

APPROVED
VILLAGE OF NORTHBROOK
PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE
VILLAGE HALL TERRACE ROOM
Tuesday, February 7, 2023

Committee Chairperson Hebl called the Public Works and Facilities Committee Meeting to order in the Village Hall Terrace Room at 6 p.m.

Call to Order

Chairperson Hebl and Trustee Israel. Trustee Pepoon (absent). Also present was Trustee Ebhomielen.

Review of Minutes

None.

Public Comment Time

None.

Discussion - Utility Rate Study

Deputy Public Works Director Matt Morrison opened tonight's meeting stating on December 13, 2022, the Village Board referred the continued discussion and review of the utility rate study as well as the topics of water meter replacement, lead services lines and current regulations, to the Public Works and Facilities Committee. Water meter and lead services lines have time considerations and thus are why they are being brought to the Committee first.

Deputy Director Morrison began with the topic of water meters. He provided reasons why water meters are important. There are 14,140 meters in the Village ranging in size from 5/8 inches to 6 inches. Meters are currently read by: a physical person reading the meter, external register that is attached to the water meter outside, through glass blocks or external touch pad. New meter installations are equipped with outside read capability. Numbers are written into a meter book and entered by hand into the system. The accuracy life expectancy of a meter is 20 years. The majority of the inventory is mechanical meters. These tend to slow down first. Almost one-half of those are over thirty years old. A sample of 527 meters was sent out for testing. 402 failed the test. The average accuracy recorded for different age groups of meters ranged from 44% to 76%, to be considered accurate according to AWWA standards it must be at least 98.5%.

Village Manager Cara Pavlicek noted we should be aware of the potential amount of water loss and charging a resident for that and then the increase in water rate per gallon, some residents may see an increase in the water rate as well as a more accurate and higher accounting of their usage on their water bill.

Trustee Israel asked what the Village's current water loss rate was

Director Hamill stated that it was approximately 23% under the formula the State uses. The number includes everything from water main breaks to hydrant flushing. Director Hamill stated that we are producing water that we are not selling so unlike some communities it is not water we have paid someone else for. The State will be requiring all water systems to be at 10% or better regardless of their age and condition.

Chairperson Hebl stated that it seems like the Village could reach that just with the meter change out.

Deputy Director Morrison stated that most villages use an automated meter infrastructure system a. The meter has a radio that communicates to a central radio network that then ties back into the Village utility billing. Ultrasonic measurements determine the volume of flow through a meter. Mr. Morrison stated that many other nearby communities have made this transition already.

Chairperson Hebl asked if there were IT concerns for cybercrimes. Mr. Morrison answered that IT, Finance and Public Works would work together but that the meters themselves communicate through an encrypted radio signal and there is no personal data transferred. It is a similar process to the one used by Nicor Gas and ComEd.

Deputy Director Morrison gave information for the estimated schedule for the project. The timeline would run from Jan 2023 through approximately April 2027 and is part of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The estimated cost of the total project is \$4.5 million.

Trustee Israel asked who would be responsible for the installations. Manager Pavlicek answered that it could be a hybrid approach. The largest meters could be outsourced and in-house staff could manage others. Ultimately, this would be reviewed by the staff team and included in the bid specifications.

Deputy Director Morrison reiterated that this presentation on meters was to set a base level so that all were working off the same knowledge base. No decisions needed to be made tonight. The topic of water meters will be included in the next meeting which could take place June 2023. Public Works will bring back points for policy consideration. Staff from the Finance, Public Works, and IT will work on the RFP specifications.

Trustee Israel stated that their needs to be a communication plan to educate the public. Trustee Hebl and Trustee Israel agreed that the item should be brought up in upcoming budget discussions. Director Hamill answered that the program is included in the CIP now and want to incorporate the meter accuracy into establishing rates for the next 2-3 years.

