

REPORT:

PUBLIC SERVICE COMM MEETING 2/18/21 6pm

Online Zoom / recorded

Comm members present: Harpin, Oleskiewicz, Chair: Bona

Also in attendance. Councilor Lamb and LaForest, DPW Commissioner Lescarbeau, Water Foreman Todd, Fire Chief Miranti, and public and press

Commissioner Lescarbeau stated he met Saturday with fire dept members, water dept, and mayor to implement plan moving forward.

They will start bagging hydrants not working. They don't want to test all hydrants at this point due to temperatures and age of some.

Foreman Todd stated NAFD List and DPW list of hydrants don't exactly match up. Some hydrants could be counted twice if on a corner and show as two streets

He's been going through flushing log that should show recorded issues with hydrants. Working on making data better to be shared with all depts in a software program. Todd provided better definitions to the terms, frozen, broken, seized and explained how some of the internal components work and fail.

Harpin asked for a timeline when inventory would be finished and bagging. Can there be more preventative to stop them from freezing or seizing? Asked about pricing.

Todd said about a week to finish inventory and another for bagging once they come in. The workers do grease the caps. Some have parts to be replaced, but the parts can cost \$2000 so not worth it. They need to not crank the caps back on as tight which makes them harder to open. New hydrants run \$2500-3000 doing it in house. Different length hydrants may require extensions that cost a few hundred more.

Lescarbeau. Only have one person in water dept to do the labor.

Oleskiewicz Bona: should insurance money have come in to replace that? Lescarbeau said yes.

LaForest: Asked about why food grade grease on valves. How many hydrants are missing or cant be fixed? Where is insurance money going? Lescarbeau said grease is industry standard practice. Missing number will be known after inventory. Money received is not always known by DPW and there should be better communication.

Oleskiewicz: are there guidelines on flushing and maintenance? Most preventative maintenance is done at time of flushing.

Bona: how many are flushed. Todd: all that are working. Confirmed the last time flushed there were 65 not working and more likely around 100 now. Down from 300 in 2011. Lescarbeau confirmed the five hydrants ordered in 2020 was cancelled due to uncertainty of how budget will be affected due to COVID19.

Harpin: asked how many on staff. Lescarbeau said there are two employed. The foreman and meter reader who doesn't do maintenance unless emergency. One other ½ time foreman out on injury. One new worker will be starting in a couple of weeks. The dept is the lowest paid in the state and cant get

licensed operators at the rate we pay. We lose them after they are trained to neighboring communities that pay \$5 more per hour.

Lamb: Ability to get hydrants and parts? Supports better communication and tech to share information between departments. How long have some been not in operation?

Lescarbeau: takes about a month for hydrants to arrive. More automated system will get more attention, but it all comes down to money.

Bona: if we had the technology wouldn't it have shown data that the hydrants were working at the last fire? How old are some of our oldest hydrants? Todd: yes, but it would create a more streamline system for repairs and works with GIS. Right now the system is mostly vocal and manual. Some are over 100 yr old.

Miranti clarified info on Veazie St hydrants. Stressed that we need more staff on water dept. They have been adding more hydrants to CAD system which will help dispatch also. Dispatch has a mapping system that are listed as working or not.

Todd and Meranti feel there could be over 637 hydrants. Neither could remember the last time there was a full inventory/inspection.

Oleskiewicz. How do we accommodate getting Todd help when there are multiple issues happening with storms, breaks, etc. Lescarbeau: said DPW is a skeleton crew that move to where they are needed. Miranti mentioned how neighboring communities have much larger water crews for smaller systems.

David Moresi: we have a breakdown of the entire system and has been overdue for improvement for a long time. The water dept can only do so much and they need more staff. Mentioned his insurance rates are affected by working or non working hydrants.

Trevor Gillman felt hydrants have been brought up in past budgets but there was no urgency in those conversations.

Other water infrastructure.

Lescarbeau: hopes for an enterprise fund. Allows for planning of a capital project. Water plan ten years ago was \$20 million over 20 years. Also have a sewer system from the 1800s. Dams are inspected annually. They would not be capable of handling the 500 year flood. Last estimate to repair dams is \$5-8 million. Aqueduct would need \$200k in repairs.

Harpin: Asked in past about capital improvement plans and needing to start discussing infrastructure. This needs to be taken seriously. Council has difficulty getting information.

LaForest: Commissioner of DPW should be a suit pushing papers and not doing everything.

City used to belong to Municipal Vulnerability Program which opened us up to more grants. City rejoined it 2 years ago. The city lost grant opportunities by not applying for. There are tons of funding this city should have applied for. Massive failure going back several admins have not expanded funding or protecting our infrastructure.

Gillman: You don't have depts screaming and yelling on how they need help. How is finance comm supposed to do their job if people aren't allowed to speak on issues?

Transfer Station:

Commissioner: DEP is mandating an additional person to be put back. Must have two workers on site. Going to fill the transfer station position from the highway dept budget as they have an open position. Looking to purchase an excavator that can push more trash in the trailers. City pays for 24 ton and can only get 20 tons in with current loader. Some building repairs needed. DEP wants a safety wall at edge of pit that needs to be engineered. Scale may need repairs or replace. DPW will be coming forward with a recommendation. Need to consider if we continue to operate as we are or bag only? Scale is about \$50k. Excavator \$140k. Total needed expenses is \$250k. Losing \$2k month by not packing trailers well.

Oleskiewicz. Asked about privatizing. What is being used to compact trash.

Lescarbeau: 10 years ago we were doing 15000 tons per year. Once Pownal plant opened dropped to 4000 tons. City cant make deals like private business. There is a T-Bar on the loader but it's not as good and crushing the trash like an excavator could do.

Bona: if it goes private they could close it and move it all to Pownal. Believes residents don't want to lose a local transfer station and as long as costs cover expenses it should stay.

Moresi: transfer station is a valuable asset for the city and his company uses it regularly.

Gillman: questions about rates for leaves. Said there is a charge for leaves, but council never approved a charge. Lescarbeau said that is for large haulers. Bona suggested the sign should be clear on who is charged. Gillman also asked about city clearing leaves on Marion Ave. Lescarbeau, Moresi and Lamb said the city has not cleared leaves on Marion Ave for a few years and the neighbors have hired a private business to clear leaves on their street.

gave us definitions of the differences of broken, frozen, seized hydrants.