



Committee of the Whole Meeting – Feb. 18, 2020 Staff Responses to Council Questions

Before each Committee of the Whole or City Council meeting, questions that have been posed by the City Council relating to [the agenda](#) for that evening will be posted to the City's website. Below are the responses to this week's questions.

4. Items of Business

b. Consider Draft Resolution Authorizing the City Administrator to Purchase 24 Sets of Structural Firefighting "Turnout" Gear for the Fire Department from W.S. Darley at an Estimated Cost of \$47,000.

Q: We authorized the purchase of 20 sets of turnout gear in January 2019, and there is a request for 24 sets in February 2020. Is this an annual expense, or did our inventory of turnout gear age out all at once?

A: Turnout gear is an annual expense. This year, the request is to replace gear (primary and secondary) that has aged beyond the 10-year National Fire Protection Association limit as well as purchase gear for personnel that do not have a secondary set.

Q: Are we still able to donate our old gear to the organization/location it went to last time? If so, please remind me of those details. If not, please advise on its fate.

A: Yes, the goal is to donate old turnout gear. Last time it was donated to "Hearts In Motion." We will contact them again this year when we move to surplus the retired turnout gear.

c. Consider Draft Resolution Authorizing Execution of a Contract with Benchmark Construction at a Cost of \$110,825 with the Allowance of City Administrator to Approve up to \$11,082.50 in Change Orders for a Total Not to Exceed Amount of \$121,907.50 for Sanitary Sewer Lining Project.

Q: Do we know what, if any, impact there was by not combining the bid with our sister cities? If significant, would it be economically advantageous to defer this work until a joint bid could be resurrected? Assuming this work can be deferred.

A: There is really no way to determine the impact; however, the price per foot for the 2020 contract is less than what was bid in 2018.

d. Consider Draft Resolution Authorizing Execution of a Contract with Frank Marshall Electric at a Cost of \$28,700 with the Allowance of City Administrator to Approve up to \$2,870 in Change Orders for a Total Not to Exceed Amount of \$31,570.00 for Water Plant Variable Frequency Drive Installation for Reverse Osmosis Unit No. 1.

Q: The units were approved last year with an anticipated 13-week lead time. Was there a delay in receiving them?

A: No, it was about 13 weeks from the time of order to the time of delivery.

Q: Were the dimensions of the replacement units not clear in the vendor bid?

A: You may recall, there was only one bid for the replacement of the variable frequency drive (VFD) from Siemens. The company is the manufacturer of the original VFDs. The City is not able to dictate the dimensions of the VFD. A direct replacement was ordered, but it has been 12 years since the originals were installed. In that time, the size of the components have changed, and thus, changed the overall size of the cabinet. These are large cabinets that each weigh 2,300 pounds.



Q: At the time of requesting the replacement units, did we anticipate any of these installation costs?

A: Based on the drawings that were provided by Siemens, we were aware that the dimensions of the cabinet were larger. Two electrical contractors provided a quote and both were more than \$20,000. Because the quotes were over \$20,000, plans and specifications were prepared for a formal bid.

f. Recommend Draft Resolution Authorizing Execution of a Farm Lease with Pitstick Farms for a Farm Lease at a Rate of \$261 per Tillable Acre for the 2020 and 2021 Crop Seasons.

Q: Did the lessee have any interest in farming the tillable acreage of the recently purchased Peck Road farm, or did we not offer this land?

A: The land was not offered to the farmer, and the farmer did not express any interest in increasing the amount of tillable acreage.

Q: Are the payments (reduction in the lease amount) for weed mitigation performed by the lessee a new part of the lease? If yes, why did we add, and how was this performed in the past?

A: No.

Q: What was negotiated by staff/legal as it relates to the previous 2019 contract...actual revenue collected and concessions or lease payments that the City opted to waive?

A: The lease for 2019 provided for 245 acres to be leased at a rate of \$305 per acre, a total of \$74,725. The lease provides for the payment to be adjusted to account for the actual acres harvested. Mr. Pitstick only planted 57.8396 of the 245 acres possible in 2019. Therefore, the payment for 2019 was adjusted to \$17,641.07 ($\305×57.8396).

Q: Could you provide the per acre lease payment for the last four contracts?

A: Proposed 2020-21 = \$261 per acre
2018-19 = \$305 per acre
2016-17 = \$275 per acre
2014-15 = \$375 per acre
2013 = \$370 per acre

Q: When and how was the damage to the City-owned farm tile first identified?

A: City staff was notified of issues with drain tiles in late June 2019.

Q: The 2019 contract indicated that the lessee has responsibility for tile drains and any potential damage to the existing tile. Who made the final determination as to the tile problem in the spring or summer of 2019? Was our Prairie Green consultant who manages the water release management/credits on the reserve involved in making this determination? Was their professional expertise involved in assessing the problem? Was the water release from Prairie Green last spring by our consultant a possible contributing factor in the flooding of the leased farm ground?

A: Staff from Land and Water Resources (LAWR) Inc. conducted a site survey in mid-June that identified areas where drainage was slower than expected. This information was shared with staff and both parties undertook measures to initiate repairs.

Q: Heavy farm equipment has the capability of damaging farm tile. Was this a factor beyond the City's control and responsibility? Will the lessee contribute to the tile repairs deemed necessary?

A: After review with Land & Water Resources, heavy farm equipment does not appear to be the culprit. The current agreement does not require the lessee to contribute to the tile repairs.

Q: Has there been an assessment of the farm tile damage and the cost to repair the damage?

A: Assessment of the drain tiles began in late July and continued throughout the fall and winter with a maintenance program expected to be prepared in late winter.

Q: What are the corrective actions planned, and what are the projected costs (if available)?

A: Upon completion of the site assessment by Huddleston McBride Land Drainage Services, a maintenance proposal will be prepared for review and execution by the City.

Q: Would potential repairs to correct the problem take place prior to the 2020 planting season?

A: Repairs are anticipated to be completed prior to or concurrent with this planting season.

Q: Did the lessee in 2019 receive any insurance claim payments or potential financial benefit from state or federally-funded farm programs for the land in question? Were City-owned leased acres used to indemnify the lessee in any way in 2019?

A: Unknown, this was not required under the current agreement.

Q: The U.S. Department of Agriculture through the State of Illinois offers a variety of conservation programs for Illinois farmland. Have we investigated any of these programs (CRP, SAFE, etc.) to see if we would be eligible and what level of revenue would be generated by taking the 245 acres out of annual crop production?

A: City staff has not investigated alternative uses for the 245 acres since there has not been any direction provided by the City Council to do so.