

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Monday, March 30th 2020

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Mills at 6:00pm. Pardun, Anderson Miller, Roden and Mills present.

Citizens Present: None

Mayor Mills called the workshop to order at 6:02pm for the purpose of discussing the potential of adding additional connections to the current septic system and additional items related to the system.

Pardun began by explaining how the current septic system works. There are approximately 199 ERU's that are billed as part of an enterprise fund, meaning only the users of the system pay for the upkeep and maintenance.

Currently there is approximately \$236,000 in the reserve fund and the City Engineer has recommended the City upgrade P1, which would cost approximately \$207,000. The Public Works department believes they can get the price down to roughly \$150,000. However that money would have to come from the reserve fund. There are two ways to pay for these upgrades. The first would be to increase the user rates, however that would take a few years to raise the money. The second option would be to assess the users.

Pardun then reviewed a list of potential new connections. There are currently three homes that have paid the connection fee, but are not yet hooked up. There are also three homes that have individual systems that the City owns and would be feasible to connect.

10 homes have been identified that are currently City owned but would be too costly to connect to the system.

13 homes have been identified that are individual systems that the City does not own, however have frontage to the city's main sewer pipe and could be added to the system. 4 homes have been identified that have individual systems and are not owned by the City that are in town and should be added to the system. Pardun explained that he would like to see City require the homes that are considered feasible be forced to connect at the time their system fails.

Pardun then reviewed the number of potential new lots within the SFU district at the 30,000 sq ft zoning requirement. Some of these properties would not be feasible to extend the line too however due to the cost. There are 45 additional connections available, of which 24 will be taken by the homes on the list. That will leave 21 additional connections. There has also been a request by the group looking at developing a PUD on Rosabel Street that the City think about allowing that development to connect to the City system. Miller does not believe the Council should even consider that request as there is no application or plan that has been officially submitted.

The City currently owns 10 ISTS systems, which the City expends a large amount of money to keep running. Pardun cannot find any documentation that states the City is required to keep maintaining their system forever. He stated one option for the City may be to change the code to say if their system fails, the City will pay to replace the drainfield but then the system will be turned back to the owner and the City would no longer be responsible for that system moving forward. Currently, no records have been found that bind the City to ownership of these systems however the City Clerk will check the Minutes to see there is anything to reflect that. The City Attorney has not had a chance to review that proposed language as of yet. The Council believes many of these residents will be very upset, especially if it's the original owner. The consensus of the Council was to move forward with that proposal.

Pardun then reviewed the I & I situation. The system still has significant I&I, and so the City will be sending out letters in January of 2021 to notify residents that the City will be performing sump pump inspections again. The last time those inspections were done was approximately 2003. Miller would like letter sent to residents now, asking them to self inspect and also advising that the City will be performing those in home inspections next spring. Pardun will check with Public Works prior to sending anything out.

There was a billing issue that was recently discovered and Pardun questioned the Council's opinion on how to handle it. There is a resident that was connected to the system in 1986 and had been paying the quarterly maintenance bill. However at some point, approximately 20 years ago, that resident stopped being billed for sewer. Clerk Peterson believes it was around the time the City moved from manual billing to a software billing program. There is a statute of limitations of 6 years that prevents the City from collecting the entire amount, but the City can send a letter explaining the situation and requesting that resident pay for a portion of those unpaid charges.

Pardun also discussed the Jackson Meadow system. He suggested drafting a letter to the HOA to see how the system is performing. He believes the City will be on the hook to take over the system down the road if it fails. Miller noted that the HOA has specifically requested the City not take over that system. Pardun noted the City Attorney advised that if there are issues with the system and the HOA cannot properly run that system the City could very well end up taking over that system. Pardun would like to be proactive and send the letter. Currently the City is not receiving the reports and documentation it is supposed to be receiving and so he would like the Council to stay on top of the situation.

Pardun then discussed the amount of the reserve fund. He would like to see the reserve fund reach \$300,000 and suggested several options to achieve that goal. It was suggested discussing the sewer capital improvement plan in August at the budget meeting and a decision can be made at that time.

Miller moved and Roden seconded to adjourn at 7:30pm. Motion passed unanimously .