The next topic for discussion was Lead Service Lines. Mr. Morrison began by stating the Village has lead service lines but does not have lead water mains. The Village has a responsibility from the water main to the property line where the shut off valve or buffalo box (b-box) is generally located. The resident has a responsibility for the service line from the Buffalo Box (B-Box) into the home. Chairperson Hebl asked how the Village compares to its neighbors. Mr. Morrison stated that it depends on the community; some are similar to the Village while in others the property owner is responsible for the service to the home.

With the State's new legislation, the Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act, the Village is responsible for developing an inventory of lead service lines, developing and implementing a plan for replacing public and private portions of lead service lines. In particular, the inventory must be completed by April 2025, the replacement plan must be completed by April 2027, and replacement of lead service lines by April 2044 (depending on the final number of lead service lines verified). The legislation also no longer allows partial lead service line replacement, but if a lead service line is disturbed then it must be replaced completely. It is not always a straight route into the house. Trustee Israel stated getting to through the wall is the first thing to encounter and getting to the meter is the next.

Deputy Director Morrison provided a brief history on lead service lines in Northbrook. The Village made a decision in the mid-1950s to no longer allow the use of lead for the service lines. Additionally the Village required full replacement of lead service lines in conjunction with demolitions beginning in 1990, and full replacement of lead service lines in conjunction with remodels in 1995. Lastly, the

Village began replacing the Village's portion of lead service lines as part of water main projects in 1988. With these dates the Village was able to develop a list of possible properties with lead service lines using GIS. Public Works began sending out letters to possible lead service line properties and has been collecting information or helping residents verify their lead service line material in person. A view of the GIS dashboard of possible lead service lines and inspections was provided.

Trustee Israel inquired about poly-orthophosphate pipe treatment. Deputy Public Works Director Morrison confirmed that the Village does use poly-orthophosphate in its water treatment process and that the chemical provides a coating on the inside of the lead pipe and protects the leaching of lead into the water.

Director Hamill stated that there are opting out options. The information will be recorded and filed with the IEPA as required by the law. The information could be used against the sale of a home in the future.

Information was provided on how neighboring communities are handling the incentives for people to replace the lead service portion of the line. Some are incentivizing using cost sharing programs. Highland Park makes the resident responsible for the whole service line to the main, but offers a cost sharing program of 20% with a reimbursement cap of \$3,500. The only community that does not offer any reimbursement is Lake Forest. The Village of Glenview is the only community that does not have a cap on their reimbursement program.

Manager Pavlicek stated that the consultant estimates that \$7,000 is the typical cost from the B-Box to the home. She asked if the Committee would want a policy that the Board would adopt at 50/50.

Chairperson Hebl answered that it has a collective benefit to the community at large along with health benefits. She wants to incentivize people and start with a 50/50 split but wants to cap the level of exposure for the 50/50.

Trustee Israel stated that he would do a 50/50 split with a \$3,500 cap. He would work with the homeowner on interior or exterior restoration. The resident will pay more than \$3,500 out of pocket.

Manager Pavlicek suggested increasing the Village amount up to \$3,750 but not getting involved with decorating. Staff will look at other policies before moving forward.

Trustee Israel wants more information on the cost of an average installation, stating that \$7,000 is a generous number.

Village Manager Pavlicek stated that staff would bring back a draft policy or standard operating procedure for the Village Board's consideration at a future meeting.

The third topic of the evening was the structure of future Public Works and Facilities Committee meetings to continue going over the utility rate study and related topics. Future meetings will be held in June, July, and August. Consideration from the Committee will be considered in September or October. Public Works will look at the Fund Reserve Policy, utility rate study and responsibility for lead service lines and policies that include costs.

Lastly, Deputy Director Morrison asked if there were any comments or questions about the draft utility rate study. There were none.

Trustee Israel wants to be mindful if we are capturing the additional 13% rate volume that we don't bump up rates excessively in the beginning. He wants to focus on communication and outreach.

Adjourn

There being no further business, a motion was made by Trustee Israel and seconded by Chairperson Hebl to adjourn the meeting. By roll call, the motion was unanimously carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.