

City of Nokomis
City Council Special Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2022

The City Council of the City of Nokomis, County of Montgomery, Illinois held a Special Meeting at the Nokomis City Hall on Monday June 20, 2022. Mayor Holliday called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and City Clerk Hill called the roll. Those present were Commissioners Stauder, Glenn, and Mayor Holliday. Also present were City Clerk Rachel Hill and Deputy Clerk Karri Smith. Visitors present were Andy Hanfland and Roger Nuxoll of Farnsworth Group, and Adam Fox and Cameron Jones of Benton and Associates; Eric Emmerich of EJ Water and Alan Hard.

Mayor Holliday started the meeting off by announcing that this special meeting time is to be used as a working meeting with EJ Water and the City Engineers. Eric Emmerich from EJ water requested everyone to come to the Council table to make discussions easier. At this time everyone moved to sit around the table.

Eric Emmerich presented the council with an updated rate comparison proposal. He addressed the room to let them know that he would like to use this time as working group so everyone can be on the same page, and make sure everyone is communicating. At this time the council took the time to review the hand out from EJ Water. After reviewing the proposal the engineers discussed water and waste water rates. Cameron Jones of Benton and Associates asked Eric with EJ Water how they plan to pay for the loan, Eric responded to Cameron stating that they would be paying off the loan with the base rate and grants but thinks EJ Water could get it cheaper. Cameron then asked how. Eric stated they do the work as non-prevailing wage and can do some of the work themselves with their current employees. Cameron then stated that makes it hard to compare rates when they use their own employees and non-prevailing wage when the City would still be paying its employees. Discussion was then had on rates over a ten year rate plan. During the discussion about rates the question was asked if the work needing done to the lift stations was included. Eric stated that EJ water would apply for DCEO grants and some money would be set aside to bandage the lift station until they would be granted a grant, he stated that at this time they are applying for a DCEO grant for the City of Witt and are only allowed to apply for one DCEO grant per year, per county. Cameron stated that they plan to do a complete over haul of the lift stations that need the most help. Commissioner Stauder stated it is really down to the cost of our employees and our cost to keep them.

Eric Emmerich stated he does not believe that our raw water capacity is enough according to a study claimed to be from Illinois Geological survey from 2014 when the IEPA provided an opinion in of several of the City's wells. At this time Andy Hanfland from Farnsworth Group asked to review the study. Eric then goes on to explain that if the City ever had a larger company come into the City we would not be able to support it with our current system. Commissioner Stauder asked about the potential plan to do the interconnect for emergency hook ups. Eric carried on a discussion about the size of lines that they would need and a potential time line on when Coalton would go on line with EJ water, Eric stated that with a DCEO grant they hope to get Coalton online with their own water tower by 2024. Commissioner Stauder stated he is not sure this is something the City needs to worry about now but maybe in another

twenty years. Commissioner Glenn asked what his point was. Commissioner Stauder stated he just isn't sure this is what we need to be doing right now. Discussion was then had about what it would cost the City to just purchase water as a whole sale from EJ Water. Andy Hanfland stated that bulk water sale could be an option. Eric let the Council know that yes that is an option he just did not believe that was the direction the City wanted to go. Adam from Benton and Associates then asked Eric Emmerich how much water would the interconnect be able to provide the City in an emergency situation. Eric responded that the interconnect would only be able to provide enough water to keep us wet but not enough to fill the tower. At this point Andy Hanfland requested we stay on point. He proceeds to go line by line through the proposal from EJ water. Andy lets the council know that he believes that the City can afford to do all of the upgrades that EJ Water is trying to say the City could not with the changes to the rates. Discussion was then had about a replacement schedule and the replacement of lead lines. During the discussion about lead lines it was stated that it doesn't really matter who the operator is the lead lines have to be replaced. Around the table it was decided that labor cost is the biggest issue. Eric from EJ asks the question, if the City has the money to make the changes why are they not being done. Discussion was then held again on grant applications. Eric stated the City would apply for the grant then place that grant money in the care of EJ Water. He also stated that he would be able to apply for one DCEO grant per year, he also stated that EJ Water is in twenty three out of twenty-five townships in Shelby County. It was then stated that it may take years for the work to be done considering your lucky if you can only get one grant every two to three years or more. It was then asked if EJ would be able to get a grant for the City to get the work that needs to be per the IEPA. Eric stated that EJ has already committed to the City of Witt for a DCEO grant. Cameron requests that we get a better side by side comparison and a break down in audit form. A brief discussion was had about the NPDES permit and the camera work that needs done of the sewer lines.

Andy then goes on to discuss the survey he had been reviewing from the Illinois geological survey. He asks that Eric send him the details on how and where he actually got this survey from. Andy states that he does not believe that the survey is correct, he stated that the City was approached in 2014 by the EPA. Commissioner Stauder read out loud part of the meeting break down of the meeting. Andy continues to let the table know that there was an issue at the time but it was addressed with a second air stripper, he goes on in detail that the wells most impacted with contamination are no longer in use. The wells with the VOC contamination are the wells along the railroad, well 11, 12 and 13 that are on the other side of town do not have VOC's. He believes that this shows the City is actually pulling from two different water sources and that we do not have any current reason to believe that our water source is drying up. Discussion was then had on the well pumps, aquifers and the flushing of hydrants. Eric Emmerich states he is just here to give the City options with unlimited water. Andy states he believes the City has a sound and good aquifer. Commissioner Stauder goes on to let the Council know that there are a lot of things to look at and that this is a big decision that cannot be decided right away and we want to make sure we are all on the same page. Andy suggests that each company looks at their department and come up with side by side information to share at a future meeting to get the best comparison. Farnsworth will be looking at water, Benton and Associates will be looking at the waste water and EJ will be looking into what they can offer the City. That way we can come up with the best comparison and a pros and cons list. Eric states that biggest difference is in the labor cost, he doesn't want to see the City lose employees but believes EJ could potentially hire two of the current City employees. Mayor Holliday asks if the EJ employees are union and Eric stated no they are not. Commissioner Stauder states that past legal issues could become a problem. Eric stated he has been in contact with Attorney Chris Sherer. A discussion was

then had about the water and waste water rates. The council then discussed a time frame all agreeing that in two weeks they will have all information provided to the group for review and a future meeting could then be coordinated. Visitor Alan Hard addressed the council stating that 95% of the people will be looking at rates. With nothing else to discuss at this time the agreed to adjourn.

Adjournment

Commissioner Stauder made a motion to adjourn at 4:27 p.m. Commissioner Glenn seconded the motion. Voting yes, Commissioners Stauder, Glenn and Mayor Holliday. Nays none. The motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rachel Hill
City Clerk