

City of Bishop

WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION AGENDA

Date: September 12, 2006
7:00 P.M.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need Special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk (760) 873-5863. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title II).

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT: NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC: This time is set aside to receive public comment on matters not calendared on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- (1) Minutes of the Water and Sewer Commission meeting held on July 11, 2006 subject for approval.

NEW BUSINESS

- (2) Water and Sewer Charges for Vacant Properties

OLD BUSINESS

- (3) Well 1 Update
- (4) SCE Accounting Update
- (5) Master Plan Update
- (6) Public Works Report – July and August

STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

ADJOURNMENT: The next regularly scheduled meeting will be November 14, 2006 at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, 301 West Line Street, Bishop.

MINUTES
Water and Sewer Commission
July 11, 2006

Due to the resignation of Vice Chairman Tuula Kennedy, the Commission voted Forrest Cross as the new Vice Chairman for the Water and Sewer Commission.

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairman Cross called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chairman Cross

COMMISSISONERS PRESENT:

Cross, P. Mathieu, F. Mathieu, and Bhakta

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Martin and Underhill

OTHERS PRESENT:

Dave Grah, Public Works Director
Deston Dishion, Public Works Superintendent
Kathy Lehr, Secretary

PUBLIC COMMENT: NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC: This time is set aside to receive public comment on matters not calendared on the agenda.

No comments received.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

- (1) Vice Chairman Cross asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the May 9, 2006 meeting.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Cross moved to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2006 meeting as written.

MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS:

(2) Water and Sewer Master Plan Update

Mr. Grah stated that Nolte has started significant work this week. The budget for the master plan is about \$57,000 in water funds and \$126,000 sewer funds. Nolte's project manager is here and a member of Nolte staff has started the manhole investigation process. Nolte's subcontractor has started cleaning and videoing the sewers. They have a vactor truck which sprays out the pipes before they use the camera. Mr. Grah said that you can definitely see the roots in the sewers. This process is beneficial to us as we can use this to identify where the problems are starting and clean the line before a major plug up. They are evaluating our records on our wells, wastewater treatment plant, etc. They are also ready to begin work on the computer models of the water system. It will be a few months before they significant products covered by the contract.

Vice Chairman Cross asked if the areas being cleaned are problem areas and Mr. Dishion said that they will be cleaning 20,000 feet and they are generally the areas that the City has had problems with in the past. Mr. Dishion said that they are also going to video all of Main Street in anticipation of the Caltrans re-hab project on Main Street. Commissioner F. Mathieu asked if they are going to video all of the City sewer lines and Mr. Grah said that we can't afford to and arguably don't really need to. In addition, when we get our vactor truck, we will be better able to keep the lines clean. A lot of the City's sewer is clay pipe in 3 foot lengths. Commissioner F. Mathieu asked if the City would be replacing with plastic pipe and Mr. Dishion said eventually. Commissioner F. Mathieu asked if the City will keep Nolte's logs and tapes and Mr. Grah stated that they will become property of the City.

(3) Well 2 Main Loop Project

Mr. Dishion stated that we went out to bid and had one responsive bidder – Kendall Engineering for \$27,247.38, which was within budget. The project consists of constructing a new 8" diameter water main loop between Well 2 and the El Sereno Arms project. One end will connect to a new water line constructed by the condominium project and the other will connect to Well 2.

OLD BUSINESS:

(4) Update on Well 1

Mr. Grah stated that Well 1 is an inactive well behind the Police Department. We are getting information as to the cost of bringing this well on line verses the cost of a new well. So far about \$70,000 work is complete including the initial inspection and about \$40,000 rehabilitation (essentially a very thorough cleaning). Testing work is underway. At the completion of the testing, about \$95,000 will have been spent on the well. It appears the majority of water produced by the well is coming from the top 340 feet. The fluoride probably comes from below 340 feet. We are waiting for the test results of the water samples taken during the testing work and waiting for the report that will interpret those test results. The results and report should be here by the end of the week and then we will have a better idea. We are optimistic we can plug the bottom with concrete and have a good producing well. The video suggested the well casing is in good shape and he estimates we have another 5 or 6 decades of life left in the well.

Mr. Grah also stated that he would like to see the controls on Well 1 be flexible so that this well can fill in for Well 2 and Well 4.

Vice Chairman Cross said it was good news that it looks like the well can be rehabilitated rather than have to replace it. Cost estimates to seal off the fluoride, inspection of the pump, replacing parts, etc. will likely be handled as amendments to the contract.

