MINUTES
City Council Public Works & Utilities Committee

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 – 3:30 PM
City Council Chambers

Members Present:	Mac Morrow, Chair, Council Member Lauren Wise, Vice-Chair, Council Member Owen Carson, Citizen Member Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio
Staff Present:	Wilson Hooper, City Manager David Todd, Assistant City Manager Dennis Richardson, Water Treatment Plant Supervisor Emory Owen, Wastewater Treatment Plant Supervisor Wesley Shook, Public Works Director Aaron Winans, Wastewater Treatment Plant Staff Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Selena Coffey, Assistant to the City Manager
Guests:	Harvey Sankey, Dave Bradley (Transylvania Times)

A. Welcome and Call to Order

Committee Chair Mac Morrow called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

Assistant to the City Manager Selena Coffey certified that a quorum was present.

C. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mr. Wise, seconded by Mr. Carson to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Carson made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Mr. Wise, and all voted in favor.

E. DEQ Sewer Collection Permit

Mr. Todd noted that the City's sewer collection permit had recently expired and recognized public works staff for their work in ensuring that the permit was renewed, on January 27, 2025. He noted that this permit will be in place for 7 years.

F. Mills Avenue Culvert

Mr. Todd notified the committee that a 'basketball sized' sinkhole appeared near a sidewalk off Mills Avenue and that the sinkhole expanded significantly. He noted that the sinkhole has undermined the sidewalk, and the sinkhole is now the size of a vehicle. He then noted that a rusted culvert is causing the problem. He provided significant details regarding the culvert and its impact on the sidewalks, a nearby utility pole, the roadways, etc. Mr. Todd noted that Mr. Shook has been speaking with contractors who can possibly repair or replace the culvert, but the decision has not been confirmed yet. He noted that the culvert repairs could cost in the range of $100,000 and replacement of the culvert could cost over $200,000. Mr. Shook reported the sinkhole to FEMA and staff is hopeful that the city will receive FEMA reimbursement for the repairs or the replacement of the culvert. Committee members had questions, which were addressed by Mr. Todd and Mr. Shook. Mr. Todd noted that staff will learn from potential contractors when the project and repairs will be completed and report back to the committee at the next meeting. Ms. Copeloff noted the importance of getting the word out to the community about the project, its complexity, and what they might expect regarding the repairs.

G. Project Updates

1. Gallimore Sewer Basin Rehabilitation Project

Mr. Todd shared that the pipes have been surveyed with video, but staff has not yet received the final survey results. He noted that the city will begin the lining operation once the survey results are received. He shared that the project is somewhat behind, but staff hopes to begin lining in March and April. He noted that that the project cost of $2.3 million is unchanged.

2. Sewer Lift Station Rehabilitation Project

Mr. Todd shared that this project had gone out for bid and that bids were due back on March 5, 2025. He noted that staff identified some changes to design work, including adding variable speed drives to the pumps and giving staff the ability to add a channel grinder, which allows material to be ground up and allowing better flow leaving the wet well. For this reason, the designer will amend the bid package to include these items, which will push the bid due date to April 1, 2025, which will in turn push the project out another month as well. The budget has remained unchanged to date as a $2.9 million project. With adding the new variable speed drives and grinder, the project budget may increase, but this is unknown at this time.

3. Wastewater Treatment Plant Update

Mr. Todd noted that KCI is currently working on the preliminary engineering report (PER) for the project and that work should wrap up in the near term. He noted that the city currently has $12 million on hand for phase I of the project,

which includes a headworks rebuild. He noted that this work would begin in 2027, followed by the second phase of the project, which would end in the second quarter of 2029. Mr. Todd shared that the third phase, full expansion, isn't shown on the schedule due to KCI continuing to work through the PER process and finalizing their modeling process. KCI has planned to have a draft of the phase I plan completed for the April committee meeting. Mr. Todd noted that the project budget and timeline for this project is unchanged now.

4. **Water Treatment Plant Improvement Update**

Mr. Todd shared that the water treatment plant improvement project is currently out for bid, with bids due March 25, 2025. He noted that a first addendum has been distributed, which clarifies information within the bid documents. He noted that staff will be opening bids on that date and the construction schedule remains appropriate. Mr. Todd is unsure how many bidders will participate but noted that 10 entities had requested plans. He noted that this project had a mandatory pre-bid meeting, and 7 contractors were present. He noted that the city must receive 3 bids to move forward with the project and remain on schedule. Mr. Todd shared that staff hopes to have the most responsive contractor bid before city council for approval at the April council meeting.

5. **Stormwater Masterplan Update**

Mr. Todd shared that the request for proposals (RFP) is out for the city's stormwater masterplan. He shared that proposals are due on March 14, 2025 and shared his hope that all of the firms be reviewed in one day and asked the committee if they would be willing to set a date to "short list" the firms and another date to interview the firms.

Mr. Carson shared with the committee that he cares about the community, which is why he enjoys serving on the committee. He felt it important to share publicly that the company that he works for, Equinox, was contacted by a potential contractor to work as a subcontractor to apply for the RFP. Mr. Carson wanted to be transparent and ensure that he was open about this in order clearly identify the potential perception of a conflict of interest and offered to recuse himself as necessary. The committee discussed Mr. Carson's role and the potential conflict. Mr. Todd shared that he didn't see a true conflict of interest after the selection point if the process went well. Mr. Hooper noted that there would still be a level between the city and the subcontractor because Mr. Carson's firm would not be a prime contractor. He also noted that he didn't feel that Mr. Carson would meet the statutory definition of a conflict of interest if he has less than 10% ownership in the firm. Mr. Carson shared that his interest in the Equinox firm was less than 10%. The committee continued their conversation and stated that they appreciated Mr. Carson's transparency.

Mr. Todd asked that the committee plan to meet on April 8 for interviews with potential firms. The committee agreed with this date for interviews and March 20, 2025 from 10:00am-12:00pm for another meeting to short list the firms.

H. Public Comment

Harvey Sankey asked about the objective of the stormwater master plan. Mr. Todd responded by reading an excerpt of the RFP document to the group. He also asked if the funds were in the budget, to which Mr. Morrow responded affirmatively.

Tom Riches spoke and asked for an update on connectors from each house on Allison Road to the main sewer line. Mr. Shook responded to his questions.

Mr. Todd recognized long-term team member, Wastewater Treatment Plant Team Leader Emory Owen who will be retiring in April. Mr. Owen was given a round of applause by all in attendance.

I. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 3:30pm.

J. Adjourn

With no additional business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:32pm with a motion by Mr. Wise, second by Mr. Carson, and all in favor.

Minutes Approved: April 2, 2025

Mac Morrow, Chair, Council Member
Lauren Wise, Vice Chair, Council Member

Selena D. Coffey
Assistant to the City Manager