UTILITY COMMITTEE

The Utility Committee Meeting was held on August 26, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. with Chairwoman Williams presiding. Members present were Mr. Perza, Mr. Blakeman, and Mr. Snaman. Mr. Slavin was absent. Members of Council present were Mr. Dixon, Mr. Hutchison, and Council President Bonar. Mayor Carey was also present (departed at 5:45 p.m. and returned at 5:47 p.m.).

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

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

Quarterly Review of Utility Related Capital Investment Plan (CIP) (Electric and Water/Wastewater) ***(April, May, and June)***

Members reviewed a Project Tracking Report, as of June 30, 2013, for the General Fund, Community Transportation & General Fund Street Funds, and Utility (Water/Wastewater and Electric) Related Capital Investment Plan (CIP).

Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, advised members that the major project completed in FY2013 for the General Fund was the Library project. He stated that construction had been completed; however, final bills would be processed in the upcoming months and charged against the project. He noted that the Street and Alley Program and the Salt Storage Facility at Schutte Park would be under construction shortly.

Referring to the Community Transportation Fund Projects, Mr. Koenig explained that some of the funds for projects that had not yet begun were being reallocated to projects that were prepared to move forward at this time. He noted that the Robbins Hose Station No. 2 Ramp was complete and the Wesley College Project was near completion. He stated that work remained on the White Oak Tax Ditch as well as the Street Program that was ongoing.

Mr. Koenig advised members that a great deal of work was done last year in the Water/Wastewater Utility related to Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) improvements and that staff continued to work on several water projects associated with the development of a new water source at the Piney Point Well, as well as elevated storage tank projects. He indicated that some older projects were starting to move toward completion. The assignment of some pump station projects to consultant engineers was delayed due to changes in staffing levels and the need for staff to review these projects.

Mr. Koenig assured members that his expectation, as well as that of Ms. Sharon Duca, Director of Public Works, was that projects that had been lagging for the past couple of years would be caught up in FY 14. He explained that it was absolutely critical for the Water/Wastewater Capital Program to move forward in order for the City to maintain its current infrastructure, as well as to be able to expand for business opportunities and residential growth in the future; therefore, many man-hours would be spent working on this CIP in the next three (3) to five (5) years.

Mr. Koenig stated that a considerable amount of staff time and effort had been spent working on reliability issues related to the electric transmission system, including several projects that involved moving overhead lines underground in order to improve reliability. Staff had also been working on various substations to expand their capabilities in order to maintain reliability.

Responding to Mr. Snaman regarding an outage that occurred along Route 8 on Saturday or Sunday (August 24th or 25th) and lasted for approximately 2½ hours, Mr. Koenig stated that he would obtain information, including the cause of the outage, and forward it to members.

In response to Mr. Perza regarding the expected timeline for completion of CIP projects, Mr. Koenig stated that staff had struggled with the completion of projects for any given year. In some cases, he explained that projects are designated as multi-year; otherwise, the expectation is for projects to be completed and money expended as identified at 100% completion.

Responding to Mrs. Williams, Mr. Koenig stated that Municipal Street Aid Grant monies received are credited to the General Fund and are used to offset the cost of street lighting. The actual Capital Street Program was financed through a loan that the City obtained approximately one (1) year ago for the General Fund. The Capital Budget includes a Street and Alley Program which has typically been funded through a combination of General Fund tax money (at levels ranging from $0 to $500,000) and Community Transportation Funds (at levels ranging from $100,000, to $500,000). Mr. Koenig stated that there had been discussion regarding the need to accelerate the funding in the General Fund for street infrastructure; therefore, staff would be presenting a more robust Capital Plan related to street repairs that would directly affect the General Fund. He indicated that this would require a combination of taxation and additional requests for Community Transportation funds from legislators. He stated that as the road network enlarges, there is a larger need for maintenance. He advised members that the cost of asphalt is based on the price of oil and the cost of concrete is based on raw material.

In response to Mr. Perza regarding the Tar Ditch Interceptor Upgrade, Mr. Koenig stated that the design had been completed and that the City would now approach the residents in an attempt to obtain the necessary easements. He anticipated construction to begin in Spring/Summer 2014.

Mr. Koenig explained that there were constant struggles, such as timing, contractors, manpower, weather, etc., in completing projects. He understands the major inconvenience and disruption to the community when work is being done on projects and relayed appreciation for the cooperation of the citizens. He assured members that when water and sewer lines are repaired and/or replaced and roadways repaired, the work would be done in an expeditious manner.

The Committee took no action.

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

Meeting adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

Beverly C. Williams
Chairwoman

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