

La Conner Wastewater Advisory Board
1st Quarter Meeting
Tuesday, January 29, 2019

The La Conner Wastewater Advisory board meeting was called to order at 3:28 p.m. Present were Administrator Scott Thomas, Manager for the Swinomish Utility Authority Mike Poppe, Chair of the Swinomish Utility Authority Brian Wilbur, Plant Operator Kelly Wynn, Councilmember Jacques Brunisholz and citizen Dan O'Donnell.

Approval of Minutes:

Councilmember Brunisholz moved to approve the minutes of August 8, 2018. Motion seconded by Administrator Thomas. Motion carried.

Finance Report:

Administrator Thomas mentioned that the Town Engineer Evan Henke did an analysis and determined the Town owes the Swinomish Tribe a refund in the amount of \$18,096.87. This is primarily due to the difference between the original 2018 planned budget and the actual amount spent. The 2018 budgeted amount was \$411,347 and the actual amount spent was \$341,469. Administrator Thomas passed out a document from Mr. Henke detailing the new Tribal rate. The Tribal rate increased to \$0.4826 or \$48.26 per 100 gallons. This is extremely close to the rate estimated last fall. The total flow at the treatment plant has remained stable. It was noted it was a drier year.

They did not spend all of the money that they had. Plant Operator Wynn mentioned in 2019 they have two capital expenditures, one is a tractor and the other is a solar project. The rest of the capital spending is set asides for future spending. The budget is very similar to 2018. Councilmember Brunisholz mentioned they used 72% of the available funds. The funds that have not been used stay within the budget.

Administrator Thomas mentioned there have been discussions between him, Plant Operator Wynn, the Mayor and the Finance Director that at some point in time we will be looking at significant costs to the system, which is just the nature of infrastructure. Plant Operator Wynn mentioned this year Washington State Department of Ecology is increasing the amount of ammonia testing that is required. This is usually a precursor to some kind of a regulation and usually these regulations turn down on the treatment of the effluent. This can require some upgrades, especially since the treatment plant is 45 years old. They are saving money for improvements but also rehabilitating some of the structures. They may have to look at a treatment system that cleans the water even more. Plant Operator Wynn estimates they may need to seriously look at this within 5 years. This will be costly and the time to start putting money away is now. Plant Operator Wynn stated the focus will be on the mechanical portions of the plant. One thing they will not have to change direction on is the biosolids/compost program the plant has.

Public Forum:

Citizen Dan O'Donnell does not agree with the calculated Tribal rate. He said the WAB may want to ask the Council to reconsider the charge.

Old Business

None

New Business:

Most of the new business was discussed with the Finance Report.

Mr. Poppe stated they are still going to do a couple thousand feet of replacement pipe on the Tribal side this summer. The government shutdown slowed this down a bit. They should still have time to get out to bid and start this summer. They did find out they can cut out about 300 feet, which saves some money. They are still moving towards doing some work on their pump station.

Administrator Thomas asked how much of the reservation is on sewer and how much is on septic. Plant Operator Wynn stated the village is on sewer, as is the Pull and Be Damned area and Skagit County District Sewer District #1 which is the Hope Island area. Shelter Bay has its own system. The casino also has its own treatment plant. There probably won't be considerable growth even though our treatment plant has approximately 25% extra capacity. It is good that we have that extra capacity because Mr. Poppe mentioned there are about 50 lots that haven't been built out in the Pull and Be Damned area.

Operator's Report:

Plant Operator Wynn mentioned the plant is doing good overall. They have received their new discharge permit and are making adjustments to the lab routine. They just finished the compost pad and are buying a new tractor. They are also working on getting the solar completed so the majority of the electricity for the treatment plant comes from the solar panels. The estimated pay back for the solar is about 7 to 8 years.

He mentioned as an example the expense of building a new treatment plant. Skagit County Sewer District #2 out at Big Lake just finished a new wastewater treatment plant at the cost of 10 million dollars. This is something to think about for the future.

Miscellaneous

Brian Wilbur mentioned they are looking at some tenants for the fish plant.

There being no further business, Mr. Poppe moved to adjourn, seconded by Administrator Thomas. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.