



Special Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 16, 2023, at 6:00 P.M.

Wilmor Fire Station, 320 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, IL 61571

Mayor Manier called the Special Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the training room, with a quorum present.

Present: Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, and Stevens

Also Present: City Administrator Snider, P & D Director Oliphant, City Engineer Carr, Finance Director Baxter, Public Works Director Rittenhouse, Police Chief McCoy, City Treasurer Strubhar, City Clerk Brod, Attorney Schryer and Press

Mayor Manier opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

1. ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Alderperson Blundy asked to walk through the next steps for the trunkline project and further direction. He noted the 100+ year commitment and stated that he wanted to clarify that he took only the advice of City staff and Strand's information. He stated that they landed on Route B in 2019. He read past documents which stated that the City continues to have problems with the trunk sewer due to its proximity to the creek. He mentioned creek erosion and movement. In 2019 they discussed Route A and B. He stated that the key to Route A is it follows the current trunkline so this would not make a good choice. This led him to focus on Route B, which was the only other option. He noted times when they mentioned the tributary connections, as well as clearing and grubbing of trees and brush. They reviewed the costs, which were about the same. He shared that in 2019 they recommended:

- 1) An SSES study to see what I&I is contributing to the system.
- 2) The new Route B trunk sewer.
- 3) To handle stormwater to make a new influent pumping station.

Alderperson Blundy noted that Council then adopted a resolution. He stated that the next presentation came from Strand in 2021. He reviewed the presentation. He stated that Strand pointed out the following:

- 1) The age and condition of the existing system is only 50 years old, and;
- 2) The maintenance issues along the creek and a few other points.

He said because there was push back, the City reviewed five alignments A, B, C, D, and E with Route B being the cheapest. They then looked at two alignments from landowners which were named D1 and E3. He noted the price difference was about \$3 million. Alderperson Blundy said to fast forward to last week, when they discussed the cost of Route B and Route E3. He noted the prices were nearly similar and feels that cost is no longer a factor which made him want to stay away from the creek. He gave the breakdowns of each route including crossing the creek, the flood plains and how much would be open access as well as how much is in forested area. Alderperson Blundy noted a few costs that were not yet determined. He said Route B is not any cheaper and there are more creek crossings, wetlands and forest areas. He then continued by stating when you look at lagoon feasibility study, it makes him want to look at I&I.

Alderperson Blundy said that they picked one and ran with it. He recommends the following:

- 1) They rescind the resolution from 2019.
- 2) Conduct a City-wide SSES to address I&I.
- 3) Implement an excess flow removal program to clean up the I&I.
- 4) Complete the alternative route analysis.

Alderperson Blundy concluded by stating that we need the unknown costs for each proposed route.

2. CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD: None provided at this time.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS:

A. Sewer Treatment Plant 1 - Wet Weather Storage Discussion - Engineer Carr shared a lengthy memo with Council about wet weather storage. He shared that he requested a cost estimate for a lagoon from Strand. He broke out the I&I discussion. He said clarified that we do have an excess flow program that is done every year and we have spent over \$1 million on it. He stated that they could do more if they had a larger budget. He stated that in Phase 2 application to the EPA shows that it is cheaper to treat the issue than it is to locate it and try to eliminate it. He doesn't know where the \$500,000 number came from regarding the cost of treatment. Engineer Carr said that lining the clay pipes would be \$7.6 million. He noted that more than half of the I&I issue is coming from the private side which per code is a cost to homeowners. He stated that even using a T-liner, will double or triple the cost of that \$7.6 million. He noted that we have only done private work for SSA projects. Every year staff budgets for the maintenance of main lines and it is false to state otherwise. Engineer Carr said most sump pumps are in basements and asked if we need to check them every year and who will do the inspections. He stated that once you leave the inspection, they will likely put it back. He said

