

**December 13, 2017
Work Session
City of Gaston**

Present: Mayor Tony **Hall**, David **Meeker**, Rod **Hale**, Bill **Martin**, and Don **Richter**.

Absent: Jerry **Spaulding**, Chris **Jeffries**

Staff: City Recorder Wenonah **Blanchette**, Public Works Director Brent **Whittaker**, City Clerk Sharon **Bregante-Candau**, City Engineer Eric **Hoovestol**.

Mayor Tony **Hall** called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

ROLL CALL: Recorder **Blanchette** conducted the roll call for the record with:

Councilor Jerry **Spaulding**: excused

Councilor David **Meeker**: present

Councilor Bill **Martin**: present

Mayor Tony **Hall**: present

Councilor Chris **Jeffries**: absent

Councilor Rod **Hale**: present

Councilor Don **Richter**: present

• **Project Update from City Engineer**

Cove Orchard Water Association (COWA) System Consolidation

City Engineer **Hoovestol** distributed a map showing the COWA mainline sizes that he had meant to include with his technical memorandum, which was included in the packet. He presented key points of his memorandum, highlighting key components of the COWA system, including the inventory, user rates, connection fees, and financial considerations and how the system compared with the City's water system. The COWA system was in good shape and he estimated COWA's assets to be worth between \$1 million to \$2 million. The areas of concern for the City involved long-term liability and operating budgets. Additional key comments were as follows:

- He reviewed the methodology he and the Public Works Director used to develop the estimated annual operating budget (Table 1.2). The estimates assumed a gain of 30 percent efficiency due to economies of scale. There would be an approximate \$25,000 surplus to reserve for future capital improvements.
- His report did not include a total life cycle analysis over 30 to 40 years.
- Staff developed the data for the cost analysis using COWA's water rate system on COWA's water users per the spreadsheet COWA provided.
- After the estimated expenses, adding the COWA water system to Gaston's would increase the net profit by \$5,000.

Public Works Director **Whittaker** added that Gaston used a per gallon rate for billing instead of COWA's 5,000 gallon incremental rate. Staff would have to adjust the per gallon rate so COWA users' water bills would stay close to what they were now. Charging by the gallon meant revenue would automatically increase, but the base rate would remain similar.

- To determine the rough numbers of the cost estimate, staff developed a ratio based on Gaston's current operating costs. In reality, that ratio would not be exactly the same. Overall, the numbers for increased revenue were conservative in light of how well the COWA system was maintained.
- This system consolidation would provide a gamut of opportunities from which Gaston could benefit greatly, such as emergency fills to Yamhill.

Staff's additional comments and responses to Councilor questions were as follows:

- While the COWA contract currently allowed only 85 connections, the system's hydraulics would allow more connections. Potentially running another, larger line down the Yamhelas Trail to connect with Yamhill would further increase the ability to expand both systems and allow Gaston to provide emergency fire flow to COWA.
 - The 85 connections were based on COWA's water storage capacity before the City built the reservoir in 2007. Currently, the City had too much storage capacity; the smaller reservoir was not being used the 2007 reservoir's water level was kept lower to cycle in fresh water. If COWA ran its pumps longer than 50 percent of the time, as it currently did, the existing 4-inch water main pipe could handle the additional water just fine.
- COWA currently operated its pumps to fill the reservoir off an irrigation timer that was set manually. Gaston would need to improve COWA's system to a self-operating system similar to Gaston's, which would cost \$5,000 to \$6,000. Installing a cell phone-based system was recommended that would send information to a website and notify the Public Works Director directly when needed, such as when a pump station was down.
- Updating COWA's water meters to the Sensus remote read meters was preferable, but not required. Currently, COWA was replacing meters using Gaston's old, back-up stock. Gaston could absorb the estimated \$15,000 cost over a to-be-determined time frame.
- Both the State and Federal governments were very interested in consolidating systems, so outside funding was available for system consolidation and certain improvements, like water main replacements. The project also qualified for Emergency Management Grants.
 - Meters were considered a water conservation element. A project in Columbia City that included some meter replacements received 25 percent off its State Revolving Fund Loan because of that water conservation element.
- The revenues on Table 1.2 were reviewed. Staff applied a 30% ratio to the COWA spreadsheet figures to set the reduction for operating expenses, although the actual ratio would probably be around 20%. The figures were difficult to determine because so many assets would be shared.
- The funding already approved for part-time help for Gaston's system combined with what COWA was paying its two part-time employees would facilitate Gaston adding either one high part-time or two, mid part-time employees for the water system.
- Staff would research how many more connections were possible with improved telemetry and greater storage capacity on the COWA system. However, COWA was surrounded on all sides by LA Water Co-op, so the number would probably be 10 at the most.
- Staff would research the possibility of subdivisions in Cove Orchard, which was in rural Yamhill County.
- Gaston's storage tank had the capacity to add 10 to 20 more connections but not to provide fire flow. Adding a 10-inch pipe and increasing the size of COWA's reservoir to provide fire flow would cost \$1 million, so it was not a reasonable goal.
- Gaston did have a 10-inch pipe going to the intersection of Hwy 47 and Cottonwood. The size of the pipe down Hwy 47 from Cottonwood to Country Lane Estates was unknown, but it was likely a 6-inch pipe. The pipe would have to be increased from Cottonwood down to Cove Orchard, but it was unlikely Gaston would ever provide fire flow to Cove Orchard.
- Partnering with the Yamhelas Trail to punch a line through to the old railroad bed was something that would greatly benefit Yamhill County and the City of Gaston. A ballpark cost was \$50 per foot for about 5.25 miles.
- Staff would also research the lease for the land the storage tank sat on, which was about to expire. Two options were buying the land or obtaining a 100-year lease.
 - **Bill Spurling**, President, COWA Board, had said the Board looked into buying the land but ran into the zoning laws related to land zoned for farm use. COWA was looking at two options, either renewing the annual lease, which was currently at \$1 per month, or getting a perpetual lease from the elderly widower, who owned the two properties where the pump station and reservoir were located.

