

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN  
OF THE CITY OF ROCK FALLS

December 15, 2020

The regular meeting of the Mayor and City Council of Rock Falls, Illinois was held electronically (via Zoom) due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Region 1 being placed into Tier 3 Enhanced Mitigation Measures. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. December 15, 2020 by Mayor Wescott.

Deputy City Clerk Michelle Conklin called the roll. A quorum was present including Mayor Wescott, Aldermen Palmer, Wangelin, Snow, Babel, Schuneman, Kleckler and Sobottka. Alderman Folsom being absent. In addition, Attorney Matt Cole, Attorney James Reese and City Administrator Robbin Blackert were present.

Mayor Wescott called the Public Hearing to order at 6:31 p.m. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to discuss plans for a multi-phase watermain replacement project. The Project Summary and Preliminary Environmental Impact Determination developed by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Project Plan report developed by the City of Rock Falls will also be discussed.

Matt Hansen and Dan Loos from Willett, Hofmann & Associates stated that the purpose of this Public Hearing is to satisfy a public participation requirement for eligibility in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Public Water Supply Revolving Fund (PWSRF) Loan Program for the Water System Improvements projects.

Documents available on the Water System Improvements projects that are available for public inspection are:

1. Project Plan Report
2. IEPA Project Summary and Preliminary Environmental Impacts Determination letter Dated November 10, 2020.

The IEPA has reviewed the Project Plan Report and has determined the project to be technically sound and cost effective. The IEPA will approve the Project Plan at the close of the public comment period unless new information is received from public comments that would cause the IEPA to reconsider.

The City has invested significantly in their water supply, water treatment, and water storage facilities over the last 20 years but needs to put a greater emphasis on the water distribution system. According to the Illinois State Water Survey, the City's water system was originally constructed in 1885, so the existing water distribution system has some water mains that are over 100 years old. An IEPA Water System Inspection Report from May 20, 2016 indicated that some water mains are undersized and may not provide the required minimum system pressure. The report also noted that the unaccounted-for water of the system is greater than 15%, which indicates that leaks are present in the water distribution system. The City records the location of all water main repairs and the proposed water main replacements are located in frequently repaired sections of the water distribution system. The water main replacements will eliminate aging water mains and reduce the amount of unaccounted-for water use.

The recommended improvements will include the replacement of approximately 30,775 linear feet of aging, undersized, deteriorated water main and appurtenances over a 5-year period.

The project will be funded with an IEPA Public Water Supply Revolving Fund Loan. The IEPA loan will be a 20-year loan for each phase. The current IEPA loan interest rate is 1.35% and the annual loan repayment for all five phases would be approximately \$551,919, or approximately \$12.17 per month per user.

Currently, the City is eligible for a reduced interest rate of 1.01% (Small Community Rate), \$400,000 in principal forgiveness, and a loan term up to 30 years. The debt service charge would be approximately \$7.90 if these terms are utilized. Whichever terms the City agrees to will result in the debt service charge being added to the existing monthly user fees in order to repay the loans.

Alderman Schuneman asked if the debt service will affect all of our water users. Mayor Wescott stated that it will be all of the water users, residential, commercial and industrial.

City Administrator Robbin Blackert stated that when we discussed this that the principal debt forgiveness was up to 75%.

Matt Hansen stated that each year the program changes on July 1<sup>st</sup>, what we will do is maximize the principal forgiveness and minimize the loan amount. If the forgiveness is not good one year we don't have to do anything for that year, if at the end of the 5 years that we are looking at we have not done any projects we will have to go through this process again.

Robbin Blackert wanted to clarify is that we don't know what each year will bring so we have the discretion that if we don't want to take the loan in a certain year because we don't like the terms, we are not bound to take this.

Alderman Palmer asked if we can pick and choose which projects we would like to complete or is it that once we are in we have to do these regardless of the loan terms.

Matt Hansen stated that we do have to do all of them and we don't have to stick to the Phases that have been laid out. We can do the ones that are at the top of the priority list and the cost that fits best into the loan forgiveness that we can get.

Alderman Wangelin asked if the cost of this will be passed onto the customers. Administrator Blackert stated that we are going to keep the loans in line with the Debt Service Charge that the customers are already being billed and not go over it so there will be no increase to the customer.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has concluded that adverse effects are unlikely. IDNR EcoCAT indicated the presence of the Northern long-eared bat within the project area and if trees are to be removed, a field visit should be performed by a qualified individual to determine if suitable trees are present that will provide habitat for the Northern long-eared bat. If suitable trees are present to provide habitat, they should be flagged and/or clearly marked and not be cut April 1<sup>st</sup> – October 31<sup>st</sup>.

2. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

No construction will occur at or near a body of water that will require review or sign-off from USACE.

The City will receive public comments concerning this project for a period of 10 days after the public hearing. Public comments can be made in writing to Ms. Michelle Conklin, Business Office Supt., City of Rock Falls, 603 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Rock Falls, IL 61071 or to Ms. Lanina Clark, Infrastructure Financial Assistance Section, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Water, 1021 North Grand Avenue East, P.O. Box 19276, Springfield, IL 62794-9276, (217) 782-2027.

Mayor Wescott closed the Public Hearing at 6:55 p.m.

Consent Agenda items 1 and 2 were read aloud by Deputy City Clerk Michelle Conklin.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the December 1, 2020 Regular Council Meeting
2. Approval of bills as presented

A motion was made by Alderman Snow and second by Alderman Wangelin to approve Consent Agenda items 1 and 2.

**Vote 7 aye, motion carried.**

A motion was made by Alderman Kleckler and second by Alderman Schuneman to Approve the Preliminary Engineering Services Agreement for Phase 1 - E 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge over the Illinois Mississippi Feeder Canal - Section # 19-00137-00-BR with Willett, Hofmann & Associates, Inc. 809 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Dixon Illinois, amount not to exceed \$118,943.02

**Vote 7 aye, motion carried.**

A motion was made by Alderman Snow and second by Alderman Wangelin to adjourn.

**Viva Voce Vote, motion carried. (7:04 p.m.)**

  
Michelle Conklin, Deputy City Clerk