

**Minutes
City Council Regular Meeting
July 13, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER—ROLL CALL

The City Council of the City of Villa Grove met in regular session on **Monday, July 13, 2020** in Council Chambers. Mayor Eversole Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Roll call found the following members present: Alderman Johnson, Pangburn, Blaney, Hooker, Griffith, and Garrett. Clerk Osborne, Police Chief Rea, Public Works Director Arbuckle, and City Administrator Athey were also present. Contractors present were Andy Kieser, City Engineer from Fehr Graham, Professional Engineering consultant Gerald Hartman, and City Attorney Marc Miller. Council followed all COVID 19 protocols for social distancing.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE -The Mayor stood and led all attendees in The Pledge of Allegiance.

ORAL PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FOR WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP) AND WATER PLANT-GERALD HARTMAN

Mr. Gerald Hartman, Professional Engineering Consultant and Accredited Senior Appraiser for Public Utilities of Water/Wastewater Treatment, for assessment of water treatment and wastewater treatment plants was present to give some of his initial findings with the condition of the utilities.

The WWTP is in a condition that is needing repair, and after a presentation from Fehr Graham last Fall, the estimate from their study for full replacement was around \$14 million dollars. We sought a consultant to give us more information on any other options we may have before proceeding with any repairs or replacements due to the exorbitant cost of replacement. Mr. Hartman described some options for the WWTP. There are two major options to consider: 1. Optimization of the current plant, or 2. Sale of the utility systems.

Option 1: Optimization of the plant-there were descriptions of three processes available with varying costs associated with them and the effects on rates to the customer.

1. Employ a BNR (Biological Nutrient Removal) plant-this is what was discussed in the report from Fehr Graham and is the most expensive option of replacement. The ultimate cost of \$14 million or more. The report from FG did not include value engineering in it, so it was not a complete report and the final estimates could be altered once the report is completed. Positives for this are total replacement and will last 40 years, more efficient operations. This is the most expensive option with the largest rate hike required.
2. Employ an MLE (Modified Ludzack-Ettinger (MLE) with Alum Polishing)-This option is not as high cost as the first option and the system would run efficiently, removing phosphorous efficiently as well. This system can be retrofitted into the existing tanks, but with new mechanical equipment and a new basin. The cost of this would be estimated at \$4 million dollars. Lifespan would be 40 years.
3. Employ a retrofit of the current system-This would upgrade equipment and replace items that are in disrepair with some new items but also the majority would use 'reconditioned' equipment. This would reduce the cost of replacements. Average life of this would be 30 years instead of 40 years as with the previous two options. This is the lowest cost of around \$1.5 million dollars. The estimate for this option was submitted without quoting prevailing wage rates, so the cost would most likely be much higher.
4. All of the options for optimization and continued ownership will require rate hikes anywhere from 10-20% or higher. That will require more study.

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Option 2: Sale of the Utilities-This is the second option we can consider. Mr. Hartman discussed the estimated values of the water and wastewater utilities and how a sale would affect rates and the community overall. These specific details will be in his report. He stated we would have to put out a Request for Proposal for selling the utilities. The RFP would include all of the items we want to have considered. That is something we would research more before we put the RFP out for bid. The RFP and completing a sale would probably take about a year to complete. There are companies in the area that could be interested in this property, with a prediction of at least 2 that he could think of right away.

One of the largest obstacles for Villa Grove is that we are isolated with no way to grow our economy of scale. The City of Villa Grove has 1,120 water customers, and an equivalency of another 90 water customers from the wholesale meter totaling 1,210 water customers. There are approximately 1,060 wastewater customers. The total is 2,270 customers. A private company would have an economy of scale of a much larger customer base, spreading their costs out amongst all of their customers, which can provide lower and more steady rates. Private companies are required by ICC to have their rates approved before any rate hike, just like all of the other utilities do, such as Ameren. A sale would also bring tax money back to the city since the utilities would now be owned by a for profit entity. Some of the advantages of keeping the systems are keeping the employees and coordination of processes and projects between Streets and Alleys and the water utilities.

A very critical part of this entire process of determining how to proceed will be getting the public's input. The council is in agreement with the engineers and the attorneys to hold multiple meetings to help everyone understand what is available. Discussion at the meeting brought questions about what we lose and what we gain if we sell, how many improvements do we make in the meantime. Speaking to that, the recommendation for moving forward is to gather as much information as possible for the decision making, and this would include starting to work on an RFP to find out the interest from buyers. We cannot make an informed decision without considering all of the options.

When the report is completed, there will be information made available to all parties who are interested and will also be posted on our City of Villa Grove website. We thanked Mr. Hartman for the overview and look forward to receiving the written report.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA-Alderman Johnson motioned to approve the following Consent Agenda and a second was given by Alderman Garrett. Roll Call: Johnson, yea, Pangburn, yea, Blaney, yea, Hooker, yea, Griffith, yea, Garrett, yea. Motion passed.

