



# CITY OF WABASH

## Department of Stormwater

CITY HALL  
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### BOARD MEMBERS

Scott Long  
Nick Ferry  
Brandon France  
Douglas Lehman, Esq.

### STORMWATER BOARD, TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2013-5:00 P.M.

Members present were Scott Long, Brandon France, Nick Ferry and City Attorney Douglas Lehman.

Department heads present: John Wonderly, Scott Richardson, Regina Sundheimer and Assistant Angie Schlemmer.

Board President Scott Long called the Stormwater Board meeting to order.

### MINUTES

Nick Ferry made a motion to accept the February 19, 2013 Minutes as presented. Brandon France seconded the motion, motion carried.

### FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial Report balance is \$1,842,337.44 for the period ending April, 2013.

Nick Ferry inquired whose budget is paying for the billing department. The billing Department comes out of the waste water budget.

Is it costing us more? Doug Lehman gave an overview. We are not in a position to say if the City is getting by the same, more or less expensively. In the past, the City did not utilize the entire budget. We currently do not know what will be used; we had start-up costs, etc. Until the billing department gets into a routine and have billed for quite a while, we won't know exactly how it compares to the past costs. My guess is when it's all said and done; it will be between what we were paying and what we were budgeting in the past. The bottom line, I don't think the billing will be cheaper than what it was before. We are hoping it won't be more than what was previously budgeted.

President Long asked how long the City will be paying GAI. Attorney Lehman indicated another contract was just signed for the expense of the land acquisition, in the amount of \$151,000.

Scott Long made a motion to accept the financial reports. Brandon France seconded the motion, motion carried.

### OLD BUSINESS

None

## NEW BUSINESS

1. Updates from Brandon France (IAWC Operations Superintendent)-Brandon asked Regina to provide an update that effective June 18<sup>th</sup>, the wastewater billing office will begin to shut off water due to lack of sewage payment.
  - Brandon also gave an overview of the new system implemented by IAW called SAP. The new system will track social security numbers, information based on their past, their family's past, monitoring turn-on and turn-offs. The system-tracking will help avoid service being placed in the names of the spouse, a child or even a pet. We are trying to prevent folks making up scenarios. The "bad" customer has been rewarded in the past and the "good" customer punished. Hopefully, the new system will control these types of things. We will provide different incentives, sooner collections, and more automatic processes.
  - We plan to have the new water tower up and going by the end of June. Our intent is to paint the other tower when the new tower is up and running.
  - Main replacements will be on Mill St., Eldorado, Elmwood
  - In talking w/Ryan Smith, primarily replacements will be on the south side.
  - Main extensions going on w/Living Essentials are completed, but are not in service yet.
2. Updates from John Wonderly (Wastewater Department) –
  - After discussion with w/Tom Richeson from United, we will have another walk thru. A couple of catch basins did not get brought up to the proper level on the punch list.
  - We still have an issue of the basins on Main St. The issue does not involve Keith Sullivan. The issue is between the City and United. We need to figure out what needs to be done there.
  - A catch basin was installed on Inez St. We had some complaints and thought some residents might attend the meeting tonight. The Street Department is trying to help out w/catch basins on Michigan that were originally set off the curb. The curbs directed the flow down Broadmoor.
  - I had a meeting w/John Julien (Umbaugh) to decide where the long-term control plan and rates go. The Mayor has requested that John come and speak at a City council meeting. Things look really good at doing the entire Phase 2 in a timely fashion. We will meet our IDEM phase 2 deadline of 2016. That includes the Southside separation, essentially separation from the Hannah Park lift station area and screening at the wastewater plant. The cost will be around 6 million dollars. It appears if nothing changes, we can do that based on current rates. This is also based on the timing when the current bond issue is up and when we have to start paying on a new one.

3. Updates from Regina Sundheimer (Wastewater Billing).

- The City does not currently charge stormwater fees on empty houses, unless there is a water service that is active. I feel the City should be charging. Customers have asked why with all the vacant properties around town, why no one is required to pay storm fees. John stated that in the past a bill was sent only if the water was on. Brandon indicated if it's an inactive premise and doesn't have water (unless there's a meter) IAW would not be contacted, so the account would not be active. However, with the City now in control, he suggested charging a "storm sewer only" charge. It would have to be tracked. Scott asked if the department receives a list of inactive accounts. Regina commented not unless there's a "final" bill issued. How would we know who to charge if they do not have water service? If that info does not come on a report, how do you know who to charge? An example would be a seasonal person. If their water stays on, they are charged the flat fee. If the water is turned off, they do not receive a water bill or a sewage bill; they get a bill when the water is turned back on.

Doug says the short answer is; we would be billing them and the only reason we would stop billing would be if they left and have been shut off. However, we would still have them in the system and then be able to send a bill for stormwater. If the account is inactive when turned over to us or an empty lot, the only way we would know that we need to bill for stormwater would be to search the property records for the owner. The issue is time versus revenue and a cost analysis was suggested by Brandon.

Doug indicated it's hard to track, because we'll file a bunch of liens and it may be a year or two before it goes to a tax sale and we receive the money from the Treasurer. Is it worth it?

The reply to the question about empty properties not getting billed; you tell them we are starting to charge stormwater fees on abandoned properties. It's not worth it to go back in the past, but from now on, when they are in the system, they stay in the system. Explain that until the billing was turned over to the City, we had no way of charging them. Our billing was handled thru the water company and without a water bill; we had no way to charge them. Now that we are doing our own billing, we will begin to charge a stormwater fee on abandoned properties. If we find out that the water has been shut off, we can continue to bill for the stormwater. Eventually, we will find them when they go back into service. The expense would be trying to pursue the ones in the past, but less expensive with the ones moving forward.

Regina indicated that the department sent out 276 pre-lien letters at 90 days past due and over 180 landlord letters prior to that. Out of the 276 pre-lien letters sent out, the fees were approximately \$35,000.

Regina is going to add language to the bottom of the next bill explaining the options available to pay their bill.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

None

**ADJOURN**

Scott Long made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brandon France seconded, motion carried.

**NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, September 17, 2013 @ 5 pm

The City of Wabash desires to make reasonable accommodations to persons with handicaps or disabilities in order that all persons may fully participate in Public Meetings. In that regard, if you need reasonable accommodations to attend and participate in a public meeting, you are requested to contact Human Resources, ADA Coordinator, Wabash City Hall, 202 South Wabash Street, Wabash, Indiana 46992, (260) 563-4171, between 8 AM and 4 PM at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Please indicate the accommodation requested and every reasonable effort will be made to comply with your request.