

CITY OF GILBERT
MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

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

The purpose of the public hearing is to present the Gilbert Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) Plan Amendment dated March 2015. The plan amendment is needed because the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is implementing a mercury limit on the treated water discharged from Gilbert's WWTF which will require significant improvements to the Gilbert WWTF.

Presenter: Tiffany Edholm, MN GreenStep Cities Intern

MN GreenStep Cities helps cities become more sustainable. Gilbert has six of the twelve best practices accomplished. Gilbert will be invited to the League of MN Cities banquet and will be recognized as a Green Step City.

Mercury Review

- Mercury is bad for your health and can affect your blood, kidneys, and brain.
- Mercury is a neurotoxin and can cause insomnia, mood swings, muscle twitching, and memory loss.
- Mercury is exceptionally harmful to babies and small children. It can cause problems with brain development, stunted growth, and may cause possible adult health issues.
- Mercury accumulates in the body.
- Gilbert is in the St. Louis River Watershed, which is in the Lake Superior Watershed. The mercury in our surface water reaches Lake Superior. The Great Lakes have ten percent of the world's fresh water.
- The Clean Water Act of 1972 is a mandate to protect water. The MPCA enforces the act.
- The MPCA will continue to fine the City of Gilbert until they are in compliance.

Presenter: Ron LaFond, engineer with Stantec

Facility Plan Amendment

- The methylmercury limit for the WWTF will be 0.0000001 parts per million in three years.
- The reason for the presentation is if the city wants to apply for funding through the Public Facilities Authority (PFA), this is a requirement.
- The plant was originally constructed in 1956. A significant upgrade was completed in 1977. Another update was completed in 2010.
- Major issues of the facility: new limit for mercury, hydraulic capacity needs to be increased, maintenance, operator safety, solids treatment.
- Facility currently has thirteen buildings with multiple processes.
- The plant must meet the new mercury limit of 1.8 ng/L monthly and 3.2 ng/L daily by 2019

Wastewater Treatment Options:

- Do Nothing: Not an option because the city needs to meet new mercury limits and needs additional capacity.

- Regionalization: Neither Virginia nor Eveleth have the capacity to accept additional flows.

Three options and costs presented:

- Option 1 is the same as the existing facility with the exception of building a 1.7 million gallon equalization pond. The estimated cost is \$6,365,000.
- Option 2 is the same as the existing facility with added sludge storage. The estimated cost is \$6,392,000.
- Option 3 is converting to an MBR system plus sludge storage. The estimated cost is \$7,768,000.

Option 3 is being recommended because it can qualify for more grant funding. The highest quality effluent stands the best chance for meeting future limits. It simplifies the complexity of the process and can potentially change the class of the plant and reduce testing and operator requirements.

Options presented showing potential cost increases to average customer sewer charges. 1.4% of median household income is considered an affordable sewer rate by MN Public Facilities Authority. The implication is \$65 per month or less is considered by MPCA to be an affordable sanitary sewer rate.

Schedule presented and placement on Intended Use Plan (IUP) is requested by June 5, 2015. Proposed dates of the construction project are June 2016 to September 2018. Requesting placement on the IUP is not a commitment of any kind. It gets the city in line and allows the city to get a good idea of available funding.

MBR systems are in use in Clear Lake/Clearwater, Hutchinson, and Gold ‘N Plump in Cold Spring.

A pilot test is needed if the city is going to use MBR’s or dual media filters to test if either will successfully remove enough mercury to meet limits. A pilot study is usually performed over three months at a cost of \$20,000-\$40,000.

Motion by Skalko second by Pontinen to close the public hearing at 7:03 p.m.

Robert Kutsi, Mayor

ATTEST:

Debra Sakrison, Clerk/Treasurer