

APPROVED
VILLAGE OF NORTHBROOK
PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
TERRACE ROOM
TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2023

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

Roll Call

On roll call, present were Trustees Israel and Pepoon and Chairperson Hebl. A quorum was present.

Review of Minutes

None.

Public Comment Time

None.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

A. Continued Utility Rate Discussion

Deputy Public Works Director Matt Morrison stated tonight's meeting would provide an update on the Automated Water Meter Project (AWMP). Representatives from Finance, IT, Public Works and the Village Manager's Office have met with various vendors to investigate different types and brands of water meters, different software packages and different portals.

Staff recommendation is to move forward with the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), known as the Radio Read System. It is a state of the art operating system and is where the industry is headed. A customer portal is an option for residents whereby residents are able to receive account information and monitor usage. The portal can be an app or a website. The Committee agreed the "best of breed" approach gives the best options. The recommendation is to move forward with cloud-based water meter software. The recommendation for the radio communications for the AMI System is to rent or lease versus owning and maintaining the equipment.

Mechanical versus ultrasonic meters is a budgetary issue. Ultrasonic have a finite life as they are powered by a battery, however, they are more exact. Mechanical meters tend to lose time over their lifetime.

Trustee Israel asked if it is a whole meter replacement. The answer is “yes”.

Deputy Director Morrison stated that the project is on schedule. The RFP documents will be prepared for the procurement process. Net steps are; December 2023-March 2024 – Procurement process; April 2024-October 2024 – Meter material will be ordered and delivery begins, communications with customers; November 2024 – Installations begin; September 2024 – April 2027 – installations are completed.

The floor was opened for discussion.

Trustee Pepoon requested information on mechanical meters.

Trustee Pepoon questioned the size of the new meters. The answer is that the meters will be the same size as the old or current meters within a home.

Trustee Pepoon asked about remodeling costs. Manager Pavlicek answered that options will be researched and a recommendation given in the future.

Trustee Israel wants to plan for a longer time span of the life of the meter. He would like more investigation.

Chair Hebl asked if there would be a lot of data entry for staff. Mr. Morrison answered that we will need to look at how the contract will be developed. A vendor will do the installation. The radio system has to be installed and recognized and the data has to be transferred. Several trustees offered their homes for the first installations.

B. Lead Service Lines

Mr. Morrison began by reminding all that the State of Illinois is requiring the status of the inventory of lead service lines in the Village. In response the Village approved Resolution 2023-67 approving a policy and next steps for Lead Service Line Replacement Cost Sharing to help defer the cost. A resident’s responsibility is on the private side of the line. The Village’s responsibility is the private line to the main which is owned by the Village. The Village has set out to identify all of the lead service lines in the community. The majority are in the downtown area, in homes that were built before 1950. To date there are 287 confirmed lead services lines. 381 lines need yet to be confirmed. Mr. Morrison stated that ideally the final number will be below 300.

Residents may be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 on the private side for replacement of a lead service line based upon the program went into effect in the beginning of July.

Information on the Village's communication plan is included in the packet. Communication has been included in the Village newsletter, utility bills, E-newsletter, social media and website. The information will hit everyone but will not affect everyone.

The floor was opened for discussion.

Trustee Israel asked if lead pipes were found in any child care facilities or schools. The answer is none of the schools have lead service line to the Village's knowledge at this time. Mr. Morrison answered that to his knowledge all day care facilities are free of lead pipes.

Trustee Israel questioned water main improvements and lead lines on street improvements. Mr. Morrison answered that to date there have been eight projects.

Chair Hebl asked if there has been any public feedback on the letter and correspondence. Mr. Morrison answered the response rate is 20% of the population with each letter. Mr. Morrison answered that staff is available to help a resident identify a lead water line. Mr. Morrison has received approximately 10-12 calls on the lead service replacement program. One application has been filed. Chair Hebl wants to be kept in the loop regarding feedback.

C. Utility Rate Study

Mr. Morrison provided background on the Utility Rate Study prepared by NewGen Strategies and Solutions. After receiving Board feedback, staff updated the study to get the rates recommended included in the packet tonight.

The accuracy of the meters as they age can result in less water use being captured. An assumption change in the Utility Rate Study is that usage increased by 3% each year after the replacement of the water meter during installation and then holding that usage flat for the remaining ten years. The recommendation is to have a Fund Reserve Policy with a modest change resulting in 30 days of operation and maintenance at five years and 90 days of operation and maintenance within ten years. This helps smooth out the rates and if a higher than expected capital project appears, there is a reserve.

Recommended rate increases are smaller and more frequent to meet the fund balance and the needs of the system over the five-year period. Recommended rate increases of 2% increase for the first two years in the Water Fund and then 3% for several years after that will allow the fund balance goal to be fully funded in ten years.

The Utility Rate Study looked at the Sanitary Sewer Fund. With the rate increase this year and our capital, there are currently no recommended rate increases until 2029-2030. We will be fully funded in ten years.

The Public Works & Facility Committee recommendation is for the Village Board to implement a Fund Balance Policy of 30 days operating maintenance to be met within five years and 90 days in the following five years, maintain the rate structure as it is until the meter program is completed. Lastly, approve the rates in the Utility Rate Study as presented. Manager Pavlicek noted the rate increase ordinance would be presented this fall for a 2% water increase in May of 2024 and a 2% water increase in May of 2025.

The floor was opened for discussion.

Trustee Israel asked about the meter swap out. Mr. Morrison answered that the cost is built into the Utility Rate Study. It is paid for with cash on hand.

Chair Hebl would like to see an existing meter alongside a new meter for comparison.

There was consensus in favor of the recommendations presented tonight.

Adjourn

There being no further business, a motion was made by Trustee Israel and seconded by Trustee Pepoon to adjourn the meeting. By roll call, the motion was unanimously carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Anetsberger,

Recorder