

Public Hearing Minutes
June 18, 2024
City Hall, Council Chambers

Call To Order:

Mayor Omerza called the public hearing to order at 5:00pm at Ely City Hall in the Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Council members A.Forsman, Debeltz, Callen, Campbell, Bisbee and Mayor Omerza

ABSENT: Council Member Kess

Also Present: Ely Utilities Commission Members Warren Nikkola, Larry Polyner, Tony Colarich, Clerk/Treasurer Harold Langowski, and John Jamnick JPJ Engineering

Purpose:

The Public Hearing was held to hear public comment regarding the Water Intake and Burntside Lake Water Main Replacement project.

The current water supply main was originally constructed in the 1930s and rehabilitated in the 1970s. It extends from the pumphouse on Burntside Lake to the water plant on North Shagawa Road. In some areas, the water main is supported by wooden bridges that need to be abandoned.

John Jamnick from JPJ Engineering gave a presentation and indicated that the purpose of the Public Hearing is to replace 25,000 feet of water main that connects the Burntside Lake Water Intake Structure with the Ely Water Treatment Plant. This water main is the sole source of drinking water for the city. The current water main was constructed in the early 1930s and rehabilitated in the 1970s. The water main goes through cross country and over wetlands. The best time to make repairs is in the winter when the ground and lakes and rivers are frozen. The City of Ely has had multiple leaks which have required emergency repairs. Many of the wooden cross beams and bridge pilings have severely deteriorated and the connecting hardware and pipe flanges have corroded. The project plan is to directional bore under these wetland and river beds 6-8 feet deep.

The estimated cost of the project would be a total of \$4,513,000. The project is broken into 3 parts the primary scope of the project is \$908,000 to replace the watermain at the river and wetland crossings. The water intake structure is where there is a pipe in Burntside Lake that goes into the lake about 40 feet down which draws the water out of Burntside Lake, that part of the lake is about 80 feet deep, this portion of the project will be around \$435,000 to replace the Burntside Lake water intake structure, and \$3,170,000 to replace the water main to the Ely Water Treatment Plant. If we need to phase the project the replacement of the watermain at the river and wetland crossings and the water intake structure would be the top two priorities, phasing the project would be warranted by the availability of funding.

Jamnick stated that so far, the City has received \$200,000 in a Federal Community Development Block Grant, \$350,000 from the Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Community Infrastructure Grant is pending, the city is in the process of completing all the documentation for funding from the MN Public Facilities Authority Water Infrastructure Fund Grant and the MN Public Facilities Authority Drinking Water Revolving Fund Loan amounts to be determined.

The schedule to complete the project would be as follows, Minnesota Department of Health reviews the plans and specifications by November 2024, Advertise for Bids by December 2024 (contingent on final financing), Bid Opening in December 2024, Construction would start on the project in January 2025 and the project would be completed by October 2026. Jamnick indicated that the majority of the work would need to be completed in the winter months when the ground is frozen.

Jamnick showed a map of the project and indicated where the intake structure is located on Burntside Lake, where the wetlands are and the three bridges are located for the river crossings.

The project has been reviewed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. The project is still under review by the State Historic Preservation (SHPO) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). As part of their review the MDH is seeking public comment for this project. The project review by SHPO and MDH should be completed in September.

Jamnick stated that public comments are open until June 24th, which can be submitted to the City Clerk's Office at 209 E Chapman St, Ely, Minnesota, or by email at elyod@ely.mn.us.

Council Member Bisbee asked why Burntside Lake was chosen for the water source and what the quality of the water is in Shagawa Lake and why the city doesn't use Shagawa Lake for water over Burntside Lake.

Jamnick indicated that a lot more water quality testing would need to be done, the old sewer plant used to be close to the water intake area on Shagawa. In 1930 they moved the intake structure out to Burntside Lake so that's why it has been there for the last 100 years.

Council Member A.Forsman asked what type of material would be used for the water line and what the lifespan is.

Jamnick indicated that it is high density polyethylene water main pipe that is a 16-inch diameter pipe that is flexible and is easy to directional bore.

Mayor Omerza asked for any public comments. No Public Comments were received.

Adjourn

Mayor Omerza closed the public hearing at 5:24pm.

Casey Velcheff
Deputy Clerk