Mayor **Hall** believed that was fine because the negotiated lease stayed with the property, regardless of who owned it. However, the City needed to nail the lease rate down because a new owner might want a higher rate. Being a government entity, the City could change the zoning, which would be different for an individual property owner.

E. Main Street Hydrology Study

Public Works Director **Whittaker** presented pictures of the state of the road, showing the alligatoring and potholing. When digging out the washed out area, he and City Engineer **Hoovestol** found almost a foot of asphalt layers, which presumably was causing the road failures. The layers were all damaged from top to bottom, which was one of the main reasons a hydrology study was being considered and for the support for the study by nearby residents.

City Engineer **Hoovestol** responded to Council questions as follows:

- How long a fix would last depended on what the City did. If the City put a Band-aid on the problem by doing no improvements and only the resurfacing, new culvert, and shoulder work, all of which FEMA would pay for, it was difficult to estimate how long the repairs would last because it would depend on the number of flood events. He has talked with engineers dealing with other flood-prone areas about other possible measures the City could take to extend the life of the repairs.
- The intent behind a hydrology study and the resulting engineering study was to find a way to eliminate the flooding problem. The study would determine how to get rid of the water and solve the deterioration problem, such as directing the water to go under the road via box culverts and piping it across the ball field.
- There had already been two flood events across the road this year, so it seemed to be happening more often. He did not know what was going on with the river to increase the number of flood events.

Mayor **Hall** noted that according to the meeting minutes, longtime residents in the area claimed the area flooded more often now because the buildup along the river's edge had deteriorated and washed out.

Councilor **Richter** suggested bringing in the Army Corps of Engineers and dredging the river because it was silting up.

City Engineer **Hoovestol** recalled the residents talking about putting in a levee, which was easier said than done because a levee would have to be built on both sides of the river. Firwood Design Group (FDG) intended to address the feasibility of a levee.

Mayor **Hall** stated Council had already approved the funding and would vote on the contractor selection for the hydrology study in the regular session.

Sidewalk Proposal

Public Works Director **Whittaker** referenced the two proposals from FDG for sidewalk improvements on Park Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets and for 80 to 100 feet on Park Street west of 3rd Street. He reviewed the existing conditions, which were unsafe, noting the question was how to utilize the \$20,000 in the Street Fund allocated for sidewalks. His presentation continued as follows:

- He noted Mayor Hall had already talked to the homeowner at the corner of 3rd and Park and they agreed to share the project costs of landscaping and a retaining wall.
- Another sidewalk project involved five trees along 1st Street that had significantly buckled the sidewalk, causing a serious safety and liability issue. Some spots had five to six inches of exposed edge. The City's ordinance said anything from the curbside over was the homeowner's responsibility.
- The cost estimates from FDG for the two Park Street projects were \$11,000 and \$13,000. One project would have to include an extension clear to Cottonwood because the sidewalk

dead-ended into a grassy bank for half the block. The 1st Street project would need some street repairs because the asphalt currently just dropped off and there was an 8-foot strip of mud where people parked.

- Council needed to decide which of the three projects had priority.

Mayor **Hall** said the 1st Street project had priority from a safety perspective. Gaston had lots of sidewalks in bad condition but the trees were rotten and could come down hitting parked vehicles. While there was not much foot traffic along 1st Street, but it was a safety issue because of the potential property damage. He recommended choosing one Park Street project and using the balance of the money to take out some of the 1st Street trees to alleviate the immediate safety problem.

- He agreed Council could use all the funds to clean up 1st Street and put in new sidewalks, but a safety issue also existed on Park Street because kids walked in the street after the sidewalk ran out.
- He stated Council would decide in regular session how to utilize the funds.

Wage Committee Update


Mayor **Hall** said staff was updating job descriptions for the March wage increases. The original report contained two errors that were corrected as follows in the new report distributed to Council:

- The pay rate for temporary help was changed to state, "\$10.25 per hour" to reflect the recent Oregon law, which also changed the annual increase in the minimum wage from 50 cents to 75 cents for the next three to four years.
- The second error regarded the Public Works Director's pay scale, which originally started at \$22 per hour with a \$1 per hour raise every year thereafter. However, Council voted to give a \$2 an hour pay raise at the end of the Public Works Director's probation, raising it to \$24 per hour.

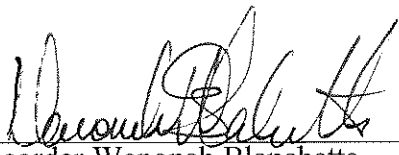
Councilors **Richter** and **Hale** believed Council had agreed on the raise being added after the Public Works Director obtained his water certificate. Public Works Director **Whittaker** noted he has already received the raise. Mayor **Hall** said staff would provide the audio and transcript for Council to review, but he believed Council had voted on the raise.

Councilor **Hale** did not recall Council agreeing on a \$1 a year cost of living increase from now to 2022. Councilor **Richter** recalled the Council agreeing on the increase for Wenonah and the part-time help, but he did not remember doing that for the Public Works Director. Mayor **Hall** said the Committee submitted the 2016 agreement to Council, which approved it. Councilor **Meeker** did not remember the agreement as written, but he did recall discussing increases over time. Mayor **Hall** said they would check the minutes and resubmit the report at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor **Hall** asked for any further discussion, none heard. Meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.



Mayor Tony Hall

Attest: 

City Recorder Wenonah Blanchette