

Council Proceedings, December 20, 2023
Ishpeming, MI 49849

The special meeting of the Ishpeming City Council was held on Wednesday, December 20, 2023, in the Ishpeming City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Jason Chapman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Jason Chapman, Council Members Lindsay Bean, Elizabeth Firby, Renelle Halverson, and Pat Scanlon (5). Also present was City Manager Craig Cugini.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Scanlon, seconded by Councilmember Firby and carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM INVESTIGATION ON THE AREA SOUTH OF DIVISION STREET (ACROSS FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL) AS OF DECEMBER 16, 2023

Manager Cugini provided a brief overview of the City's sanitary sewer efforts with the Clean Water State Revolving funds (CWSRF), stormwater challenges, roadway challenges, and efforts with the potential funding from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. He advised the City established a scoping/televising contract with Tunnel Vision for the area South of Division and he reviewed their task list. He reviewed the lateral line concerns and the ancillary home infiltration concerns.

General Foreman Bill Anderson presented pictures from the scoping related to 212 E. Johnson; 408 S. Fourth Street; 409 S. Third Street; 421 South Third Street; and 319 E. Johnson Street. There was further discussion related to the findings and the residential lateral line concerns. He provided clips from the camera video footage from the scoping which indicated there were no breaks in the main line; he added the City does not scope private lines. There was brief discussion related to the possibility of non-capped private lines that could be leading to the infiltration.

Staff further added infiltration from roof drains was occurring in this area which could be a contributing factor and reviewed possible courses of action. There was discussion related to storm sewer versus sanitary sewer and eliminating roof drains entering the sanitary sewer.

Manager Cugini reviewed the investigation and findings of the residential lateral lines and residential ancillary infiltration concerns which were not directly related to sewer lines. Staff further reviewed City Ordinance 12-700 as it relates to Sanitary Sewers and Storm and Groundwater Drains.

A motion was made by Mayor Chapman and supported by Councilmember Firby to authorize the City to pay the full amount for the repairs to the pipe issues south of the High School out of the sewer fund with no charge to the residents for the cost. Ayes: Mayor Jason Chapman (1). Nays: Councilmembers Lindsay Bean, Elizabeth Firby, Renelle Halverson, and Pat Scanlon (4). Motion failed 1-4.

Councilmember Firby expressed her concern with making a decision at this point; some problems have been identified but further information/investigation was needed.

Councilmember Bean was not opposed to working toward a solution but was not at a point to decide that the City should pay the full amount.

Councilmember Halverson was also not opposed to working toward a solution, but thought capping the abandon lines could be the primary solution to the problem and should be done.

Councilmember Scanlon suggested the abandon/orphaned sewer lines be addressed and he would like to get a determination on the exact number of abandon/orphaned sewer lines in that area that could be contributing to ground water infiltration.

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Discussion among staff and Council took place with respect to the potential cost associated with capping the abandoned lines; the City funding the cost at the joint of the City Main; residents signing a hold harmless agreement related to televising and capping/plugging the lines; with these actions being reviewed by the City Attorney. Also talked about was where the best location would be to place the plug.

Council requested the abandon/orphaned lines be the first priority; requested staff contact property owners regarding hold harmless agreements and determine if owners would be interested in capping or scoping the homeowner line at their expense. It was the consensus to have this information presented at the February meeting. Tunnel vision should be contacted to obtain a cost and residents should be offered the chance to have their line scoped with a cost share.

There was continued discussion among staff and Council related to the roof drains and how that was affecting the infiltration of the sanitary sewer. Council requested flat roof investigation information be brought to the March regular Council meeting which would include a review of any available building information, exterior analysis, obtain permission from property owners to investigate drain lines, and determine if they would be willing to participate and sign hold harmless agreement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Tonkin, 612 N. Third Street, was glad to see discussion related to the issues in that area; and, further talked about roof drains added his opinion on what issues could arise with roof drains.

Claudia Demarest, 821 Maurice Street, questioned if the County or the City demolished the structures in that area.

Todd Kauppinen, 409 S. Third Street, advised discussions have occurred on the issues related to storm sewer, however, there has been no discussions pertaining to the water runoff from the bluff near his residence and the problems with the water reaching the storm drain which required him to place sandbags near and around his property.

Kathy Sylvester, 410 E. Division, talked briefly about the force of the water that was backing up into her residences and questioned if the dirt in the lateral could be an issue. She thanked staff for all the time and effort put into the investigation.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:35 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Scanlon seconded by Councilmember Firby and carried unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,



Cathy Smith
City Clerk