



Special City Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 9, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
Washington Fire Department Training Room - 200 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, Illinois

- Call to Order** Mayor Manier called the special meeting to order immediately following the regularly scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting, with a quorum present.
- Roll Call** *Present:* Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens
- Also Present** City Administrator Jim Snider, City Engineer Dennis Carr, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Police Chief Mike McCoy, City Treasurer Abbey Strubhar, City Clerk Valeri Brod, City Attorney Derek Schryer and Press
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- Pledge of Allegiance** Mayor Manier led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Public Comments** Washington resident John Amdall asked Alderpersons Stevens and Smith to reconcile their excitement at the ground breaking of the new brew pub. He asked that they do not participate in the future ground breaking.
- Review Agenda for Deletions/Additions** Nothing was added or deleted at this time.
- Mayoral Communications/Requested Actions** Nothing additional at this time.
- City Administrator Communications/Staff Reports/Requested Actions** City Administrator Snider introduced the Strand Alternative B proposal for consideration. Alderperson Adams shared that he gained good information in the Committee of the Whole meeting that took place before tonight’s meeting. He shared two notables:
1. He asked why it changed from a three-part process without a trunkline.
2. The potential to evaluate the relief sewers.
- Item A: Affirm Strand Alternative B Proposal** Alderperson Adams noted citizen concerns and stated that we need to do what is best for the City and most cost effect for tax payers. He feels that if bullet points can be addressed at a cheaper cost and we can stay off IEPA radar, we need to look into it. He asked if the IEPA were to come this year, could we say we are actively reducing the I&I and would this help. City Engineer Carr noted a wet weather lagoon at Treatment Plant 1 in 2005 and when the plant was taken off-line, modifications were done to a lagoon at Treatment Plant 2. He explained that Ken Newman had made the recommendation to put in the parallel trunkline which is about what is Route A. This evolved into a feasibility study which has become the current Strand recommendation. He noted that public hearings took place. City Engineer Carr stated that if we appear on IEPA’s radar, there will likely be meetings discussing progress and they will know we have a solution and can push us to do the solution. Alderperson Martin asked if the EPA loan is at 1%, and we had a 30-year loan for \$17 million, the monthly payment would be \$44,678 with a total interest paid over the life of the loan being over \$2.6 million. With the market rate of 7.5%, it would be \$118,866 in monthly payments and a total of over \$25.7 million in interest paid. He asked if the difference of \$23 million is what we are looking at or could we get a cheaper loan. City Administrator Snider clarified that the 1% is the current loan rate for a 30-year loan and a consent order would be a 20-year bond at market rates. Alderperson Martin feels the I&I issues are likely caused by downspouts, footing tile, sump pumps, and submerged manholes, and he hasn’t heard any evidence that if we corrected I&I we would need to replace the trunkline. City Engineer Carr explained that he has never heard of an I&I reduction taking care of it and this would require us to go into houses, after which, we would have to confirm that sump pumps wouldn’t be reconnected. He also explained the complexity of hauling waste overland, by truck if they choose to line the current trunkline. He noted that some manholes may need lined as well. City Administrator Snider expressed concern with inspecting each person’s property to eliminate the I&I issues, noting that it is a long and difficult process. He worries about making residents feel uncomfortable. He noted that elderly people were saving their money last year, thinking they would have to pay for remediation. Alderperson Butler noted the yearlong delay caused by smoke testing and that it only reduced about 8% of the I&I. He shared that when letters were sent out, some Council members called a special meeting to make the City cease sending the letters. He is not interested in discussing I&I. Alderperson Adams stated that when Mr. Waldron was asked about a relief alternative, his answer was maybe, making it hard for him to affirm if there may be an alternative. Alderperson Brownfield shared that Council has paused the Strand proposal for two years and they have heard from two paid companies, they’ve addressed the I&I, and they gave the Pudik’s engineer an opportunity to provide their recommendation. Alderperson Brownfield noted that the town has grown since 2005 when the lagoon was planned. He also noted that costs keep increasing and it will be 2025 before we can start.

