UTILITY COMMITTEE

The Utility Committee Meeting was held on October 27, 2014 at 5:15 p.m. with Councilman Perza presiding in the absence of Chairwoman Williams. Members present were Mr. Slavin, Mr. Blakeman, and Mr. Snaman. Councilman Dixon (arrived at 5:22 p.m.) and Mayor Christiansen were also present.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mr. Blakeman moved for approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Slavin and unanimously carried.

Disposition of Public Infrastructure to Kent County - Central Transmission Bypass North

Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, advised members that the Kent County Department of Public Works recently notified the City that on July 16, 2014, a rupture surfaced in the 24-inch concrete sewer force main (Kent County Central Transmission Main), causing a sanitary sewer overflow in the center of Route 13 in front of C.F. Schwartz. The root cause was corrosion of the pipe crown due to high hydrogen sulfide concentrations in the wastewater. He explained that during a routine re-routing procedure, there was a slight pressure increase and, due to the thinned pipe wall, a failure was triggered. Mr. Koenig stated that this failure occurred on one (1) of the few remaining sections of the Kent County transmission system, from Smyrna to the wastewater treatment plant in Frederica, that does not have a redundant pipeline or bypass capability.

Mr. Koenig indicated that the failure had been temporarily repaired and, in order to complete a permanent repair, the flow must be re-routed to allow for the installation of a pipe liner. He stated that engineers from both Kent County and the City of Dover had been working in concert to develop a bypass system for this portion of the infrastructure. Mr. Koenig noted that the project had been authorized by Kent County Levy Court and was currently being fast tracked due to the related urgency. Knowing that the City's budget did not include any expenditure for an upgrade of the infrastructure, Mr. Koenig stated that Kent County had agreed to pay all the costs associated with the upgrade; however, he explained that portions of the City's existing infrastructure, and all associated easements, must be disposed of by the City, with ownership transferred to the County. He reviewed a map depicting the infrastructure to be transferred and noted that the estimated replacement value of the referenced infrastructure was $770,000. Mr. Koenig stated that the County would assume ownership and maintenance responsibility of the new bypass force main from County Pump Station No. 2 to Crawford Carroll Avenue.

Once the project is completed, Mr. Koenig stated that Kent County would be able to pump from Station No. 2, located on the north side of Denneys Road, through the bypass loop into the US 13 Interceptor Sewer; transfer down to US 13 East Pump Station (the Dover Downs Pump Station); and allow for entry into the East Dover Bypass system through that pump station. This would provide relief off the line in US 13, allow for completion of the permanent repairs of that infrastructure, and provide a redundant backup for future problems, should they arise. He explained that the line in US 13 was aging and subject to additional breaks in the future unless permanent repairs were made. Since the central transmission main down US 13 is critical to the functions of City of Dover, Mr. Koenig stated that staff felt that the disposition of the public infrastructure would be a good way for the City to partner with Kent County to improve the transmission system through the heart of Dover and for areas north of the City.

As a part of the disposition process, Mr. Koenig stated that although the replacement value of the referenced infrastructure was estimated at $770,000, it would be necessary for staff to determine the actual values; therefore, staff was in the process of reviewing construction contracts involved with the McKee Run Pump Station. He stated that if the assets were not fully depreciated, it would be necessary to recognize the value in the transfer.

Staff recommended disposal of the referenced public infrastructure, and all easements necessary for the perpetual maintenance thereof, associated with the County's Central Transmission Bypass North project, to Kent County.

Responding to Mr. Blakeman, Mr. Koenig stated that the City would not receive any money for the disposition of the public infrastructure to Kent County. He explained that, although the City would be abandoning the maintenance responsibilities of the infrastructure, it would be utilized by Kent County in the future, once the upgrades are completed. Mr. Koenig indicated that the pump stations would continue to be owned by the City.

In response to Mr. Perza, Mr. Koenig stated that he felt confident that there would be no future negative consequences resulting from the proposed transfer. He stated that the McKee Run Pump Station was designed to handle flow for the area and that the 16-inch force main was the channel from the City's pumping infrastructure into the County's system; therefore, the project would meet the overall conceptual designs that had been discussed with Kent County in the past. Unless there was some significant change in the system, he did not anticipate the transfer of the assets causing the City any additional costs. Mr. Koenig stated that the only costs for the City in regard to the transfer would be any depreciation costs associated with the infrastructure. Elaborating, Mrs. Donna Mitchell, Controller/Treasurer, stated that the original project consisted of approximately 5,000 linear feet, which would need to be "written off" by the City. Although this would not go against the budgetary basis of accounting, she stated that it would affect the GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) basis of accounting, explaining that the amount would be reflected as an expense on the income statement. Mrs. Mitchell assured members that the exact amounts would be made available when the Committee's recommendation is considered by City Council. Although she felt confident that the City's debt covenants would not be impacted by writing the assets off, she stated that she would confirm this prior to the next Council Meeting. *[City Clerk's Office Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Mrs. Mitchell stated that the book value of the Mudstone Branch project that would be written off with the transfer to Kent County amounted to $64,400, and there would be no negative impact on the City's debt covenants.]*

