



West Branch City Council
City Administrator's Report
4/20/20

Pending Action Items:

(Wastewater Topic)

The City met with Baldrige Environmental and Veenstra & Kim to review the sludge reduction data. Baldrige Environmental reported data that missed the mark the months of January and February due to the cold weather. Baldrige has introduced moving the enzyme and aeration unit to the lift-station. This could come with expenses of \$20,000 - \$40,000. The Wastewater Task Group would like to reconvene and weigh its options before making recommendations to City Council. At this time, the Baldrige technology has still not been approved for a formal pilot project status here in West Branch. However, the Baldrige technology has gotten pilot project approval in Middletown Iowa. In the Middletown case, the Department of Natural Resources gave Middletown a new time frame to carry out its study. We would like this same consideration to review this technology in West Branch. But since Middletown was able to get distressed community status, and since Middletown is a smaller community. It is believed that it may be difficult to get DNR to give us the additional time we need before we have to start investing large amounts of funds for this project. There will be efforts over the next several weeks to soften DNR's position in this matter. On another note, the City Administrator's Office has been working with East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) and Cedar County Economic Development Commission (CCEDCO) to pursue a grant request under the COVID-19 Economic Development Assistance Program. Since wastewater service is not only critical for residential but also critical for our industrial and commercial partners, we have gotten the green light to submit an application. ECIA will be preparing the grant application with assistance from CCEDCO and the City Administrator's Office. At this time we are pursuing a \$7m grant, of which the city would be obligated to contribute 20%.

(College Street Bridge)

The project is expected to be ready for final acceptance next month at the May meeting(s). For more information please call Eric. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns; please do not hesitate to contact the city's project engineers.

Dave Schechinger, P.E.
dschechinger@v-k.net
319-466-1000

Eric Gould
egould@v-k.net
319-466-1000

(Cubby Park)

The "GoFundMe" site for fund raising for the West Branch Splash Pad. Has been temporarily suspended due to the lack of having banking information set-up for taking donations from "GoFundMe". Due to the unfamiliarity and some staff confusion of fund raising with this venue there has been a delay in taking in funds due to being unsure of the legality of taking in funds from this venue, and if City Council was needed to authorize "GoFundMe" as a Depository. After reviewing this issue with the City Attorney it was concluded that City Council does not need to give any authorization because Resolution 1702 already set-up a fund for Splash Pad donations. At this time, staff has submitted the necessary information to "GoFundMe" and we are awaiting their formal reactivation notice. In the meantime we also started the process to accept local fund raising on the city's web site. The web site infrastructure has been set-up, we only need to have the page designing work done. Lions Club and Bayer have indicated that they are interested in donating a total of \$5,000 to the West Branch Splash Pad project. This would bring our total to \$5,000. Our

goal is \$170,000 for a splash pad that uses recirculates water system. A pass through water system would cost less but would be less environmentally friendly and could hurt the City's ability to expand its water permit as the city continues to grow.

Report from the Desk of the City Administrator:

- **Reminder New Councilmembers: Please set up time with Nick for website pictures.**
- Turn Lane related to the School Project? V&K organized a meeting with the Department of Transportation (IDOT) to inquire if this project would qualify for assistance for the turn lane since the I-80 construction project could have negative traffic impact on West Main. I believe the meeting has planted the seed in IDOT planning process, and I believe we will be following up in the next couple weeks.
- Some may recall that the City and CDG urged local businesses to apply for the COVID-19 Small Business Relief Grants opened this past March 30th. Two West Branch businesses were able to get grant funding. I am happy to announce that "Mexico Lindo" got the grant maximum \$25,000 and "The Down Under" received \$10,000. One of the criteria used were businesses most at risk of claiming losses more than 75%. At this time, I am unsure of future rounds of funding, but the city will do its best to try and keep our businesses aware any future funding opportunities.

Follow up / Reminder Items:

- At this time, April 30th 2020; is the anticipated end of the Governor's Order to evaluate whether can feasibly work remotely and to the extent reasonable, shall take steps to enable such employees to work from home. Is it the City Council's intention to continue beyond this date should it expire as originally intended?

**EMPLOYEE AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
(RMCC Region 6)**

SECTION TWO. Pursuant to Iowa Code § 135.144 (3), and in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Public Health, unless otherwise modified by subsequent proclamation or order of the Iowa Department of Public Health, I hereby order that beginning at 11:59 p.m. on April 16, 2020 and continuing until 11:59 p.m. on April 30, 2020:

- A. All employers shall evaluate whether any more of their employees can feasibly work remotely and to the extent reasonable, shall take steps to enable such employees to work from home.
- B. All businesses or other employers remaining open with in-person operations shall take reasonable precautions to ensure the health of their employees and members of the public, including appropriate employee screening, social distancing practices, and increased cleaning and hygiene practices.
- C. This section shall not be a basis for closing or taking other enforcement action against a business or other employer absent an additional specific order or directive of the Iowa Department of Public Health.

- The City is also pursuing COVID-19 funding for the West Branch Food Pantry. We are placing an application for \$41,280 grant. If the grant is successful we hope to partner with School District, Scattergood Farm School, and the West Branch Food Pantry. It is intended to increase our food delivery, food pick up, and enhance the school district brown bag program.