

**MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES**  
**Portsmouth City Council Meeting on**  
**March 11, 2019 – 7:18 p.m.**

Members present:

Sean Dunne	1 <sup>st</sup> Ward
Jo Ann Aeh	2 <sup>nd</sup> Ward
Kevin E. Johnson	3 <sup>rd</sup> Ward
Jerrold Albrecht	4 <sup>th</sup> Ward
Gene Meadows	5 <sup>th</sup> Ward
Thomas K. Lowe	6 <sup>th</sup> Ward

Also present was City Manager Sam Sutherland, Solicitor John Haas, Auditor M. Trent Williams and City Clerk Diana Ratliff.

Manager Sutherland asked that Wastewater Director Rick Duncan speak with regard to a sinkhole by the 12<sup>th</sup> Street pump station. Mr. Duncan stated that the situation was by Bob & Floyds Tire Shop and traffic was limited to one lane because of the issue with the pump station. He introduced Kevin Butler and Andy Cremeans from the Corp of Engineers, and stated that he had been spending a lot of time with them and had inspected the problem and they were trying to figure out the best way to fix it. He advised that there was a 54 inch metal pipe that ran under the levee and the pump station behind Bob & Floyds that goes out to the river that had been installed back in the 1960’s. The pipe had been inspected and they knew that there were some issues surrounding it, the repair was included in the budget for 2019. However about a month ago when the river was up, they had a problem with the station where they had lost some of the ground through the pipe and now there’s a large sunken area right outside the pump station. He had ODOT look at the highway and the Corp of Engineers look at the pump station; the current plan was to wait until May to make any major repairs because that was the period the river was more likely to be low and that would be the best time to make the repairs. He said that they were looking at both a total excavation of the pipe or repair it with a liner and had spoken with Mr. Sutherland about possible funding. He advised that there were four (4) similar pipes in that area (17<sup>th</sup> Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street) and for the past 3 years they’ve fixed one pipe a year because the other 3 pipes were thought to be the worst, but he did have the 12<sup>th</sup> Street pipe in the budget to be fixed. He commented that this year and last year had been unusually wet years and that was a big part of the problem. He added that the goal was to come up with a plan to repair between now and the end of April or first part of May; prior to those dates it would then be put out to bid.

Councilman Dunne asked for a ballpark estimate of price. Mr. Duncan stated that they had an estimate of \$900,000 if it had to be completely excavated. He advised that the pipe was 35ft in the ground, right beside the highway along with a gas line. He said excavation would consist of: Driving the piling into a large area, digging all the way down to remove the old pipe and replacing it with a reinforced concrete pipe, then backfilled and properly vetted. They were looking at possibly some cheaper ways to make the repair and should know within the next few weeks if that’s possible. Mr. Dunne asked if the State would provide any funding for smaller cities with infrastructural issues, Mr. Duncan replied that he had spoken with every different funding agency and FEMA will be onsite tomorrow to inspect the site and determine if their funds could help. He said that FEMA was looking at other projects in the county because there have been some major highway/road slips in the area. Mr. Duncan stated that it was his understanding that there had been an emergency declaration and this event happened during that time frame and it was possible that the city may get some FEMA funding.

Councilman Meadows asked how big the pipe was and Mr. Duncan replied that it was 54 inches in diameter and was approximately 270 feet long, he had drawings and photographs if Council would like to see them.

Acting Mayor Johnson asked Mr. Duncan what the purpose of the pipe was and what area the pipe served. Mr. Duncan stated that it was East and West from Gay Street to Offnere Street on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets underneath the Railroad tracks and Waller Street. He said when ODOT put the road in underneath the railroad tracks back in the 1960’s the 12<sup>th</sup> Street pump station was installed to help pump the water out when it rained because that area

was the lowest spot in the city. There were a lot of storm sewers that drain into that system but it was installed because that low spot was lower than the rest of the city and if the river was up, the water had to be pumped out to the river, that was why the pipe had to be so deep because it had to be lower than the lowest spot. If the water wasn't up, then the water would drain by gravity, but if the river was up, a flood gate had to be shut and the rain water had to be pumped out to the river. Mr. Johnson asked if the pipe ran underneath the levee and the reply was "yes". Councilman Dunne asked if the other three (3) pipes needed annual repair, and if there was something that all four (4) could get done. Mr. Duncan stated that the other three (3) pipes had already been replaced and said that there were 16-18 pipes that ran under the levee that were similar to this pipe but only four (4) of them were corrugated metal and the others were concrete or another material. They don't believe they have any problems with the other pipes which were inspected every five (5) years. Mr. Johnson stated that the city went through a lot a few years ago to get the levee certified and asked if this would have any bearing on the re-certification. Mr. Duncan advised that after the repair was made it would be inspected and certified. He reminded Council that the certification done previously was for FEMA not for the Corp of Engineers and he believed that it was every five (5) years. The Corp of Engineers inspects the levee annually. Mr. Butler added that the recertification would be done when FEMA does the next map revision for this area, but he didn't know when that would be done.