(5) Update on SCE Accounting

Mr. Dishion stated that Southern California Edison is just now putting out their new rate structures. He will have more to report at the next meeting.

(6) Grease Reduction Program

Mr. Grah stated that Alex Printing is in the process of printing the “Fat-Free Sewers” pamphlets to be distributed to customers and restaurant owners. We still plan to get together with the restaurant owners. Mr. Dishion said that the commercial businesses are doing a better job with their interceptors maybe in response to the large number of problems that had been occurring with the grease interceptors. Vice Chairman Cross said that he hopes the restaurants will be receptive to the program and suggested the brochures also be distributed to residents in areas where there have been significant problems in the past.

(7) Public Works Reports – May and June

Mr. Dishion highlighted the reports for May and June. He stated that each unit in the El Sereno Arms condominium complex will have their own water service with meter, in addition the laundry and each irrigation system will have its own service and meter. A total of 20 meters will be installed. Commissioner P. Mathieu asked if Bishop would eventually be metered and Mr. Dishion said that the State requires that all new

construction install water meters and that is the reason we install them but do not read it. He also noted that the City crew is working on the Grove Street water line project.

STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS:

Mr. Grah stated that Commissioners are required to attend Ethics Training before January 1, 2007. Two sessions have been given; one in Mammoth and one in Bishop. Commissioner P. Mathieu suggested that possibly getting an evening class scheduled for those commissioners that work during the day.

Items to be discussed at our next meeting:

- a. Grease Reduction Program
- b. Well 1 Update
- c. SCE Accounting Update
- d. Well 2 Loop Update
- e. Master Plan Update
- f. Public Works Reports for July and August

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Martin adjourned the meeting at 8:12 P.M. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, September 12, 2006 at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers.

Forrest Cross, Vice Chairman

Kathy Lehr, Secretary



To: Bishop Water and Sewer Commissioners
From: David Grah, Director of Public Works
Subject: Water and Sewer Charges for Vacant Properties
Date: 8 September 2006

General:

The City of Bishop Department of Public Works receives requests from owners of vacant properties to not charge those properties for water and sewer. How the City responds to these requests should be reviewed, and the Water and Sewer Commission plays an important role in this review.

Background:

In general, the City of Bishop charges properties for City water and sewer based on whether a usable connection to those systems exists. For water, a usable connection usually means a water service line extending from the water main to a water shutoff valve at the property. For sewer, a usable connection usually means a sewer lateral available at a sewer main for the property. The City applies charges whether or not those connections are used, regardless whether the property is developed, and regardless whether the property is occupied.

Some owners of vacant properties and some owners of undeveloped properties argue their properties do not use City of Bishop water nor do they use City of Bishop sewer so they should not have to pay water or sewer fees. In most cases where these properties are granted relief from fees it is first determined that there are no water or sewer services available to those properties or, if those services are available, those services are severed or destroyed. If and when those properties connect to the City's water and sewer system, they would need to pay a one-time connection fee in addition to regular periodic water and sewer fees.

The requests for relief from fees comes from both owners of completely undeveloped properties as well as from properties that are developed and currently vacant. The requests for relief from fees for vacant properties include requests from owners of properties with more than one unit, such as a single family residence with an apartment over the garage, that they not be charge for the vacant unit.

There seems to be two sides to the argument over fees for undeveloped and vacant properties. One side, the side voiced in most of the requests, is that these properties don't

use water and sewer and shouldn't pay for something they don't use. The other side of the argument is that the flat rate fees charged are not based on use but are based on the opportunity to use and are related to the value of that opportunity.

No Use Argument:

The argument that properties that can't or don't use a service shouldn't pay for that service is straightforward, especially in the case of most undeveloped properties. The argument goes that undeveloped properties should not be charged until they develop. The City would receive clear notice through construction permit applications when the properties develop and so would know when to charge connection fees, if appropriate, and when water and sewer fees should commence. Connection fees would be appropriate when new connections are required for water or for sewer

While handling undeveloped properties this way would be straightforward, it would be more difficult for the City to know when to start or stop fees for developed properties as they changed from vacant to occupied. Either the City would need to depend on the property owner to provide notice of a change, or the City would need to undertake a periodic occupancy verification program.

Opportunity Argument:

The argument that properties that don't use water and sewer should pay fees stems from the idea that the opportunity to use those systems brings value to the properties whether they are used or not. Development of a property is normally extremely restricted without access to public water and sewer systems. Access to the City of Bishop's water and sewer systems has a large positive impact on the value of properties, and that impact exists whether the systems are used or not. With this argument, because properties benefit from the water and sewer systems whether they use them or not, they should help pay the costs of those systems, whether they use them or not.

