

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Committee Members Present:

Peter Lindstrom, Chair; Wendy Wulff, Vice Chair; Kris Fredson; Phillip Sterner; Susan Vento; Raymond Zeran

Committee Members Absent:

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Lindstrom called the regular meeting of the Council's Environment Committee to order at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 27, 2020 with the following roll call:

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Without objection agenda was approved.

It was moved by Sterner seconded by Vento to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2020, regular meeting of the Environment Committee.

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Motion carried.

CONSENT BUSINESS

Approval of the Consent Agenda (Items 2020-263 JT and 2020-264 JT)

It was moved by Fredson, seconded by Wulff to approve the consent agenda business items.

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Motion carried.

1. 2020-263 JT: City of Loretto 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Sewer Plan, Review File 21804-1
Requests that the Metropolitan Council adopt the Advisory Comments and Review Record attached to the business item and take the following actions:

Recommendations of the Environment Committee:

1. Approve the City of Loretto's Comprehensive Sewer Plan.

2. Strongly encourage the City to develop and implement an I/I mitigation plan to reduce the future risk of work plan assignments by the Council when the use of the storage ponds is no longer available for peak flow attenuation.
 3. Advise the City to revise its City Code Section 412.35 to require the disconnection of existing, non-compliant clearwater connection sources once they are identified.
2. 2020-264 JT: City of Saint Paul 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Sewer Plan, Review File 21918-1
Requests that the Metropolitan Council adopt the Advisory Comments and Review Record attached to the business item and take the following action:

Recommendations of the Environment Committee:

1. Approve the City of Saint Paul’s Comprehensive Sewer Plan.
2. Prior to final plan adoption, advise the City to:
 - a. Implement the advisory comments in the Review Record to correct the summary of Chapter 41 of the City’s Legislative Code that pertains to the separation of stormwater and sanitary sewer systems.
 - b. Include a copy of Chapter 41 in its final submitted version to the Council.
3. Require the City to submit GIS datasets related to the local wastewater system when it becomes available.

NON-CONSENT BUSINESS

3. 2020-289: Metro Plant Polymer Contract

It was moved by Wulff, seconded by Fredson that the Metropolitan Council authorize its Regional Administrator to award and execute a contract to Polydyne, Inc. of Riceboro, GA to provide Clarifloc polymers CE-817 and CE-2179 at unit prices of \$0.12 per pound and \$1.00 per pound respectively delivered to the Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant. This contract will be for a period of five years with the total procurement not to exceed \$15,100,000.

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran
 Nay: 0
 Absent: 0

Motion carried.

INFORMATION

1. General Manager Report
General Manager Thompson called on Ned Smith, Director, ES Finance and ES Pandemic Incident Commander to provide an update on our pandemic response as well as bond refinancing.

Pandemic Response:

We are now in week 33 of our Pandemic Response. Due to the tireless work of our staff, we have maintained 100% regulatory compliance and continue the rehabilitation and improvement of our system, all while protecting our environment and the health of our employees and the region. We have had 7 employees test positive for COVID-19 since March and are currently seeing a slight uptick in people reporting symptoms and close contacts. We have weekly ESET and operations meetings to talk through issues and opportunities and have built a strong process for communicating information and updates to our employees. All our facilities have health screening stations and procedures to make sure our employees are well and keeping each other safe. We have modified many of our workstations to increase physical distancing as well as implemented

changes to lunchrooms, break schedules, shift schedules and mask protocols. We have shifted our Incident Command update meetings to bi-weekly, and given the steady operations, focus the meetings on situational updates and leveraging Neuro Leadership Institute materials for managing and increasing connections through the pandemic. Staff working from home continue to effectively support our onsite workers and to meet our planning responsibilities to the region. Staff have shown amazing dedication and adaptability as we continue to adapt to “business as unusual.”

Comments/Questions:

Committee Member Vento asked if there is any other additional reporting in the Metro area regarding wastewater assessments and COVID. Staff stated we have been working with the U of M Medical School and the ES GIS team identifying locations in the regional collection system in close proximity to university housing, nursing homes, etc. to identify and trace the COVID virus. We have not been privy to the information at this time but are involved in helping identify locations.

Committee Member Vento inquired if testing would continue in the next few years. Will it be short term or long term? Staff stated the long-term outlook is not known at this time for this effort.

Bond Refinancing:

Every year, our bond consultants, Baker-Tilley (formerly Springsted) look at our outstanding debt and compare against the current market to see if we have opportunities for refinancing by considering terms, interest rates, and refinancing costs. This year, rates have finally hit a low enough point where refinancing approximately \$35M in Build America Bonds from 2010 will yield approximately \$500K interest expense savings per year. The average interest rate on the outstanding bond was 5.1%, and we are anticipating a 2.7% refinance rate. We hope to complete the transaction before year end. Baker Tilley also identified other opportunities from our 2012 offering that we will be pursuing in the Spring – so as not to flood the market with all of our offerings at once.

Comments/Questions:

Chair Lindstrom asked about the bonding bill. How does it affect us? Staff stated the bill included a \$5 million inflow and infiltration repair segment for community partners. It is typically a 50/50 responsibility (50% for the community, 50% for the Council). Great news! A fixed amount will be allocated to each community. Outreach will be done with community partners

Bonding bill also provides PFA funding sources which the Council (ES) has historically provided \$45-50M per year in low interest fixed 20-year loans.

Committee Member Fredson asked what percentage of the PFA goes to the metro area vs. outstate. Staff stated the metro area comprises approximately 50% of the state’s population. The exact percentage is not known at this time.

If Committee members have items they would like brought before this committee, please let leisa.thompson@metc.state.mn.us know.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Environment Committee Meeting of October 27, 2020.

Susan Taylor
Recording Secretary