

CITY OF GILBERT
MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Mayor Kutsi called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Kutsi, Councilors Pontinen, Skalko, Bol, and Liimatta

Absent: None

Staff Present: City Attorney Kearney, City Engineer Jammick, Public Works Operations Director Lautigar, and City Clerk/Treasurer Sakrison.

The purpose of the special city council meeting is to discuss the Waste Water Treatment Facility upgrades.

Engineer Jammick stated that Stantec is pushing for the pilot test for filters and that decision needs to be made. The City share of MBR would be about \$5 million and the City share of sand filters would be \$4.9 million. More grant money is available for the MBR filters, but the overall project is more expensive so the local share comes out about the same for either project.

Mayor Kutsi stated that Eveleth appointed two people to meet with Gilbert regarding combining sanitary sewer treatment.

Engineer Jammick stated that an approved facility plan must be completed by March of 2016. Plans will be submitted in 2017 and the facility will be online in 2019.

Councilor Pontinen asked if we have applied for an IRRRB grant. Engineer Jammick stated that they can look into applying for grants. He stated that we will look into phasing the project and possibly getting grants over multiple cycles.

Councilor Pontinen asked if we would need to do a bond. Clerk/Treasurer Sakrison stated that we would need to. She stated that the MPCA says that Gilbert's sewer rates have room to go up according to their standards. Lautigar stated that it would be an additional \$16 to \$20 increase per customer per month for sewer rates for twenty years.

Councilor Skalko asked if it would be worth looking into working with Fayal on this. Engineer Jammick stated that it would be a good idea to work together with Eveleth and Fayal.

Engineer Jammick stated that the sand filter option uses our current process. MBR filters are a completely new process. It may be easier to phase the project with the sand filter option. Councilor Skalko asked if it would be better to stay with sand filters to accommodate phasing.

Councilor Bol is concerned about maintenance and replacement of MBR membranes. Engineer Jammick stated that the replacement cost really impacted Hibbing's decision to steer away from MBR. Public Works Operations Director Lautigar stated that Hutchinson is getting a longer life from the membranes than expected; about 12 years.

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Councilor Skalko asked which filter system would be easier to adapt if new standards come down for sulfides.

Mayor Kutsi stated that the mercury standard is coming down from the Federal EPA and being enforced through the MPCA.

Engineer Jammick stated that we fall under Federal EPA standards for mercury since Gilbert's waste stream flows to Lake Superior.

Councilor Bol asked what would happen if everyone that was affected by these new standards acted in defiance.

Attorney Kearney asked if there are any studies that support the harm of mercury. Discussion on whether the amount of mercury being removed warrants the cost.

Discussion about the maintenance costs of the sand filter option versus the MBR option.

Public Works Operations Director Lautigar stated that the facility study looks at the plant as a whole. It is a high cost because the plant is old and things need replacing, not just because of the mercury standards.

Motion by Skalko second by Liimatta to adjourn the meeting at 6:37 p.m. Motion carried.

Debra Sakrison, Clerk/Treasurer

ATTEST

Rob Kutsi, Mayor