houses built before the mid-1950s are likely hooked to the sanitary sewer. This will cause the City to tear up yards or basements to install a new sump pump including new wiring. He further explained that we will need 1.5 million gallons for storage, for a two-year storm. He was given a price of \$40,000 but they may call for an additional \$100,000-\$140,000 to do a design which may give more options. He stated that he has never had to change a solution with the IEPA and he is not yet sure if it will fit on the site. Engineer Carr noted there are already pipes on the land which you wouldn't want to put a lagoon over. He asked how much storage do we plan for, noting that we had a 500-year storm recently. He also noted if we were to have a lagoon and keep the existing line, each current manhole would need to be armored which will require additional engineering, sharing that one pipe crossing alone was \$50,000. They will need to do survey work to locate the exact easement and tree removal will be needed to get to the trunkline. Engineer Carr shared that we have to avoid the Indiana Bat area during specific seasons. Regarding the relief sewers, Engineer Carr noted that of the two bottle necks, one of them travels across wetlands and another property that a land owner has stated they will not allow. Engineer Carr explained that he doesn't know how long it will be before the IEPA tells us we have to do it. He noted that Alderperson Blundy was comfortable putting off the work for five years and Alderperson Blundy responded that regardless of what we do, the I&I problem never goes away. Alderperson Blundy recommended doing the citywide SSES as we move forward with the alternative route analysis. He doesn't think we have spent enough time looking at anything other than Route B. Alderperson Blundy said let's do our due diligence to see which Route is the right route to choose, he is not saying to wait five years. Engineer Carr said he can get a price for a citywide SSES and come up with something like purchasing meters and getting it done over a couple years. He noted that it comes from the sewer fund, not the general fund. Engineer Carr clarified that Strand already reviewed the multiple alignments. He also stated that projects have a lot of internal communication and if an engineer doesn't think a plan will make it, those options fall off so their clients save that cost and this information was covered in a presentation by Mike Waldron in 2021. Engineer Carr shared the fiscal impact of the different studies, noting the feasibility study would be about \$50,000 and Strand came it at \$40,000 then if it was still feasible, it would be an additional \$100,000-\$140,000 to do up-to-date flow monitoring and surveying work. He explained that looking at the 10-million-gallon lagoon would be about \$5 million and they would likely need to put in a pump station for an additional \$5-6 million. He also shared that the Hamilton relief sewers were about \$1.5 million. He feels that televising the existing trunklines would be about \$100,000 and lining only the parts that need it would save money. Engineer Carr explained that doing larger portions up front would save the expense of bypassing the line twice if we have to go back. He said if Council would want the lagoon feasibility study, they could move forward for about \$40,000 and it might be 2026-2027 before construction could start. City Administrator Snider said he understands how to assess items and how governments solve these problems due to 42 years' experience. He shared that he found a hardcopy from Ken Newman from 2012 stating that we were planning on abandoning STP1 and installing an excess flow settling tank and a large lagoon to catch flows that exceed capacity. He continued by sharing that after further consideration by staff and the public service commission, it was decided to construct a large sewer between the plants instead of building something to catch all flows to transport them to STP2 in order to eliminate constructing excess flow facilities. Council approved this unanimously in 2012. Administrator Snider noted that delays were caused by the 2013 tornado and that this was picked up again before 2020. He said that Mr. Waldron pointed out that we would need to engage IEPA to gain their support as opposed to moving forward with design. He said the IEPA may not accept this and they likely know the best path is Strands recommendation. Administrator Snider stated that Strand has a good reputation and does a good job. He stated we need to solve this problem at the least cost possible. He clarified that we tried looking at I&I and spending people's money is rolling the dice. He further stated that we have an opportunity to get a 30 year, 1% interest loan through the IEPA which saves the lower to moderate income people money. He said rates will go up for the owners, noting that the cost will increase if we receive a consent order. He said you cannot borrow money out further than 20 years so we would have market rates if forced to do the project at 5% on a 20-year bond. And the rates to go into effect for owners will be substantially more. He advises caution. Alderperson Butler stated that we contracted with Strand in 2016 and it took until October of 2019 to make a clear recommendation in the best interest of the public. He shared that they considered multiple routes, some which were unfeasible and this is not a multiple choice for us to pick. He shared his concern for the input from a non-engineer who spent a Sunday afternoon reviewing to provide recommendations. He stated that we paid experts to do this and a solution was provided. He also stated that the people at this table do not know how to design a sewer and we've done due diligence for four years talking about this. Alderperson Blundy stated that he appreciates the sense of urgency but feels there is fear mongering, saying we have to get it done to get a good rate. He stated that after talking to his wife, he concluded that as long as we are acting in good faith, they will not ding us. He said Strand said the other route was cheaper and what he read, Strand recommended the lagoon, Route A or Route B. He doesn't think due diligence has been done. Alderperson Butler said that Mr. Waldron stated that Route B was the recommended route, and he would like it on record. Alderperson Martin said if we have to do a new system, we need to put it right back, which would be Route A, even though that is not efficient. He further stated that the landowners bought this land with the chance that something like this could happen and we have a moral and ethical standing to fix it. He expressed that he is not willing to do eminent domain on the northern route but if we can broker a deal, that is something else. He sees Route B as the only option on legal and moral issues. Alderperson Martin said he is also willing to do a blend between Route A and B and as for I&I, he doesn't think the issue is on the City side but we need to look at it to see what it would take to tackle the issues. He questioned adding up I&I on the public side, the City side, looking at the lagoon and finding 40 acres for overflow. He hasn't seen evidence that this has to be removed because it is bad, he has only seen that it has to be replaced to handle the rain events. Alderperson Stevens expressed that she doesn't know why we didn't take Strands recommendation

