

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, January 18, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Don Cooney
Qianna Decker
Jeanne Hess
Stephanie Hoffman
Esteven Juarez
Chris Praedel

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and Deputy City Clerk Shelby Moss.

Public Comments

When an opportunity was given for general public comments, the following people addressed the City Commission:

In Person Comments

An anonymous City resident read a communication he had received from the City and asked questions regarding the City's directive for him to put all communications and requests in writing.

Call-In Comments

None

2022-00

Presentation re: Utility Rates

Public Services Director James Baker and Prein & Newhof Engineer and Utility Policy Committee member Tom Wheat delivered a presentation entitled *2022 Proposed Utility Rates*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

In response to questions from Commissioners, Director Baker and Mr. Wheat provided the following information:

- water aesthetics issues could be caused by high iron levels in the water and may be more problematic for customers living in the high-pressure areas.
- Water Pump Station 5 located on the east side of Kalamazoo had planned upgrades and would be receiving iron, magnesium, and PFAS removal systems. The upgraded Station 5 would be used to based-load the entire water system and assist with water aesthetics for the entire system.
- hydrant flushing could also cause water customers to see increased iron levels in their tap water. Customers were encouraged to run their cold water after hydrant flushing to help flush out the home's system.
- water customers could install devices on their own plumbing systems to help remove iron from their water including a whole home filtering system or water softener system.

- the wastewater tertiary treatment system would be receiving an upgrade and maintenance due to the aging system.
- utility bills pay for the operation, maintenance, and improvements of the utility systems. City residents will continue to pay less overall for both water and wastewater than township customers. Property taxes do not pay for the water and wastewater systems.
- improvement upgrades benefit all customers in making the water and wastewater system more reliable and safer for everyone. Investments in the systems decrease watermain breaks, remove aesthetic water quality issues, and ensures enough water is available in the system to respond to fire emergencies.
- Public Services will work with water customers to reduce water usage by identifying leaks and inefficient appliances. Public Services can also assist customers in tracking behaviors and identify ways to reduce water usage.
- Public Services will assist families with utility payment programs if they fall within or below the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) threshold.
- Public Services has identified all lead service lines within the system, but if a customer is concerned, they should contact Public Services for lead testing. All customers may request to receive an NSF Certified filter.
- the City had received \$5 million dollars from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to start immediate replacement of lead service lines in the north portion of the water system. However, additional grant funding was needed, and the City would be applying to EGLE for additional funding.
- the water and wastewater systems are enterprise funds, meaning expenditures and revenues are segregated into separate accounts and the revenues could only be spent on the water and wastewater system.
- The Utility Policy Committee was created to provide communication, transparency, and oversight for the water and wastewater rates. The Utility Policy Committee contracts with professionals who specialize in water and wastewater rates and the final rates are approved in a public meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission.
- the water and wastewater enterprise accounts carry a fund balance for unexpected maintenance costs and upgrades. The City's website provides documents titled *The City of Kalamazoo Utility Financial Policy* and the *Water Contract* outlining water rates with the surrounding Townships.

Commissioner Hess thanked Director Baker and staff for removing lead service lines and addressing the odors around the wastewater treatment plant. Commissioner Hess remarked on her experience touring the wastewater treatment plant after being elected to the City Commission.

Commissioner Decker expressed support for investing in the water and wastewater system, and she stated the improvements were necessary to support the additional homes being built in the community. Commissioner Decker requested a link be

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Presentation re: Utility Rates (cont'd)

2022-00

Presentation re: Utility
Rates (cont'd)

added to the City's website to provide information regarding financial assistance and water testing resources for water and wastewater customers.

Mayor Anderson highlighted the service of Sidney Ellis on the Utility Policy Committee and noted Mr. Ellis was the Executive Director of the Douglas Community Association. Mayor Anderson remarked on the operational reliability and safety of the water and wastewater system as one of the most important and foundational priorities for the City and its residents.

Commissioner
Comments

Next an opportunity was given for comments from City Commissioners, but no comments were offered.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Shelby Moss
Deputy City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

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