

**Minutes
Town of Clifton
Town Council – Special Session
August 28, 2018
10:00 A.M.**

Members Present

Luis Montoya, Mayor**
Barbara Ahmann, Vice-Mayor*
Laura Dorrell, Councilmember
Ray Lorenzo, Councilmember*
B. Waddell Reyes, Councilmember
Ray West, Councilmember
John Freida, Councilmember

*Excused

**Late Arrival

A quorum was present.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Council member B. Waddell Reyes followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Work Session:

Discussion regarding the town's Wastewater Treatment Facility: Town Engineer, Chad Crockett provided detailed information on each of the proposed alternative sites to construct a new facility and the existing challenges to consider:

Site #1. Existing Site: Grant funding requirements require that the town own the land and due to the site location is in a floodplain, mandates that new construction be protected from a 500-year flooding event. This would require the site to be elevated 8 feet to allow for 2 feet of freeboard. He noted that by raising the elevation of the site and the bank protection would result in a narrower river through this area and could potentially cause upstream flooding. Cost estimate to do the site preparation work only is \$1.25 million.

Site #2. Smelter Hill: Located ½ mile from existing WWTP, owned by Freeport McMoRan. This site has environmental issues which are currently unknown since the property was once a mining location. Additionally, other issues include the challenge to pump up to this site due to an unclear path to this location due, which crossed through ADOT right of way and railroad right of way as well as existing utility lines. Cost estimate to develop this site is \$1.5 million which, doesn't include the cost for environmental investigation and mitigation if needed, nor the costs to close the existing treatment plant.

Site #3. Table Top: Owned by the town but difficult to pump up to this site. Existing El Paso Gas lines run along the top of table top road, which has a 150'-200' right of way for their high-pressure lines. There is an 800' elevation difference from the existing WWTP site which would

require 4-5 pump station to get the raw sewage to the treatment plant. This would also create pressure back down to the effluent pond, which would need to be controlled. This site would also go through State Land. A state land permit can take up to two years to obtain. In addition to extending the collection system lines to the new WWTP, water and electric lines would also need to be extended to this site. This makes this site cost prohibited. Cost estimate to develop this site is \$2 million minimum and doesn't include environmental costs or existing WWTP closure costs.

Site #4. Jail Site: Land adjacent to the existing Greenlee County Jail Complex: available property insufficient in size to accommodate the WWTP. The available property is 1/3 acre, the required amount of land needed is 1 acre. Site is not feasible therefore no costs have been determined for this site.

Site #5. Old Landfill site used up through 1970's. This site is located in the perfect location, however owned by FMI. Primary concern is the potential contaminants that were disposed of at this site. Prior to this time period, there were no environment regulations. Arizona Department of Environmental Quality offers funding to test the site if owned or will be owned by the town, but the town assumes the liability if environmental issues are determined. This site is not feasible therefore no costs have been determined for this site.

Site #6. Land near town approach above Ward Canyon. This area is too close to a residential area and also has environmental issues since it is has old tailings in this area. Doesn't meet the requirement of drying bed regulations being located so far away from residential properties. Cost estimate to develop the property could be close to \$5,000,000.

The next option presented by Mr. Crockett was the possibility of rehabilitating the existing wastewater treatment plant. This option was discussed with USDA-RD with regards to funding availability. According to USDA, potential funding may be eligible if the rehab improvements does not exceed 50% of the cost to build a new WWTP.

Concerns presently affecting the existing plant involve build up of sludge over the years in the digester. The digester is believed to be 16' below the surface. The engineer recommends hiring a contractor who specialized in this type of clean-up. The contractor will have to cut into the currently reinforced concrete to pump out the sewage. The issue in removing the sludge is to pump it out then dump the sludge onto drying beds. Once dry, the material can then be dumped into the local landfill. Mr. Crockett explained that FMI is willing to allow the town to use one of its three 65,000-gallon drying beds. Although the town does have two small drying beds, these are not sufficient to handle the anticipated amount of sludge thought to be in the digester.

He continued to explain that once the sludge is removed, a better evaluation of the digester can be made to determine whether the existing tank of the clarigester is structurally sound. The cost estimate for, sludge removal, cleaning of existing clarigester tank and inspection is approximately \$200,000.

If useable, the old clarigester can be rehabilitated to accommodate a new process for wastewater treatment. This new process is known as Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR) Technology. The cost estimate for this new process is \$1 million. This cost, does not include any re-piping, lining existing piping, electrical or modification to existing fittings.

Concerns from the council included authorizing the expense then determining that the facility cannot be utilized.

Town Manager, Heather Ruder explained that the town will be required to remove the existing sludge in the current facility in order to properly decommission the facility as required by ADEQ if a new WWTP is constructed. Ms. Ruder also provided information on a recent conference call involving ADEQ, USDA and the town. Preliminary discussion from ADEQ indicated that the town may need to provide a secondary method to discharge wastewater should FMI no longer receive the effluent in order to continue qualifying for an Aquifer Protection Permit (APP). However, it has been determined that this is not a requirement.

Ms. Ruder recommends moving forward with the sludge removal, cleaning of existing clarigester tank and inspection of the current facility. The reviewed funding sources in this year's budget to cover the estimated cost to include:

1. \$16,000 Sewer Budget
2. \$200,000 Public Works-street maintenance
3. \$100,000 Mayor & Council's Contingency Fund

Discussion regarding potential alternative funding for this clean-up was to reconsider the original FMI-Community Investment Grant Program project previously approved by Council to seek funding for street repair equipment. Although the grant application has not yet been submitted, members of the Council agreed that the urgency of the wastewater treatment plant's current condition should be a priority for the health, safety and welfare of its residents.

New Business

Discussion and/or action to provide staff direction regarding the Wastewater Treatment Facility:

Mayor Montoya made a motion to re-direct the FMI-CIP grant application project from requesting street equipment to ~~addressing~~ **address** the **emergency** ~~current~~ health and safety ~~issue~~ **situation affecting** at the town's wastewater treatment plant **and to immediately take action** to remove the existing solids from the digester ~~and to direct~~ **by directing** the Town Manager to utilize the funding sources as presented to clean-up the facility for further evaluation.

Second to the motion was made by Council member Reyes.

Voting in favor of the motion were Council members: Montoya, Reyes, West, Lorenzo, Dorrell

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and Freida.

Motion carried.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made by Council member Dorrell. Second to the motion was made by Council member Reyes. Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:50 a.m.