

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

APRIL 25, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. by Chairman Jonathan Smith. Committee members present were Haraz N. Ghanbari, Jonathan Smith, and Barry VanHoozen. Also present were Bridgette Kabat, City Administrator, and Alice Godsey, Director of Public Utilities.

CITIZENS' CONCERNS

Bob Venzel, 1583 Watermill Lane, asked about the status of the Fort Meigs Road ditch cleaning. Mr. Smith explained that it is on hold because no trees can be removed between April and October because of endangered bat species. Ms. Kabat added that to straighten the ditch they may have to remove a tree. She added that as time permits, workers from the Department of Public Utilities will clean out garbage from the ditch that they can safely reach. Mr. Venzel said that the vegetation that grows in the ditch should not be cut down because it helps stabilize it, and the sidewalk is starting to slope towards the ditch. Ms. Kabat asked if he was suggesting we have a no mow, no weed policy. Mr. Venzel said that is what he is suggesting. Bill Brown, 743 Deer Run, said that the ditch cleaning destroyed his backyard, and he understands why people are angry and fed up with the government. He said that it is twice as noisy as it was before. He asked about the fence and said that if the hope is that the residents will forget about it, they will not. Mr. Ghanbari said that he had originally supported bottom dipping but he is now not in favor of it. He asked if City Council as a whole agrees not to bottom dip, could the fence be installed. Mr. Smith said that the problem is whether to do an engineering study or not do an engineering study.

MOTION ON SEWER APPEAL

Ms. Godsey requested approval of a sewer credit for Michael George, 126 E. Second Street. The property had a broken pipe in the crawlspace. Typically usage each quarter for this property is less than 900 cubic feet minimum, but the last bill showed consumption of 98,500 cubic feet. A receipt was provided to show that the pipe was repaired. Ms. Godsey requested that a sewer credit of \$6,652.42 be granted. This amount represents the sewer charges for the water that did not enter the sanitary sewer system. She said that they are offering the property owner a 36 month payment plan for the water portion of the bill. The Committee agreed 3-0 to recommend approval of the sewer credit.

HOMEOWNERS' GRANT PROGRAM – REQUEST TO INCREASE

Ms. Godsey stated that Ordinance 121-93 established a grant program whereby homeowners are reimbursed for two-thirds of the cost of separating their clean water connection from the sanitary sewer, up to a maximum of \$3,000. The budget line item for 2018 has been increased to \$200,000 and they are requesting that the maximum amount of the grant be increased to \$6,000. Ms. Godsey said that they plan to advertise the program through social media and the website to increase participation. Ms. Kabat said that a flyer could be inserted in water and sewer bills also. The Committee agreed 3-0 to recommend approval of the increase in the grant program.

TOLEDO AREA WATER AUTHORITY MOU AND MOU WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS REGARDING WATER

Mayor Mackin stated that discussions are ongoing with the Toledo Area Water Authority, and the City of Toledo has agreed to provide financial information, which is a big step forward. However, just as the suburbs to the north are looking to Detroit as an alternate source for water, he has been meeting with representatives from the City of Maumee and the Northwestern Water and Sewer District to look at other options. He requested approval of a memorandum of understanding between the three entities. He said that each entity has agreed to contribute \$25,000 to look at the cost of tying into the Bowling Green water system. Mr. Smith asked about the feasibility study that we previously had done by Poggemeyer. Ms. Kabat said that this study would be more fine-tuned and would include the cost of improvements and dial in on the cost of water per 1,000 cubic feet. Mayor Mackin said that we only have projections and estimated anticipated costs. He said that even if we don't go with this and Toledo is a better option, we need the information to have something to compare Toledo's numbers to. Mr. VanHoozen asked if there is agreement with the three entities on who to hire because Poggemeyer is 85% there. Mayor Mackin said that they have not talked about it yet, but he is not opposed to Poggemeyer doing the work. Mr. VanHoozen asked if there is willingness by Bowling Green to sell the water. Mayor Mackin said that they have spoken to Bowling Green and all parties involved believe that regionalism is in the best interests of the region. He said Bowling Green is agreeable to this investigation, but has made no commitment to sell at this point. Mr. Ghanbari asked if Mayor Mackin is comfortable that if this option were given the green light, that Bowling Green would agree to it. Mayor Mackin said that he is. He added that their technical experts have talked to our technical experts and this is the lowest cost to get to the next point. Mr. Ghanbari asked why this option was chosen from the list of options that was provided to City Council. Mayor Mackin said that some options like the City of Oregon are off the table, and connecting to an existing water source seems to be the best approach at this point. Mr. VanHoozen asked how TAWA plans on understanding Toledo's numbers. Ms. Kabat said that we will be compiling a list of questions, and we will be meeting with other entities to compile a comprehensive list to present to Toledo. The Committee agreed 3-0 to recommend approval of the memorandum of understanding contingent on receiving the agreement to review prior to the City Council meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Smith, Chairman
Public Utilities Committee

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 23, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.