Councilman Meadows asked about the liner that could possibly be put in the pipe, Mr. Duncan replied that the other pipes that he referenced were lined. The process is to fit a pipe into the old pipe and then grout would be injected around the gaps and a repair was done around the corroded part of the existing pipe. He said the price would be quite a bit less to do a repair but didn't have any numbers yet. Auditor Williams advised Council that the Flood Defense fund was the primary fund that would be used and the balance was currently approximately \$176,000 and reminded everyone that this was why passing a levy for flood defense was so important.

Kevin Butler – Levee Safety Program Manager for the Huntington District Army Corp of Engineers – He said that they reached into four states, thirty levee systems and as Mr. Duncan pointed out, each of those levees were inspected annually. He pointed out that the City of Portsmouth had seen quite a bit of progress from Mr. Duncan and his team in the past few years. In fact, Mark Puckett was present at the last sponsored engagement meeting in Huntington, WV and received an award on behalf of the City of Portsmouth for the most improved levee sponsor. They've seen the hard work that Mr. Duncan and his team have put into addressing the deficiencies that were outlined, because back in 2014, it was determined that the system was unacceptable. He added that through the city's efforts by installing relief wells, addressing seepage concerns and lining the pipes that were found to be deficient, they were able to reinstate the levee into the Levee Safety Program and as a result of that, they were eligible for federal funding to make repairs to systems that have been damaged by a flood event. They were currently initiating a project to install a cut-off wall near the waste water treatment plant to address some seepage concerns that they had and where they've seen problems over the past few years. He addressed the sinkhole issue and viewed it as an emergency type of situation and would urge the city to seek funding to make repairs as soon as possible. He doesn't believe that this project would be eligible for funding through the Army Corp of Engineers Levee Safety program because they were doing another project, but encouraged the city to seek funding anyway possible. He said that it wasn't an issue of just a defective pipe, but the pipe was moving a large amount of material through it and could progress to the point that perhaps during the next major flood event that foundation material next to the levee and under the levee would continue to move through that pipe and threaten the integrity of the levee. They've estimated that at least 100 cubic yards of materials had already been moved through that pipe possibly just in this year alone. There was a large sinkhole that had formed next to the pump station on the order of 60-80 feet in diameter and it will continue to progress with each flood event.

Councilman Dunne asked him to elaborate on other cities and the funding that they receive besides the city budget. Mr. Butler said that he had seen municipalities pursue funding through grant avenues but one thing to keep in mind when receiving grant money was the timeline involved. Some grants may not have a fast track for getting funding because of their application process. He said that the City of Ironton pursued funding through the HUD Community Block Development grant and they've seen communities receive funding through FEMA's hazardous mitigation program. Mr. Duncan stated that there were some grants that were reimbursable.

1. **Munn's Run 80ft wall repair**

**CM-19-19**

Manager Sutherland stated that there was another problem with the wall in the area north of Sterling Avenue. He said it was approximately an 80ft. section that had washed out and the proposed repair was to tie a new wall into good concrete on each end, plus installing a new footer for approximately \$39,000.

Councilwoman Aeh motioned to accept Alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 Ayes – 0 Nays**

2. **Disbursement of Hotel Motel Tax Credit**

**CM-19-20**

Manager Sutherland stated that this is the annual disbursement and this year it was \$25,468.00. Councilwoman Aeh asked if there was a list of applicants and amounts they received. Clerk Ratliff stated that it would be in Council's next packet. Mrs. Aeh stated that it wasn't an emergency but it was one that needed to be passed right away so that these organizations can get their money to operate on.

Councilwoman Aeh motioned to accept Alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 Ayes – 0 Nays**

3. **2% increase for wage reopener for 1039 & 1039C**

**CM-19-21**

Manager Sutherland said that this was in regard to the wage reopener for 1039 and 1039C for a 2% increase.

Councilwoman Aeh motioned to accept Alternative #1.

Acting Mayor Johnson asked the media if they knew what was being discuss, they did not and Mr. Johnson asked Mrs. Aeh to read the request.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 Ayes – 0 Nays**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. on a motion by Councilwoman Aeh.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk