starting numbers. We can overlay those with our records to know what was done on city's side but it was never required to have what was done on the private side. We could ask inspections or scan lateral permits to see what was done manually from their 2015 records forward but we would need to see what was done from those permits, whether it be a full replacement, just a partial patch or a meter brought out of a pit. Inspections records go back to 1967, we would only have a portion to follow up on. Per EPA's new rule, anything identified as possibly lead or unknown is considered lead.

Atassi adds that the inventory would entail which are confirmed lead and which are unknown per Fed/State requirements for the DNR. If it's zero unknown, the inventory would not be needed. We recommend developing a strategy of reducing the number of the unknown.

We can look at building records, tax records, plumbing requirements, interviewing city staff and collecting all information, then developing a strategy for next steps to take that may include sending surveys to homeowners. You would need to improve inventory because it plays a huge role in the funding to be received. But the two go hand in hand, developing a plan and refining inventory.

Lindman states we can look at bringing that back with the inventory but each service would have to be looked at individually whether it be going home to home or through other sources.

Force moved to adopt this plan for Clark Dietz less inventory for the time being. Seconded by Herbst.

Motion carried 5-0.

2. Discussion and Possible Action on the Purchase of Trucks/Trailers for Hauling Class A Biosolids.

Lindman started on the option available to purchase quad axle trucks to handle dry biosolids but the challenge is what would be long term. We do have equipment replacement funding that could be used but it's a $300k item and with the unknown we would not recommend the commission move forward with the purchase but advised there are costs to us because we are contracting out the removal of the biosolids in the interim. We have costs estimated from Donohue.

Gehin questioned the $50k, whether it was a monthly or annual cost.

Lindman replied this would be an annual cost but hopefully we would know by then the volume of the biosolids.

No action needed on this item.

3. Discussion and Possible Action Approving Recruitment and Retention Initiatives.

Vanderboom summarized the discussion that was held at the October Human Resources Meeting with the conclusion of approving new hires to borrow up to one week vacation time without having to wait for time off to accrue and increasing the amount of personal holidays and vacation time that is earned. Another concern employees brought up was pay. What we can do now is temporarily remove steps 1 & 2 of the pay scale and start everyone at step 3 of the pay scale. Any current employee in step 1 or 2 would be moved to step 3 with the thought that with the next wage study salaries will be equalized with market trends. Looking at budget increase, there is a cost of living increase of 2% but the salary ranges would be moved up 2% as well. HR approved fully funding Option 3 of the last wage study. Next year HR would begin looking into a culture survey and identify items that need improvement. HR will also look into development training next year and into a CDL trainer position. Next year's budget considerations would be pay adjustments for employees because it takes too long for them to reach the midpoint pay ranges. HR had a discussion on maybe looking at 2 increases every 6 months until the midpoint range is reached, if employees were hired at the minimum salary. Another item to be considered for next year are for those that are already above midpoint. This could include a percentage lump sum increase and ARPA funding could be utilized. All items recommended for immediate implementation were approved by the HR Committee and expected to go to the finance committee then council. Items for next year's budget would have supplemental requests to budget and would be considered one by one.

Robinson questioned what the projected cost would be.

Vanderboom replied the suspension of steps 1 & 2 would cost less than $20k. The 6 month increases would cost quarter of a million dollars.

Gehin questioned if we had a timeframe for new employees to acquire their CDL.

Vanderboom replied Water has a timeframe but not Wastewater.

Erickson explained that they require new hires to have a CDL as they are needed on the streets on day one of hire.

Robinson moved to implement changes consistent with the City and its policies. Seconded by Force.

Motion carried 5-0.

4. Adjourn.

There being no further business to discuss, motion to adjourn by Gehin. Seconded by Herbst.

The meeting is adjourned.

Link to view meeting in its entirety: https://tinyurl.com/wausaucitycouncil

Gina Vang, Recording Secretary
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