



Sammy Rich, City Manager
Mike Hackett, Director
John Boyd, Assistant Director
WATER AND SEWER DIVISION
Customer Service Department
Bryan Parris, Director
Operations Department
Brandon M. Cook, Director
Water Reclamation Facilities
Jeff Hill, Director
Water Treatment Facilities
Wayne Stanley, Director

CALLED WATER AND SEWER COMMITTEE MEETING
City Hall, 601 Broad Street, Sam King Room
Friday, May 5, 2023
10:00 AM

PRESENT: Chairperson Jim Bojo
Commissioner Craig McDaniel
Commissioner Elaina Beeman
Mr. Sammy Rich, City Manager
Mr. Andy Davis, City Attorney
Mr. Mike Hackett, Division Director
Mr. John Boyd, Assistant Division Director
Mr. Bryan Parris, Customer Service Director
Mr. Doug Walker, Public Information Officer

VISITORS:
Tom Couch, citizen
Norma Reboledo, citizen
Diana Hopper, citizen

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Jim Bojo welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

UPDATE ON REVERSE OSMOSIS

Minutes prepared by: Bryan Parris, Customer Service Director
Called Water and Sewer Committee/ Commission Minutes, May 5, 2023

Mr. Hackett began by saying that the meeting was requested for clarification as far as moving forward in the reverse osmosis plan. He stated it is known that the city is doing this in anticipation of regulations coming down the road from the EPA that would limit fluorinated forever chemicals from being in the water system and one of the challenges all along for us was where to do this. Original plans were to retro fit the existing plant. As we got further into that we became aware that it was evident that it could go badly. In the past, we have shut the plant down for a short six-to-eight-hour window but that was a very coordinated effort with the contractors. The city does not have anyone to buy water from. If we shut down, the city shuts down. Therefore, the risk associated with this approach is enormous. The idea of building a whole plant on top of the existing plant and never having that plant shut down, not having any construction issues or scheduling issues really enters the realm of impossible. So, we started looking for other sites to put the new facility while we keep the current facility in operation, which will reduce all the risk associated with time and scheduling. If you are familiar with construction, the more risks, and the more scheduling conflicts that you have then the higher the price goes to the point where it reaches economically neutral to just move somewhere to build this plant. Provided that we were close to one of our raw water sources and not be in a situation where we were extending large diameter pipe too far as this becomes very costly. As you know there is not a whole lot of real estate available, but the city does have this property on Riverside Parkway. We have a concept drawing to give an idea of the scope and scale of the new plant.

Mr. Hackett explained how the raw water would flow through the plant and then be pumped to the four million gallon tank at the top of Blossom Hill to the beginning of the distribution system. We will retain the structure at Blossom Hill for future needs which will possibly include an additional tank. One tank to operate the city and the other to provide additional storage for maintenance of structures. It is difficult to empty a tank if you do not have one in reserve to allow you to operate.

Commissioner McDaniel questioned, knowing we rely heavily on the Etowah right now, will we be able to get all water from the Oostanaula after project completion? Mr. Hackett said yes, we would have that capability as well as still having the Etowah with its new pump.

Chairperson Bojo questioned if there is enough room and room for the future? Mr. Boyd said yes, and there is plenty of room for future growth on the adjoining Celanese property, just not enough time for that property at this point.

City Manager Sammy Rich stated we know this location is being considered for a new Fire Department Headquarters and Police Department however this is the more important project and the WTP should be move to the front eight acres of the Riverside Parkway property.

Chairperson Bojo, So, you are looking for a motion for this change.

Commissioner McDaniel made the motion to move the new WTP location to the recommended location.

Commissioner Beeman seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

Ms. Diana Hopper asked what is the EPA deadline for 4 ppt, is it 2025? And why were the PFAS levels not listed in the annual Water Quality Report. Hackett responded yes, they are looking at the end of 2025 for the 4 ppt and that the PFAS levels are not required to be on the report at this time.

Ms. Norma Reboredo asked if there would be a generator at the new WTP. Mr. Hackett said no, a generator large enough to run the plant would be the size of a semi-truck and extremely expensive. The plant will have dual power source coming from Georgia Power so if one goes out the other would simply be activated.

The City of Rome's plans to build a new Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to remove "Forever Chemicals" also known as PFAS from the City's drinking water will not include construction on the former Celanese Fiber location previously owned by Environmental Rehab on Riverside Parkway. Preliminary reports indicate that potentially extensive and time-consuming remediation work would have to be undertaken before the property would be available for construction. Due to the urgency of the WTP project, the City of Rome is considering other options since building at the Celanese site would not be completed in time to meet new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations, and so a decision to move away from the Celanese site was necessary.

The construction of the new Reverse Osmosis plant was approved by the City to address PFAS removal from the Oostanaula River in order to meet the EPA's Maximum Contaminant Level of 4 ppt for PFOS and PFOA in addition to implementation of a "Hazard Index" for other PFAS substances that is expected to become law later this year. Temporary efforts were made to upgrade the Bruce Hamler facility to filter the PFAS pollutants, but a new permanent solution is necessary to meet water demand and the increasing strict standards by the EPA.

Due to the risk of attempting to build a new facility around, and in some cases on top of, the existing Bruce Hamler WTP at the present Blossom Hill location, selection of a new site became a necessity. The City's representatives were told that construction at the present location posed too much of a problem. According to Bryan Pate of Insite Engineering, it would not be prudent to risk a misstep in the construction process that could potentially shut down the City's water for an indefinite period of time. Per Mr. Pate, the cost of building the facility on another parcel away from its current location would not adversely impact the previously developed overall construction cost, because any added cost for a new site would be offset by savings in the demolition cost, operational risk, and construction risk imposed by building a new facility on top of the old one while still in service.

Locations under consideration include a Riverside Parkway location (for which conceptual plans have been drawn) currently owned by the City as well as other adjacent parcels.

Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted.

Mike Hackett, Director
Rome Water and Sewer Division

Minutes prepared by: Bryan Parris, Customer Service Director
Called Water and Sewer Committee/ Commission Minutes, May 5, 2023