1. **MINUTES OF THE LAST REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING, HELD JUNE 8, 2020**
2. **CLOSED SESSION MINUTES OF THE LAST REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING, HELD JUNE 8, 2020**
3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING, HELD JUNE 15, 2020**
4. **CLOSED SESSION MINUTES OF THE LAST SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING, HELD JUNE 15, 2020**
5. **MINUTES OF THE LAST REGULAR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING, HELD JUNE 22, 2020**
6. **CLOSED SESSION MINUTES OF THE LAST REGULAR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING, HELD JUNE 22, 2020**
7. **AUTHORIZATION FOR PAYMENT OF BILLS**

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- 8. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE MONTH ENDING MAY 31, 2020**
- 9. CASH BALANCE REPORT FOR THE MONTH ENDING JUNE 30, 2020**

PUBLIC COMMENTS-Ken Cordes made the comment that he thinks the Council meetings are not advertised in enough places for everyone to see when they are. Other comments were made during the discussion of the report from Mr. Hartman by several public members in attendance, asking questions about the report.

ENGINEERING REPORT-Andy Kieser was in attendance and started his report about the issues with the scrubber and aerator at the water plant. The underlying issues is that the Hydrogen Sulfide is being stripped off faster than projected, causing the scrubber to overload. Added media has helped, but a second piece of equipment needs to be added to correct the issues. The second issue addressed was the chlorine holding room leak that went into the office suite. This chlorine room will be sealed off to prevent any future issues. Cross Construction has the force mains completed under the bridge. The McCoy project is fully permitted as well as the demo of the old water plant and once approvals are done we can proceed. Andy will also open up the MFT for road projects that was put on hold due to the COVID closures. Kieser also reported the force mains project at the Sycamore Street bridge have been completed by Cross Construction.

OTHER REPORT COTW-Chief Rea reported he is spending his time right now evaluating the equipment needs of the department, and the policies and procedures. PW Director Arbuckle indicated the cost for sidewalks will be 700-800 dollars, and now they will proceed with these. Alderman Blaney also stated that the golf carts in town have gotten out of hand with minors driving them and children not being secured. Chief Rea is addressing these issues with his staff. Also, complaints have been made about things left by the buildings on Main Street and the loitering. This will be addressed by the police department as well.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT-The audit is almost complete.

MAYORAL REPORT-The Mayor addressed Marc Miller to give an overview of the Wind/Solar ordinances. Mr. Miller stated that after looking at the Douglas County ordinances, etc., that it would be a good idea to contact the lawyer who is working with Newman and Murdock for assistance with the ordinances we are writing. He is specialized in this area and is extremely familiar with the current process in our county.

BUSINESS

- 1. ORDINANCE NO. 2020-MC-08-AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT BY THE CITY OF VILLA GROVE FOR THE POSITION OF CHIEF OF POLICE-** Alderman Blaney motioned to approve the ordinance 2020-MC-08. Second was made by Alderman Johnson. Roll Call: Johnson, yea, Pangburn, yea, Blaney, yea, Hooker, yea, Griffith, yea, Garrett, yea. Motion passed.
- 2. ORDINANCE NO. 2020-MC-09-AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 53.01 OF TITLE V, CHAPTER 53 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF VILLA GROVE (REGARDING SEWER USER RATES)-** Alderman Garrett motioned to approve the Ordinance 2020-MC-09, for Sewer Rates. Alderman Blaney seconded the motion. Roll Call: Johnson, yea, Pangburn, yea, Blaney, yea, Hooker, yea, Griffith, yea, Garrett, yea. Motion passed.
- 3. POLICE RADIO UPGRADE PROPOSAL FROM CHIEF REA**-The radios in the Police Department are in desperate need of upgrading. Alderman Blaney motioned to approve the purchase of the radios as

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presented in the quotes. Alderman Garrett seconded the motion. Roll Call: Johnson, yea, Pangburn, yea, Blaney, yea, Hooker, yea, Griffith, yea, Garrett, yea. Motion passed.

- 4. SALE OF LOT ON WILSON STREET (PREVIOUSLY PUT OUT FOR BID TWICE WITH NO RESPONSES) BID-** Alderman Hooker motioned to approve the bid of \$500 for the sale of the Wilson Street property. Alderman Garrett seconded the motion. Roll Call: Johnson, yea, Pangburn, yea, Blaney, yea, Hooker, yea, Griffith, yea, Garrett, yea. Motion passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION-Alderman Garrett motioned at 8:31 pm to move to Closed Session under the Open Meetings Act Section 2(c)(1) of 5 ILCS/120/2 Exceptions to the open meetings act for the discussion, appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees. Alderman Blaney seconded the motion to enter. Roll Call: Johnson, yea, Pangburn, yea, Blaney, yea, Hooker, yea, Griffith, yea, Garrett, yea. Motion passed. There will be no further action upon return to open session. Council returned to open session at 9:26 pm.

ADJOURNMENT-With no further business, Alderman Hooker motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 p.m. Alderman Johnson seconded the motion. Roll Call: Johnson, yea, Pangburn, yea, Blaney, yea, Hooker, yea, Griffith, yea, Garrett, yea. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle L. Osborne

Michelle L. Osborne, City Clerk

XC: Mayor and City Council; Building Inspector; Department Heads; File