MINUTES
City Council Public Works & Utilities Committee

Wednesday, November 6, 2024 – 3:30 PM
City Council Chambers

Members Present:	Mac Morrow, Chair, Council Member (Arrived at 3:37 pm) 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 Aaron Winans, WWTP Staff Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Denise Hodsdon, City Clerk
Guests:	Harvey Sankey

A. Welcome and Call to Order

Committee Vice Chair Lauren Wise called the meeting to order at 3:34 pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

City Clerk Denise Hodsdon certified that a quorum was present.

C. Approval of Agenda

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

D. Approval of Minutes – September 3, 2024 Meeting

Motion by Mr. Carson, seconded by Mr. Wise to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2024 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Public Assistance Grants

Mr. Hooper explained that FEMA's public assistance grants are for government entities to help them with recovery. He reported that we filed our application and had our first in-person meeting with our State FEMA liasons yesterday and they will help us identify projects that are eligible and how much they will cost. He said the

early indications suggest that the total cost of our damages are low enough that we will get a lump sum from FEMA rather than having to go through the laborious reimbursement process. Despite the fact that our repairs are nominal compared to others, there are a couple areas of concern that we will likely include in our request for reimbursement:

1. The Wastewater Treatment Plant is operational and is treating, but the RBC tub is filled with silt and sand and other debris that limits its physical capacity. While the water is getting treated, it is not staying in there long enough to get treated as much as we'd like. We need to undertake a significant project to clean all that contaminated silt out of that RBC tank, which is a time-consuming and expensive project and we will seek reimbursement for that cost. Mr. Todd added that we are working with a contractor and he described the process for cleaning out the 8 RBC tanks. He said we hope to have 4 RBC's cleaned out by Thanksgiving and do the other 4 after Thanksgiving.

2. Repair of washouts on Cathey's Creek near the Water Treatment Plant. These are downstream from the intake so don't affect the intake, but they are upstream from the bridge and the main pipe that carries the finished water into town. Mr. Todd is working with the Forest Service to either get them to move this up on their priority list, or to give us the okay to do it.

3. The cost of all the refuse collection we have been doing, namely trees and limbs and construction debris, and the cost of dumping that at the landfill and manhours to collect it. Mr. Hooper noted that he will recommend that we extend our free collection until the end of the calendar year.

4. The cost of the temporary generator at the Water Treatment Plant.

The committee discussed the vulnerability of only having one intake at the Water Treatment Plant after the second intake was destroyed by Tropical Storm Fred in 2021. Mr. Todd reported that when meeting with the FEMA folks, we talked about that and the potential to use some of this money to recoup that second intake. Mr. Morrow added that this may be a good time to bring back up the idea of a Cathey's Creek intake at the mouth of the French Broad River. He noted that would be about an 8-year project and we would have to get the County Commissioners to support reclassifying Cathey's Creek.

F. City Ownership of West Main Street

Mr. Hooper explained that this idea came out of the Ecusta Trail Working Group. The idea is to ask the State if the City can assume ownership of West Main Street from the trail terminus to Caldwell, which would give the City more flexibility to reconfigure it and do some other things to draw trail users into downtown. One idea proposed by Heart of Brevard is to use colorful paintings on Main Street to act as a path to lead people to explore downtown. These changes would otherwise have

to go through the rigorous and lengthy process for NCDOT approval. If the Committee agrees to recommend to Council and Council approves it, the Ecusta Trail Working Group will bring a proposal to the Ecusta Trail Advisory Board on what we would do with Main Street if we assumed ownership of it. Following discussion, there was consensus to proceed with the request.

G. Public Comment

Harvey Sankey asked if there was any update on the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Mr. Hooper reported that KCI has shared the results of their initial capacity projection, and a more thorough report will be available soon.

Committee/Staff Comments

Aaron Winans mentioned that he has been contacted by Gaia Herbs regarding MSD not renewing their discharge permit. They have requested that we consider taking their discharge, what they call influent; it's before it goes to pretreatment, and that goes to Rosman. He has preliminary results and data from them and the levels of COD are too high. He said he is working with them and going through the process of looking for solutions.

Mr. Carson noted that Pisgah Labs flooded during Helene and asked if there was any update from our last conversation? Mayor Copelof reported that she toured their facility today with Senator Tillis' staff. Their main building had 3-feet of water and all of their operations have stopped. They have estimated damages to equipment and buildings at $750,000 and it will be about four months to get back to having an operational lab. Mr. Hooper added that Council set out the terms that Pisgah Labs must agree to to qualify for a utility extension and connection. One of those terms is that they get a Letter of Map Revision Based on Fill and lift themselves out of the floodplain. Other terms include that they have to comply with our code of ordinances and CFR; they have to agree to annex at the end of 2039; and they have until March 1st to agree to these terms or else they are subject to renegotiation. Mr. Carson noted that they also own 75 acres of land that would never be developed or have a building on it and he suggested what if we try and connect them with an entity like Conserving Carolina that does floodplain storage projects. Essentially get them to do a good thing for the community downstream; do an ecological restoration of the floodplain; use the net cut to help meet their LOMR; build their buildings well out of any sort of future Helene scenario, then also have created this massive floodplain storage project. He said I think if you pitched it to them, there are pieces of it that could work and lead to beneficial outcomes for everybody.

H. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Public Works & Utilities Committee was scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2024 at 3:30 p.m.

I. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 p.m.

Minutes Approved: December 5, 2024

X Mac Morrow

Mac Morrow
Chair, Council Member

X Denise Hodsdon

Denise Hodsdon
City Clerk