

Public Hearing- Minutes

Community: Town of Westport

Project: PL-16-116

Date: Ap. 26, 2018 pm

The public hearing began at 7:00 pm at the Community Building. All in attendance are listed on attached sign-in sheet. Jodi Corner, SIRPC explained the OCRA planning grant process and stated that Commonwealth has provided the Town with a plan that will be introduced to the public this evening. After the presentation, questions can be answered, comments will be heard and if no issues arise, a resolution will be passed by the Town on April 9, adopting the plan.

Bryan Gatewood (BG) Town Council President of Westport introduced members of the Town council, Commonwealth Engineers and SIRPC. He stated that prior to application submission, the Town went through the QBS process to determine that Commonwealth was the engineering firm they wanted to work with. The Town will have a rate study performed during the implementation of this plan. The proposed project is for the water system and dam only. The plan proposes a 30% increase in just the water portion of the bill, stating citizens can take their minimum bill and times it by 1.3. This is based on receiving 45% grant funds from OCRA and RD to assist in funding the project,

Vince Summers (VS), Commonwealth Engineers (CE) then started the presentation, see attached Power point slide sheets. He stated that the plan did include alternatives for the Town to compare to see which project is best for them. This PER includes an executive summary that gives citizens an opportunity to view the planning area, existing facilities, need for the project and the alternates considered. CE then gave an explanation of their recommended improvements, a new water treatment plant located adjacent to the existing 1980 plant which is at the end of its life. The project includes a package system, replacing pumps and repairing the clear well. This project will improve the water quality and efficiency of the overall water system. A portion of this project will also include upgrades to their connection with Decatur Rural Water and repairs to the dam to ensure safety.

After the presentation, the floor was open for citizens to ask questions and make comments.

Citizen: Did you go through the costs of other options? CE: Looking into hooking up to either Jennings County Water or Decatur Rural Water both were explored by would raise the rates much higher and would lose control of the system.

Citizen: Can you just pay an up front higher cost for the new plant and not get a forty- year loan and have no debt? CE: They looked into just hooking up to the other water companies but the Town would still have existing repairs that need attention so the cost would be much higher. The water company you buy from will also pass on their maintenance costs to you. CE showed the cost comparison sheet to the public.

BG stated that the Town has not had a water rate increase in ten years.

Citizen: Have you done a stream sustainability study? CE: Studies have been done and CE looked at the rainfall changes in the winter and spring. IFA did a study to look at climate change and wells, This

plan does not include water from Decatur County. Another climate report from Purdue University from March 1, 2018 was also looked at. Based on the information available, trends in the future are: longer summers, more storms in the spring and an increase in rainfall but nothing conclusive says for sure. CE looked at streamflow from 1945-46, no trends say it's getting less.

Citizen: With the development in Decatur County- if there are less farms and tile in the farmland, will the surface water from fields effect Westport? CE: EPA has an issue with this and has stated that water tests are required at the plant to make sure the water filtering system is approved. This is part of the design and IDEM will also have to approve it.

CE: In regards to the pumps at the water plant... they have a couple hundred days capacity.

Citizen: Will there be an increase in water pressure? CE: homes in the northern portion will have an increase in pressure. All residences above. 950 S will have the same pressure. BG: those homes will have their 2" lines replaced.

Citizen: She stated that water from Decatur Rural Water is better than this water. She still buys bottled water because she says it tastes better and feels it's safer for her children. Citizen: He also buys bottled water for his coffee. BG: the intent of this project is to get better quality water. Not sure if the taste will change, chlorination is still a requirement.

Citizen; Will sewer bills go up? BG' No, this just effects the water bills.

Citizen: What is the size of the new lines? CE: state minimum is 6" lines. What is the typical water pressure now? CE: 50-52lbs. Storage Water? CE: clear well will remain the same, both well and tower have 2 days storage, 100,000 gallons. Does the new plant have a warranty? CE: We assume but will check with a couple of manufacturers to make sure. Two big manufacturers are: Tonka and West Tech.

VS: We encourage you to review the report available at he town hall. They looked at short lived assets (less than 15 years) when compiling the numbers to make sure funds are there to fix issues if they arise before the life is over.

Citizen: Is the iron or steel have to be bought in America? CE: the steel and iron does but the pumps and other electronic/ motorized equipment does not have to be American made,

Citizen: We received letters in the mail with testing results, will the new project address some of those issues? CE: the project is designed to increase the quality. BG: yes, the project is designed to take more carbon out of the water.

Citizen: How are other communities addressing this issue? Keep treating or hooking up? CE: they have worked with Crown Point on a similar situation. I can get other community examples and get back with if you would request that information. BG: By treating our own water, we can maintain control.

Citizen: Does the water company have a profit? Where does the money go? BG: There are funds in the account but not a lot. That information is available upon request. The funds go to pay for salaries and O&M.

Citizen: Will the new capacity increase for future growth? CE: Current average is 100,000 gallons and the new plant would be able to take on 300,000 efficiently. Mark, utility operator stated that they run the plant at 50% right now.

Citizen: How long will the repairs to the dam last? CE: 20 years plus

Citizen: Can you give us a time line for new rates? CE: New plant will be operational in 2020 but true rate increase numbers will not be available until the bids are received. The rates could increase in increments, if the Town could like. Financing for the project should be confirmed by the end of 2018,

Citizen: How long has it been since the Town had to send out a water issue letter to the citizens? BG: stated one year, He mentioned that as time changes and it's much easier to maintain ground water than creek water.

VS: They want to make sure the plant keeps up with the standards

BG: the sewer plant is working fine and was surprised to find out that rebuilding a new plant is the cheapest option.

Citizen: The first time she has heard that the cost to rebuild is 30% more than to hook onto Jennings Water or Decatur Rural Water which is between 40-50% more,

Citizen: In favor of project. She would love to see new businesses come, the community grow which would spread the costs over more people.

The public hearing concluded at 9:05 pm and stated that the resolution will be presented to council on April 9 for adoption.

Signed,

JL

Jodi L ConYer, Grant Administration Manager- SIRPC