

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 10, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Jonathan Smith. Committee members present were Jan Materni, Jonathan Smith, and Barry VanHoozen. Also present were Bridgette Kabat, City Administrator, Kate Sandretto, Law Director, Alice Godsey, Director of Public Utilities, and Matt Choma, Deputy Director of Public Utilities.

SEWER CREDIT FOR 1103 VILLAGE SQUARE

Ms. Kabat requested that this item be tabled as they are still gathering information.

SEWER CREDITS TABULATION

Ms. Godsey reported that two credits have been approved since the last committee meeting. She said the year-to-date total of credits granted is \$7,264.66.

AUTHORIZE PURCHASE OF SEWER SYSTEM TELEMETRY EQUIPMENT

Ms. Godsey requested approval of a contract with Mission Communications in the amount of \$32,177 for telemetry equipment for the 11 sanitary sewer lift stations. She explained that this equipment will send an alarm to the on call person if there is an electrical malfunction or high water issue that needs to be addressed. If these issues are not resolved in a timely manner, it could result in sewer back-ups. Ms. Godsey said that one other quote was received and it was for \$160,000. Both Ms. Godsey and Mr. Choma used this company at previous places of employment and had no issues with them. Ms. Materni asked if there is a battery back-up for these systems, and Ms. Godsey said that they have portable generators. The Committee agreed 3-0 to recommend approval of the purchase.

LEGISLATION REGARDING SECTION 1060.06(b) RULE 65 NON-SUFFICIENT FUND FEE

Ms. Sandretto stated that at a previous meeting the Committee discussed the returned check fee. The Code language currently reads that the fee is \$20 for city customers and \$30 for outside city customers. The current amount charged to the City for returned items is \$23. Ms. Sandretto presented the Committee with two options. The first would be to repeal the language and handle it with an administrative policy. The second option is to amend the language to read that the fee is equivalent to what the City pays the bank. She recommended that it not be changed to a certain amount because that amount can vary. The Committee agreed 3-0 to go with the second option and amend the existing language so there is consistent application of the fee.

LEGISLATION TO REVISE HOMEOWNER GRANTS

Mr. Smith stated that the Committee has discussed the grant program that encourages homeowners to remove clean water connections from the sanitary sewer system. Ms. Sandretto stated that the current language allows for the City to reimburse homeowners 2/3 of the construction costs up to \$6,000 maximum. Because the cost of construction has increased and to encourage more participation in the program, the Administration is recommending that the amounts be changed to allow for reimbursement of 80% of the

construction costs up to \$12,000. Mr. Smith asked about the fines from the EPA for overflows. Ms. Godsey said that the fees are discretionary, but it can be up to \$25,000 per day for a violation. Mr. Smith said that he is okay with the change to avoid costs and to help with our EPA permit in the future. Mr. VanHoozen said that he has no problem with the change, and he wishes we could find some way to encourage homeowners to participate. Ms. Sandretto said if this is approved by City Council, the Administration can work with the PIO to get the information out. Mr. Smith suggested a press release to local plumbing companies. Ms. Kabat said that the Administration will discuss that internally. She said that they have to be careful because they cannot show preferential treatment. Ms. Godsey reminded the committee that a clean water connection to the sanitary sewer is illegal, and that resolving these connections is voluntary at this point, but in the future it may become mandatory. The Committee agreed 3-0 to recommend approval of the increased amount for the homeowners grant program.

FORT MEIGS DITCH DESIGN FOLLOW-UP

Mr. Smith said that he sent the design of the ditch to residents in that area, and he has not received any comments from them as of this meeting. Ms. Godsey distributed additional information to the Committee about the ditch and setbacks. The Committee discussed options regarding a sidewalk or multi-use path and what type of a buffer is required on a road with no curbs. Ms. Kabat said that the Administration will check with the consultant to see if the buffer requirement is a Federal regulation. The Committee reviewed the options of no sidewalk, a 5' wide sidewalk, and an 8' wide multi-use path. Mr. VanHoozen said it is a heavily used sidewalk, and he wondered how not installing a sidewalk is an option. Ms. Kabat said it would have to be put on the other side of the road. She stated that she believes several properties on the east side of the road go the edge of the road or to the center of the road. There are also questions about how to put in a sidewalk without affecting the drainage. Mr. VanHoozen said that it sounds like it would be a major project to put it on the east side of the road, so really the only options are a 5' sidewalk or 8' multi-use path. Mr. Smith added that he thinks there are right of way issues on the east side. He noted that when he runs, there is a pooling of water issue on the sidewalk north of the ditch so he believes whatever is decided should be continued down all of Fort Meigs Road. Ms. Materni said that she sat in on one of the recent Land Use Plan meetings, and people want more parks and multi-use paths connecting the City. Mr. Smith agreed that there is a lot of demand for it. Ms. Sandretto clarified that the Committee wants to know if the 5' buffer on an uncurbed street is a recommendation or regulation. Mr. Smith said that his recommendation would be that an 8' multi-use path with a 2' buffer be installed depending on the rules with the buffer and how it would impact the west side of the ditch. He said that this can be discussed at the next Council meeting, or if the meeting is running long, it can be pushed back to the first Council meeting in January. Ms. Godsey said that pushing it back to the first meeting in January would not be too detrimental to the time line.

OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Smith, Chairman
Public Utilities Committee

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.