regarding the SSES. She noted we did the SSA for West Holland and Lawndale. She asked if every house on Lawndale was looked at and the footing tiles unhooked. Engineer Carr said the contractor dug up within two feet of the home and if they had found a connection, they would have disconnected them but they didn't find them. She asked if they considered a sump drain line. Engineer Carr said it is run on Lawndale, Hilldale and Holland. Alderperson Stevens said she would like to see a map of what needs to be televised. She asked why are we doing part of Catherine when we are going to be redoing it. Engineer Carr said all of Catherine except one block is lined and we will not be relining sewer on Catherine. Alderperson Stevens said we need to be educating the public in small increments because it is a big topic. Alderperson Adams expressed his appreciation for what everyone has said. He wants clarification regarding the IEPA and asked if we get a consent decree, does that mean we cannot get an IEPA loan. He said in August of that year we got a consent decree but then got a loan in September. Engineer Carr explained that the original consent decree we received was due to STP2 and they wanted us to decommission the plant without a loan. Finance Director Baxter confirmed that Phase 2A got a loan. Alderperson Adams clarified that the consent order did not eliminate the other option. Finance Director Baxter noted they gave us additional time due to the tornado. Administrator Snider said they had identified areas, but we were given grace because of the tornado. He said there is a significant lag effect and at the earliest we anticipate is the 2025 cycle. Alderperson Adams expressed concern with how to move forward, noting the frustration rolls back to people not at this table. He said if we could rewind time and involve the landowners, we could come to a consensus but unfortunately that didn't happen. He remembered at a meeting during COVID he had gotten a call from a landowner about the lack of communication but Council had been told that the landowners had received communication. Alderperson Brownfield agreed with Alderperson Adams but noted that during the time since then, we have done our due diligence and brought back all the engineers. He stated that if we move to the north, that landowners will bring in a new engineer who will give another option. He also stated that if you are scared to make a decision because you might offend someone, you shouldn't be at this table. Mayor Manier shared that when he lived in Washington estates, they tested I&I and they told they could hook back up to the system. He noted Rolling Meadows South was smoke tested and not a lot was found. He explained that the drains, footing tiles, and sump pumps, could be a major expense and that the letter to the residents was pulled by Council. Alderperson Butler stated that regarding the data from Robinson regarding the I&I, at best we could only eliminate 20% of the overflow. He asked Mr. Carr and Mr. Snider if we could work towards an application for Route B and concurrently determine if an excess water treatment plan is feasible. This allows us to continue to move forward to mitigate the risk of a consent. He suggests moving toward an application for Route B but also perform a study for feasibility. Engineer Carr said we have been in line already for Phase 2B and all we would have to do is a rate study and if we can afford it, we could get put back in line. He also said if we were selected for funding in 2024, they would expect us to get the project going and if the lagoon was feasible, he doesn't see it a problem to step back out of line. Alderperson Martin would like to pursue what Alderperson Butler mentioned but have a discussion regarding I&I. Engineer Carr clarified that private side work cannot be done on an IEPA loan. As for flow monitoring, it would take multiple flow meters and would require staff set them up through storms to chase down the worst areas. He noted that the state requires us to remediate some of the I&I. Administrator Snider said if we step it up, we have done a good job of using our resources. He noted that we have a small number of crews, and we would have to analyze if outsourcing would be more cost efficient than using staff. Alderperson Blundy restated that he likes the idea of the dual path and our engineer has recommended doing the SSES. He also stated that he cannot get behind Route B because Strand is giving him conflicting information, noting that E3 is now less expensive. He cares that 100 years from now we are not fighting the creek. Alderperson Brownfield said that Strand looked at E3 which was presented by an engineer that was paid by the landowner and E3 is cheaper on paper but there are six or seven landowners that will be affected, which will make it more expensive. Alderperson Brownfield noted that we have multiple engineers recommending Route B and he trusts our engineers. Engineer Carr said that Strand did their best to look at everything the same and they included a contingency which is way lower than something that has not yet been designed. He stated that it could be lower but he didn't want to be accused of skewing the costs. He noted that shifting away from Route B is another \$700,000 in engineering costs and in two years we might be in the same boat if we change something to north of the creek. Alderperson Stevens asked if we need a new trunkline at this point. She said she heard Strand say they could do things to the current line and she recommends doing the feasibility study and the SSES. Engineer Carr said we don't know the condition of it and noted that 15 manholes are sticking out of the creek which are vulnerable. He said it will likely need some sort of lining but it won't be known until the televising which would cost about \$100,000, plus the lining itself would be a significant price. He noted the current main would require more maintenance. He said it is not sized for what we are putting into it. Alderperson Stevens stated that no one knows what treatment would cost. Engineer Carr shared that it would require pumping and some chlorine. Alderperson Butler said we are sizing it to treat a 100-year event. He stated that infiltration is a cost but has nothing to do with size of the line, noting the biggest problem is east of STP1. He asked why would we do an SSES for areas in the City that doesn't impact the line. He stated the SSES west of the plant would be wasted because the water can't flow uphill. Alderperson Stevens said it is not her idea to do the SSES, it was Strands. Alderperson Butler shared that we did the SSES a year ago with Robinson and learned that we can reduce about 20% to handle a 2-6 year rain event. Engineer Carr noted that we did a large portion of the SSES when we smoke tested. Next would be getting into the manholes and into homes themselves and we did what we could to find the most, quickest and cheapest. Alderperson McIntyre noted that we already treated. Engineer Carr said we may see additional discharges into the lagoon in order to treat with chlorine.

