PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:44 p.m. by Chairman Jonathan Smith. Committee members present were Jan Materni and Jonathan Smith. Barry VanHoozen was absent. Also present were Bridgette Kabat, City Administrator and Alice Godsey, Director of Public Utilities.

DELINQUENT PAYMENT PENALTIES AND PENALTY PROCESSING

Mr. and Mrs. Fought, 160 Quail Road Unit 26, were present and stated that they have lived in Perrysburg since 1992. Ms. Fought said that their records with the Department of Public Utilities go back to 1995, and they show that they have had no late fees until this July. She said that she was told there were no exceptions on waiving penalties and that the only criteria to be used was the postmark on the envelope. Mr. Smith stated that City Council recently passed legislation to allow waiving the penalty if the payment was postmarked on or before the due date as there was no remedy to waiving late fees previously. He stated that zero tolerance for penalties being waived was already a part of the Code and not recently passed. After receiving complaints on the mail, City Council tried to alleviate some late fees with the legislation they passed. The committee was made aware at this meeting, that the code of charging late fees after the 15th was previously not being followed. Now that the code is being applied, there may be a sharp increase to late fees being applied to water users. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the billing collection process. Ms. Kabat said that there are some unintended consequences to deal with since the legislation was approved such as a lot of mail coming in without a postmark. She said the billing clerks encourage Council members to come in and see how they do what they do. Mr. Smith said that he believes a possible solution is to introduce a grace period such as not applying late fees until the 18th of the month and offer a one time waiver of late fees within a twelve month period. Ms. Materni suggested that the period be increased to 24 months because she worries about habitual offenders. Mr. Fought said that they always used to get their water bill on the 1st of the month, but in September they didn't get it until the 7th. He said the mail is the problem. Ms. Kabat said that they will take these ideas back and discuss it with the clerks and see if they can identify any consequences.

ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR CONSTRUCTION PHASE, WWTP DEWATERING PROJECT

Ms. Godsey requested approval of an amendment to the agreement with Jones and Henry Engineering for design services for the dewatering project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. She said they are out to bid on the construction phase now and bids will be opened on October 8. Ms. Godsey stated that the contract amount of $66,488 includes $52,642 for the construction phase and $13,846 of design services for ancillary items that are being incorporated into this project. The Committee agreed 2-0 to recommend approval.

SEWER CREDITS TABULATION

Ms. Godsey distributed a spreadsheet showing the sewer credits under $1,000 that she had approved since the last meeting. The year to date total of credits granted is $5,205.21.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Ms. Godsey reviewed the budget for the 331, 332, 401, and 402 funds. She said that the engineering salary line item has been zeroed out. Ms. Kabat said that it was based on an old formula and this could be revisited in the future once we see how much time the engineer actually spends on water and sewer projects. Ms. Godsey stated that there are dollars in the 401 budget to repair the SR199 water tower because during a recent inspection some corrosion was found internally and externally. Also included in the 401 budget are the E. River Road water connection which is currently under design and the emergency connection with Bowling Green which is being done in partnership with the Northwestern Water and Sewer District. Ms. Godsey said that there is $200,000 in the budget for the fixed base meter reading system. There was a brief discussion about the sanitary sewer grant program that is in the 402 budget.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Smith, Chairman
Public Utilities Committee

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.