Mr. Blakeman moved to recommend disposal of the referenced public infrastructure, and all easements necessary for the perpetual maintenance thereof, associated with the County's Central Transmission Bypass North project, to Kent County, as recommended by staff, subject to the final review of the undepreciated amount. The motion was seconded by Mr. Slavin and unanimously carried.

For clarification, Mrs. Mitchell stated that the amount to be written off would be the undepreciated value, which would be the leftover remaining balance of the assets.

Dedication of Private Walkway as a Public Walkway - Village of Westover - Mifflin Road to Trafalgar Drive

Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, reminded members that as part of the approved subdivision plan for the Village of Westover, the City of Dover required the construction of a private sidewalk connection from Trafalgar Drive (located on the east side of the Village of Westover) to Mifflin Road to guarantee the pedestrian interconnection of the existing developments in this area and the newly constructed Village of Westover Subdivision. Prior to the construction of the new Dover High School, this sidewalk connection primarily served as a connection for the residents of the Village of Westover and the Village of Cannon Mill to access local businesses in the vicinity of Route 8. The Village of Westover Homeowner's Association had inquired for a number of years about dedicating this walkway for public maintenance; however, staff had previously not favored such a dedication.

Mr. Koenig noted that, with the construction of the new Dover High School, the pedestrian patterns had changed, explaining that this walkway now represented a safe path to the new Dover High School and related facilities, so the "public" interest with respect to this walkway had changed. He noted receipt of a letter from Representative Darryl Scott requesting consideration of the public dedication of this walkway. Mr. Koenig indicated support for the reconsideration of the dedication and, based upon the current and projected use of the walkway, he had no objections to its dedication as public walkway. He explained that the walkway would potentially serve as a walking path from Woodmill Apartments, Deerfield Subdivision, and other areas to the east.

Mr. Koenig stated that the dedication may require the City to sign a blanket easement used by the Community Transportation Fund Program in order to obtain documentation identifying that this sidewalk could qualify for community transportation funds if repairs or other work become necessary in the future.

Mr. Koenig reviewed a map depicting the walkway to be dedicated as public, from Trafalgar Drive to Mifflin Road. He advised members that the estimated maintenance cost of the walkway is $1,000 per year, including costs associated with winter maintenance. In addition, Mr. Koenig stated that the existing private walkway was approximately 770 linear feet long and six (6) feet in width; therefore, the estimated value of the dedication was $23,100.00 (770 l.f. x 6 ft. x $5.00 per square foot). He stated that the walkway had been privately maintained since its construction (dating back to 1996/1997) and the City had received occasional complaints regarding overgrowth and lighting issues associated with the walkway.

Staff recommended acceptance of the dedication of the existing concrete walkway and that the City Manager be authorized to execute any documents necessary to ensure that public funds could be used for future maintenance on the dedicated walkway.

Responding to Mr. Blakeman, Mr. Koenig indicated the need for additional improvements to the sidewalk network on Mifflin Road. Currently, there were no planned improvements, other than the dedication of the walkway. In addition, he stated that there was a need for sidewalk improvements on the south side of Route 8 from the new Dover High School property east to Mifflin Road. Mr. Blakeman noted that the State had sent notices regarding plans to make improvements to the

sidewalk along Route 8. Mr. Koenig stated that the State had a program called "Safe Route to Schools" and since Mifflin Road is a State right-of-way the City would not incur any burden for such improvements; however, the City may advocate for the right-of-way.

In response to Mr. Perza, Mr. Koenig felt that the City would not have any more liability if dedication were accepted than the City had at the present time.

Mr. Slavin stated his observation that students were using the safe walkways as designed, and expressed his amazement at the number of students who walk to school. He felt that any additional improvements would only prove to be helpful.

Mr. Koenig confirmed that the dedication would be in the best interest of the students.

Mr. Blakeman moved to recommend acceptance of the dedication of the existing concrete walkway and authorizing the City Manager to execute any documents necessary to ensure public funds can be used for future maintenance on the dedicated walkway, as recommended by staff. The motion was seconded by Mr. Snaman and unanimously carried.

Mr. Blakeman moved for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Snaman and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Adam M. Perza
Acting Chairman

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