Also, the argument that a property should pay water and sewer fees whether or not they use those services is consistent with the City's water legacy as captured in the city's Municipal Code. Traditionally, the idea that the City does not charge for water use, it only charges for its water system costs, has been important to the Bishop community. In fact, what could be described as civil revolts erupted in the community during the 1920's over this topic. Because of the close relationship between the water and sewer systems – virtually all flow in the sewer system comes either directly or indirectly from the water system – sewer charges take a parallel course. The City does not as much charge for water and sewer use as it charges for the costs of providing the systems. This supports the idea that payment of fees should be independent of receipt of service.

Discussion Topics:

1. Should properties only be charged for water and sewer when they use water and sewer?

2. If properties should only be charged for water and sewer when they use water and sewer, would it be consistent to move toward metered water so that charges are more closely tied to water use?
3. If properties such as second units, should only be charged for water and sewer when they use water and sewer, what, if anything, should the City do to verify if a second unit is vacant or not?
4. If the City should charge all properties for water and sewer service, regardless whether those properties use water and sewer, should the City continue to charge based on available service connections or should it charge based on availability of water and sewer to the property?
5. If the City should charge based on available service connections what level of effort should the City make to verify the presence of those connections?
6. If the City were to charge all properties based on availability of water and sewer not based on service connections should large undeveloped parcels in the City limits, primarily City of Los Angeles parcels, be charged for water and sewer?

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

July 2006

WATER

1. Removed 4 older model main line valves on Home Street and replaced them with lower profile modern valves. This work was done to accommodate the Home Street Improvement Project.
2. Raised 3 hydrants on Home Street to assure they were above finish grade of new sidewalks.
3. Tested backflow valves within the City.
4. Took routine readings of water meters.
5. Continued working with Layne Christensen on the Well 1 rehabilitation project.

SEWER

1. Cleaned and videoed nearly 20,000 feet of sewer main line. This is done as part of Water and Sewer Master Plan.
2. Performed annual service of aerators on the sewer ponds.
3. Repaired broken sewer main in the intersection of West Pine and Fowler Streets.
4. Removed south sludge pump and sent it off for repairs.
5. Cleaned plugged sewer at the 600 block of West Elm Street.
6. Removed and cleaned grit pump.
7. Cleaned sludge and grit drying beds.
8. Made routine inspection of grease interceptors.

STREETS

1. Began the Home Street Improvement Project on July 18, 2006.
2. Performed inspections for the Home Street Project.
3. Ground and patched sidewalk deviations at the northeast corner of West Pine and Fowler Streets.
4. Made minor changes to alley off of Willow Street directly across from Moffett Street. This work was done to enhance drainage in the alley.
5. Continued with annual traffic painting.
6. Swept all City streets and alleys.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Performed application screening, interview process and hired a new Maintenance Worker 2.
2. Hauled trash and debris from the Fowler Street Pit to the Sunland Landfill.
3. Performed routine maintenance and made minor repairs to light trucks and heavy equipment.
4. Cleaned weeds and debris from shop planters.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

August 2006

WATER

1. Kendall Engineering started and completed the Well 2 Main Line Loop project.
2. City of Bishop crew installed a 14" tee and valve cluster at Well 2.
3. Replaced various main line valves on Home Street.
4. Raised three fire hydrants on Home Street to meet new sidewalk grades.
5. Continued with water main line map for the GIS project.
6. Installed a new Mueller fire hydrant at the intersection of North Warren and Grove Streets.
7. Made minor repairs and serviced the sodium hypochlorite generator at Well 4.
8. Began annual main line valve exercising.
9. Took routine water samples.
10. Took monthly readings of water meters.

SEWER

1. Removed failing manhole at Home and Grove Streets and replaced it with a modern manhole.
2. Repaired a sewer lateral at 336 South Second Street.
3. Made routine inspections of grease interceptors.
4. Performed routine maintenance on the grit pump.
5. Cleaned plugged sewer at the 200 block of May Street.
6. Cleaned grit and sludge drying beds.

STREETS

1. Continued with the construction of the Home Street Improvements.
2. Assisted home owner at 212 May Street with removal and placement of new sidewalk as part of the Sidewalk Safety Program.
3. Provided weed control on City streets and alleys; paying close attention to puncture vine.
4. Swept all City streets and alleys.
5. Repaired and replaced various street signs.
6. Patched potholes and gutters on City streets.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Swept Fairgrounds prior to opening of Tri-County Fair.
2. Performed routine maintenance and made minor repairs to light trucks and heavy equipment.