Alderson Brownfield motioned to affirm the Strand Alternative B proposal; Alderson Butler seconded.

Alderson Brownfield suggested that pausing this will not do any good. Alderson Martin shared that the increased amounts could harm the City financially and it is time to make a decision. Alderson Blundy stated that tonight’s presentation was helpful and noted the costs are now almost identical. He stated that he would like to evaluate this more. He stated that the alternative bypass solution is a change. Alderson Blundy expressed concern for maintenance issues and doesn’t like the fact that we have a 50-year-old trunkline that needs to be replaced. He stated that our I&I is out of control and he would like to get another 50 years out of the trunkline before fixing it. Alderson Butler stated that we need to move forward, he doesn’t feel it is unreasonable and we can’t wait another four years because it would cost more money. Alderson Butler shared that the Pudik family stated that if we go through this 3rd party analysis, they would stand behind Council’s decision and he would like to hold them at their word. He noted that our engineer and Hamilton both confirmed that Route E3 would never get the easements going through private property. He also clarified that Council has spent \$900,000 with Strand and smoke testing. Alderson Butler noted that the Pudik engineer was hired to get the trunkline off the Pudik’s property. Alderson McIntyre Shared that he was in support of having this meeting tonight to gain more information and agreed that there are concerns. He thinks there may be an opportunity to look at the overflow lagoon. He noted three new Council people who might need time to process the information. Alderson Martin stated that he agrees with Alderson Butler but feels we still need to mitigate the I&I. He also feels the relief sewer is a hail Mary, but we need to look into it. Alderson McIntyre stated that we are going against the Constitution if we take imminent domain and feels there needs to be just compensation. Alderson Butler shared concern if a motion on the floor does not pass because it would be confusing and doesn’t want it on the record for the IEPA.

2 Ayes: Brownfield, Butler
6 Nays: Adams, Blundy, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens
Motion failed by roll call vote.

Alderson’s Comment Alderson Stevens stated that the mayor is presiding officer and should have stopped Mr. Amdall from speaking, per the Rules and Procedures. She shared that she was at the groundbreaking because she voted for the project. She looks forward to going to the establishment in the future.

Alderson Brownfield is all for trying to figure out what to do and asked Council for their next step in the process.

Alderson Stevens asked what the City’s plan is for addressing I&I.

Aldersons Butler and Brownfield noted that I&I is not on the table.

Alderson Brownfield stated that he recognizes it is hard for the new members of Council. He recommended taking the opportunity to talk to staff.

Alderson Stevens interjected by stating that they are not allowed to talk to staff.

Alderson Brownfield recommended contacting the City Administrator and clarified that it is Council’s job to set policy.

City Administrator Snider stated that he has never told a Council member that they cannot speak to staff to discuss a specific item and noted Council members have refused to come when they are invited.

Alderson Adams congratulated the WMS Cross Country team for their State achievement. He also hopes people realize what it takes to run for office and noted that this is a tough place to sit.

Mayor Manier recognized the WMS Boys Baseball team.

Alderson Smith clarified that she is in favor of the brewpub but is concerned about the issues with Marlene Miller.

Alderson Blundy noted long pauses between trunkline discussions. He likes Alderson Martin’s idea to create a plan and thinks we need to keep this discussion on the agenda every month.

City Administrator Snider shared that he appreciates the comments but is at a loss about the direction provided by Council. He thinks staff has done a tremendous job and this will drag on if he doesn’t have direction from Council. He feels Council is setting staff up to fail and asked to receive specific direction.

Alderson McIntyre would like more time. He would like to know if the relief sewer and lagoon are realistic.

Alderson Stevens would like a hardcopy of the presentation. She stated that Council members didn’t want letters going to the community and they didn’t talk about who was going to get the letters. She feels that we need to start with the City’s side.

Jim clarified that direction is in the form of a motion.

Alderson Stevens stated that there weren’t enough shovels at the ground breaking.

Adjournment At 10:18 p.m. Alderson McIntyre moved to adjourn; Alderson Adams seconded.
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.