



CITY OF FREEPORT

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August 23, 2016 – Meeting Minutes

A special meeting of the Freeport City Council was convened at 7:00pm by Mayor Rodney Atkinson with Councilmembers, Ken Goebel, Tim Hennen, Mike Eveslage and Ben Ertle present.

Staff in attendance: Clerk-Treasurer Adrianna Hennen, and Maintenance Assistant Vernon Fuchs

Others in attendance:

Andrea Ramacher (720 1st Ave N)

Mark Middendorf (711 Main St E)

Matt Worms (124 9th St SE)

Rose Austing (716 1st Ave N)

Jean Renneker (525 1st Ave N)

Water Tower Fee

Atkinson began the meeting by explaining that, in the beginning of the water tower fee, the idea was to pay off the bond early so the City set it up to accumulate an excess, which has now reach about \$370,000. Atkinson stated that the flat \$20 fee for everyone seemed to be unfair considering the elderly, single person is paying the same as a family of five, so the goal is to find a way to make it fair and equal for everyone and that is why we are trying to find a way to base is on water usage.

Resident's Jean Renneker and Rose Austing asked why, in the Melrose Beacon, K. Goebel stated the North end of town users get off scot free when it comes to the water tower fee? Atkinson stated that on behalf of the rest of the council, they do not feel that way, they are aware that everyone pays the water tower fee, even the people who have wells.

Previous Mayor, Matt Worms, stated at the public meetings held at the Community Center, all residents were fine with paying the same fee. Worms also stated that it was the intent that on new houses or business that came in after the water tower was put up would be charged the water tower fee. A. Hennen said that is not how it has been conducted. A. Hennen stated that all new houses and business are getting charged the fee because that is how it has been since she has been working for the City.

T. Hennen explained that the ultimate goal of all of this is to reduce the water tower fee so that the sewer rates can be increased to the point where residents won't see much of a difference in cost on their utility bills. T. Hennen stated that it is widely known that Freeport's sewer system needs serious work and this is the way we are trying to accomplish raising the sewer rate, but not raising the overall bill. Resident's in attendance understood that.

Worms stated that if the bill isn't going to go down at all people are still going to be complaining about the amount that their utility bill is and if that's the big problem, people's complaints, much isn't being resolved. Eveslage stated that people realize we have a sewer problem so it would be easy to justify putting money towards that instead of all of it going toward paying the water tower off early.

Atkinson explained that commercial industry in town is what is getting really hit with the tower fee and if we based it off of usage it would be fairer to them as well. The high users will pay more since they are using more and the low users will pay less since they use less. Atkinson also stated that no decision would be made tonight, but instead they are introducing what council has been working on and will continue to take input in the coming months.

Atkinson went on to explain some of the calculations he had been working on to determine what percentage of the water tower fee should be based on usage and what should be a flat fee. These calculations showed what the flat fees would be and what the dollar amount would be per 1000 gallons of water used.

Atkinson stated at the next meeting he would like council to decide what formula to use for the water tower. Then following that would be figuring out the sewer rates, but to have a goal of January 1st to have everything go into effect.

Jean Renneker closed out by stating that she does understand that the sewer is an issue and she is fine with paying the water tower and other fees, but that everything does have to be fair and equal as possible to the majority of residents in town.

Adjourn

Ette moved to adjourn at 8:35pm seconded by Eveslage. Motion carried 5-0.

Mayor, Rodney Atkinson

City Clerk-Treasurer, Adrianna Hennen