

**Minutes  
Committee of the Whole Council Meeting  
July 27, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER—ROLL CALL**

The City Council of the City of Villa Grove met in regular session as a Committee of the Whole on **Monday, July 27, 2020**, in Council Chambers. Mayor Eversole-Gunter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll call found the following members present: Alderman Blaney, Johnson, Hooker, Pangburn, Griffith and Garrett. Clerk Osborne, City Manager Athey, and Public Works Director Arbuckle, Chief Rea, City Attorney Marc Miller, and City Engineer Andy Kieser were in attendance. Some Public members were in attendance.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**-Multiple citizens were in attendance at the meeting. Discussion began with Bruce Allen from the Chamber of Commerce reading a letter to the Council opposing the sale of the utilities. Mayor Gunter responded that no decisions have been made and facts are still being researched. and rate sustainability is being studied. Another citizen asked why this issue of sale of the utility could not be put on the November ballot as an advisory referendum. Further information was given during the business meeting item #2. Another citizen spoke up to say that their water still smells badly and is hard. Mr. Kieser from Fehr-Graham noted he was not aware of this issue and would like to work with the citizen to determine the issues.

**City Administrator Report-Jacki Athey**-The audit follow up continues.

**Engineering Report-Andy Kieser, Fehr Graham**-Mr. Kieser reported on the sulfur smell issues that have continued at the water plant. He explained the issue was with the media that was installed not being able to keep up with the larger amounts of Sulfur being removed that was originally planned for. Mr. Kieser stated there was a study of the sulfur content in the water system that was used to determine the size of the media. That study indicated an amount to be removed could be handled by the current media installed without the addition of another piece of media. In retrospect, they now know this was not how they should have proceeded. At this point some measuring instruments are being used to determine the size of the additional media that will be installed to alleviate the issue. He will be in Villa Grove on July 28th to install the measuring devices and also to discuss the demo of the old water treatment plant. The loan for the demo and McCoy will be \$600k with \$300k forgiveness.

**Mayoral Report-Cassandra Eversole-Gunter**-Reported that all of the activities scheduled for Sept. 19, 2020, to celebrate the Alumni and the 100th anniversary of the Villa Grove School System are canceled due to COVID 19 precautions. The fireworks display has been canceled. Fireworks will take place on July 2, 2021 at Richman Park.

**Business**

1. Brad Drew of Leaf It To Us-discuss expansion of his business. Mr. Drew did not appear at the meeting so no discussion was needed.
2. Brief review of Utility Systems Study (Gerry Hartman report)-A robust discussion happened in light of the study completed and submitted by Gerry Hartman. Mayor Eversole Gunter asked Mr. Mike Cline, a Professional Engineer and Villa Grove resident, to give an overview of the study from what he has read. Mr. Cline proceeded to list some areas that the City Council need to consider and answer as they move forward-there are 4 unknowns at this time:
  - Removing Nitrogen from the wastewater efficiently
  - Removing nutrients from the wastewater and when the EPA is going to begin

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mandating this.

- Sewer system-the condition it is in and what the EPA will do about having a leaky system and when that will happen.
- The market for selling the utilities-the RFP of the bids and how that will influence rates.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Cline for his assistance in interpreting the report and the main considerations in moving forward with research.

Everyone agreed the Summary and Recommendations page of Mr. Hartman's report (found on page 31) held the main considerations facing the City Council as: Complete the rest of the engineering report from Fehr-Graham to show all of the options and include cost benefit analysis and rate comparisons; Continue to operate the system and fix things as they are needed; RFP-release that sooner rather than later. Marc Miller suggests getting more engineering study done before putting the RFP out there to be certain we have the most information possible.

3. Wind Farm Impacts and Hiring of Attorney-Dr. Janet McCumber represented the group that has been working for the past 2 years with the wind farm issues. They attended the meeting to answer any questions about the wind farm regulations in Douglas County. They told us the Douglas County Wind Ordinance was created in 2009 with very little input from experts in the field, which put Douglas County in a vulnerable position, which has led to the current issues. Marc Miller, City Attorney, stated the options we have for wind farm ordinance regulation: we could Do Nothing and let the County regulations take care of any issues, we could pass zoning to ban wind farms but this is not a very likely option, or we could stay in the middle and create an ordinance that regulates and minimizes the negative impacts. Marc strongly encourages hiring off a lawyer who specializes in the area of wind regulation to write our ordinance, as this is not his own area of expertise and a specialist really should be used for this.
4. 2020 MFT Plan submission to IDOT-council gave consensus to move forward on the MFT 2020 plan to be submitted by engineer Kieser to IDOT.
5. Other items brought before the council-Scott Arbuckle asked for consensus to price tractor tires. Consensus given.

**CLOSED SESSION**-Alderman Pangburn motioned to move to Closed Session at 7:58 pm 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 Garrett seconded the motion. 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 9:31 pm.

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**ADJOURNMENT**-With no further business, Alderman Blaney motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m. Alderman Johnson seconded the motion. Roll call: Blaney, yea, Pangburn, yea, Johnson, yea, Hooker, yea, Griffith, yea, Garrett, yea. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Michelle L. Osborne*

Michelle L. Osborne, City Clerk  
XC: Mayor and City Council; Building Inspector; Department Heads; File