Mayor Manier asked for direction to give to staff. Engineer Carr said he hasn't received any clear direction. He said they have asked about the SSES but we have done a lot of that already. He asked if they want them to do a \$40,000 study. Alderperson Blundy recommended the SSES then move forward with the \$30,000 lagoon study to see if it is worthwhile. Alderperson Martin asked about the flow evaluation. He said there is something worth looking into there and asked if this is normal for a city. Engineer Carr said for older cities I&I is a problem and it is typical. Alderperson Martin doesn't need a \$40,000 study, he just wants to know if it's plausible to have a basin take the water and hold it until the system can handle it. Then we can look at flow pump. Engineer Carr said he doesn't know enough about wet weather systems to know what a 100- or 500-year storm would bring to the system. Alderperson Butler said if there is at least one member of Council that doesn't understand why Strand made the recommendations, we should have them come back one more time. He still thinks we need to move towards an application for Route B in the spring. Engineer Carr said when Strand came last time, his intent was to simply answer the questions that Council had. In 2021, he went over the application process. Engineer Carr said the next part moving forward would be with a rate study to see if we could afford it. Administrator Snider said if we do move forward with the application, the rate study would have a cost. He said the estimate could be up to \$140,000 to complete. Engineer Carr said it would be about \$40,000 to look at a lagoon and a rate study would be \$35,000-50,000. Administrator Snider stated that we could do both but there will be a cost and contracts will be brought to Council for approval.

Mayor Manier asked for a straw poll for bringing Strand back in order to answer questions, negating the need to discuss Business Item B on the agenda. The straw poll resulted in the general consensus in agreement to bring them back.

B. Phase 2B Trunkline Engineering Continuation – This item will be reviewed at a future meeting.

4. ADJOURNMENT: At 7:51 p.m. Alderperson Brownfield moved, and Alderperson Smith seconded to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.



Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk