

**Minutes
Committee of the Whole
February 27, 2023**

The Committee of the Whole met on February 27, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room at the City Building. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Melissa Monich. Attendance was as follows:

Council Members:

Dan Driehaus
Grant Hoffman
Melissa Monich
April Robles
Sarah Stankorb Taylor
Jodi Woffington

Staff:

Rusty Herzog, City Manager
Megan Statt Blake, Community Development Director
Brooke Brady, Police Chief
Jeremiah Caudill, Finance Director
Charlie Holtz, Water Works Operator
Mike Lippert, Water Works Director
Rob Nicolls, Public Works Director
Cy Wilson, Assistant Fire Chief

Water Treatment Facility Presentation & Tour

Mr. Mike Lippert, Water Works Director, presented a PowerPoint with an overview of the City's Water Treatment Operation. The text from the slides are as follows:

Map of the Service Area. Mr. Lippert noted that Wyoming Water services a small portion of Springfield Township residences and a small portion of Woodlawn as well. A 25% surcharge is applied to these water bills as it takes more effort to service these outline areas from our water plant facilities.

Facilities: The Water Works facilities include Wellfield, Water Treatment Plant, Van Roberts Pump Station (high service pump station), 1.0 million Gallon Concrete Reservoir, 0.2 million Gallon Water Sphere (Tower), and the Cody Pass Booster Station. Mr. Lippert stated that, as many are aware of the concerns of the events in East Palestine, Ohio, the most recent water testing reports received today indicate that there remains no contamination in Wyoming's water supply.

Wellfield Protection Area & Wellfield Locations. Mr. Lippert outlined two maps: one showing the Wellfield Protection Area and the Aquifer. He outlined the one-year time of travel area and the five

year time of travel area, and he outlined where these travel time areas are in relation to the location of the aquifer. He explained that if there is a contamination in the aquifer, the area indicated within the one-year time of travel area would not be affected by the contamination up to one year. The City would have to make amends or make changes to its water supply source within a year. He noted that the five-year time of travel area borders I-75 and General Electric in Evendale. Mr. Lippert noted that water in the aquifer moves roughly five feet per day.

Further, Mr. Lippert explained that when the public expresses concern if the contaminants in East Palestine's water supply could affect Wyoming's water (highly unlikely), he explained that it would take many years for the contamination to reach Wyoming's water, if ever.

Additionally, he explained that the Water Department keeps an eye on events around us that could affect the water supply but there is not much it can do with surrounding elements. For example, an auto repair company in Lockland caught fire last year and although Wyoming Water Department wouldn't necessarily respond, the EPA contacted the Department to advise of the situation.

Water Treatment Plant. The plant is currently twenty-three years old and can produce an average of three million gallons per day. The average we are pumping today is typically 700,000 gallons per day. In the summer, the gallons per day can almost double but even at double, it is not at capacity to what the plant is able to produce. The exterior plant equipment consists of an air stripper, generator, and an aerator. The generator will allow the plant to operate for two to three days without power.

Treatment Train and Lime Softening Clarifier. Mr. Lippert explained the treatment train diagram on how water is produced starting from the wells and through its distribution process. Essentially, water is pumped from the wells, it is aerated and softened before the pH is adjusted, then chlorine and fluoride are added around the filtering process before it is discharged into the community.

Mr. Lippert explained that ground water, such as Wyoming's, is much easier to treat than water that comes from the Ohio River. The ground water is like a big sandbox; it is wet, and water is getting naturally filtered so before it reaches the plant for processing it is already in pretty good shape.

The water tower, or sphere, holds 200,000 gallons of water. The water reservoir was built in 1949 and the water tower was constructed in 1955. Mr. Lippert reviewed the equipment that is located inside the water tower and what its uses are. It is anticipated that the water tower will be repainted within the next five years.

Mr. Lippert explained that the booster station that is located on Cody Pass is used to increase the water pressure to homes in the hilltop area, such as Circlewood Lane, for example. The water that

is in the water tower is around 60 psi. The further houses are located away from the water tower, the lower the pressure can drop. The booster station boosts that water pressure up 20 psi. The booster station is the only facility that does not have a backup generator attached. For residents in the hilltop area, water is pumped through the reservoir then pumped out of the reservoir into the water tower and then out to homes from there. If Cody Pass fails due to a power interruption, the plant is still able to service the area through the reservoir and water tower, it would temporarily be at a lower pressure. The booster station helps to boost the water pressure to the areas off Compton Road as well.

Water Works Staff. Mr. Lippert stated that the water plant shifts are typically 7:00 a.m. to midnight, 365 days per year. In addition to monitoring the plant operation, the operators are also responsible for utility locating (call before you dig) and water main break valve operations and repairs, just to name a few. The City has been a part of the Ohio Utility Protection Service (OUPS) for the past fifteen years. Before being part of the service, Wyoming was typically asked about 20 times a year to mark its water lines for some project or another. Today, we are averaging about ten markings per week.

In addition to the operators, the department consists of three, part-time water meter readers, and one part-time water operator who has been with the City for approximately 40 years and works on Saturday mornings. Clay Evans and Devon Evans are both Class I EPA certified, Charlie Holtz and Mike Lippert are Class III certified, and Jim Koch holds a Class IV certification which is the highest certification an operation can achieve. Operators are required to be certified by the EPA to work for the Water Department, to operate the water plant.

Water Quality. The USEPA helped the Water Department establish water quality goals in a corrosion study done a decade or so ago. Based on this study, Wyoming's corrosion goals are Alkalinity of 70 ppm, PH 8.8. Free Chlorine (plant) 1.1 ppm, Fluoride 0.85 ppm are Wyoming's goals set to meet OEPA standards. Every day, routine tests are done at the water treatment plant for chlorine, fluoride, PH, and hardness. We subcontract out the bacteria and volatile organic compound tests, which is the test that was conducted following the East Palestine spill.

Water Monthly Reports. Mr. Lippert explained that the monthly reports that City Council members receive include data such as the monthly water flows for chemicals and a monthly operation summary, which includes many numbers. To condense the data in to an easy-to-understand format, the activities the Water Works employees handled and any other noteworthy water notes such as how many main breaks occurred. Mr. Lippert shared where this information can be found on the monthly report to City Council, which is at the bottom of the monthly report spreadsheet.

Taste & Odor. In 2011 and 2017, Wyoming Water was awarded winner of the best tasting water in the state of Ohio. We receive very few taste/odor complaints.

Issues & Projects. Water Main break notifications are typically sent out via Nixle, which is the City's emergency notification (text/phone) system that residents can sign up to receive. If the break occurs on a small street, crews will go door-to-door to notify residents of the break and the work that will be done to fix it. If there is ever a boil water advisory, which is rare, Water Works staff members will typically go door-to-door and leave a paper door hanger on the resident's front door outlining the instructions. Mr. Lippert explained that on average, the City experiences 25 water main breaks per year. Of these 25 breaks per year, an average of 22 of them are caused by old infrastructure breaking down and/or a contractor accidentally hitting a pipe, or something similar that is unrelated to pipe condition.

Water Main Repairs. Mr. Lippert reviewed the two most common ways to repair a water main break and noted that the current distribution system is aging as some piping in the City is 100 years older or more. Wyoming Avenue pipes are approximately 130 years old. There are still many areas in the valley that have a small, four-inch water main which will have to be replaced in the next few years.

Residual Lime Sludge & Lead Lines. Mr. Lippert explained what lime sludge is and how it is formed. The power plant the City uses for lime sludge disposal will no longer be taking the material after 2025 (we are told). Alternative options are being researched and it is hopeful that a plan will be determined by the end of the year. Some of the options include hauling the material to Rumpke for disposal or to Dayton for recycling, or it can be applied to farmer's fields as fertilizer.

Mr. Lippert explained that the EPA is studying lead lines leading into homes. When the City replaces water mains and lines where lead lines are present, they are removed and replaced up to the property line. The property owner is responsible for the lines leading into the structure. The EPA is contemplating having the City be responsible for replacing the lines up to and into the structure which involves creating a plan for crews to legally enter private property to do the work. The City Solicitor will be consulted if the situation looks to be going that direction.

Well Cleaning & Maintenance. Every other year in the spring, the wells are flow tested which helps verify each well's condition. Approximately every eight to ten years a major rehabilitation on each well is needed.

Hilltop Park Future Water Line. Mr. Lippert explained that this is a project that is anticipated to be completed next year. The water main that runs between the reservoir and the water tower needs to be replaced. It was discovered that there is a small leak in this line that may be affecting water pressure. The line is approximately 70 years old and as such, it makes better sense to replace the line rather than repair a difficult leak. By making the repair, it may make better use of the reservoir and provide fewer labor hours in the plant.

Other Projects & Issues. Upcoming projects include slaker replacement, Vermont Avenue water main replacement and street reconstruction, water tower painting, Lockland Consortium dialogue,

PFAS (per/polyfluorinated substances), and declining water revenues. Mr. Lippert explained that during the Covid shutdowns, our water usage was high resulting in an increase in water revenue. Revenues are generally not increasing as more residents install water saving fixtures and front-loading washers which use less water.

Committee of the Whole briefly adjourned to take a tour of the Water Treatment Plant.

Emergency Operations Review

Mr. Herzog shared that following the East Palestine incident, many Wyoming residents have reached out asking what Wyoming's plan is, or if we have one, in the event of a train derailment and the City does already have a plan in place. He noted that Chief Brown reminded him that not only is Wyoming, but many Cincinnati area communities are always working through similar mock disasters and emergencies, but on a smaller scale. In the event that a weather event affects the City, or a train derailment, the trainings have already provided staff with the tools necessary to handle these types of emergencies. The City has an Emergency Operation Plan in place for all possible scenarios including a train derailment.

District Chief Cy Wilson was present and explained that he and Chief Brown have met several times with representatives from CSX. They provided us a list of their crossings and when you contact them (their headquarters in Atlanta) you can give a precise location of an issue and they can provide an area for sheltering in place or evacuation if necessary. Additionally, emergency personnel are able to use an app where if a train were to become stuck or stopped on the tracks in Wyoming, the identification number on any of the rail cars can be entered into the app which will then provide information on what the car is carrying, especially any types of chemicals, where similar cars are located on the line, and how many cars are carrying the same type of chemical. The app is closely monitored by CSX in Atlanta and if the app is used, the user is contacted to find out why a car's identification number was entered. CSX is also able to tell us the name of the chemical that is in a car, if it is flammable, or an inhalation hazard. Having this information will be the initial assessment on what to do. In Hamilton County, most communities already have mutual aid agreements for both police and fire. Mutual aid agreements allow communities to help each other out with equipment, manpower or other assistance needs.

Additionally, the Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is a tool where if a similar situation happens here that happened in East Palestine, where federal support is needed, EMA would be the entity to take charge of the situation. In terms of communication, if an incident leads to the federal level, the communication needs would be handed over to the Police Department to handle. The Police Department would likely first, use the Nixle emergency communication system to alert Wyoming residents of an issue. If an incident is on a small-scale level but public notification is necessary, emergency crews can also go door-to-door if necessary.

Mr. Herzog stated that in our emergency plan is also a contingency plan on if something were to happen with the City Building; which would likely depend on how far out an evacuation would be

in order. If an evacuation order requires the City Building to be evacuated further than the Civic Center, for example, there are places we can go in Springfield Township and/or Woodlawn, to conduct business during an emergency. Most of the City's IT infrastructure is set up so that it can be operated remotely. If the Public Works' equipment were to be lost, due to its proximity to the railroad tracks, this is where the mutual aid agreements with other cities would come in to play. The same process would occur if something happened to the public safety building. There are surrounding police, fire, and EMS agencies that would assist.

All the City's records and materials are backed up off site, the biggest software not able to be located off site but has the ability or staff to remote in, is our financial software. It can be accessed remotely but the data is not off-site. The City does not have a full-time IT staff member. We are under contract with our IT staff, and they regularly remote into our system. The IT infrastructure can be moved if needed and the equipment is replaceable by other cities with mutual aid.

Mr. Hoffman asked clarification if something were to happen to the firehouse, would other fire departments come to help cover our space because most of our Fire and EMS personnel are local and if the building were to be lost, would our staff work with someone else's equipment if we have an emergency somewhere else in the City. District Chief Wilson explained that this is part of the mutual aid agreements already in place. The City would notify Hamilton County Communications that it is out of service and any calls for help could be dispatched out to the closest available unit. Most of the local fire chiefs are in regular communication with each other on a regular basis and equipment is borrowed regularly, whenever there is a need.

Mr. Herzog added that regularly when we have a fire event or EMS need in town, other cities automatically get dispatched to help, mutual aid is commonplace and is not even thought about, departments just jump in and help.

Ms. Woffington commented that as the Water Treatment Plant is located so close to the railroad tracks, if something were to happen on the tracks, what would the City do. Mr. Lippert explained that if a railroad disaster would happen in near proximity to the Water Treatment Plant the City has two areas where it can quickly connect to Cincinnati Water. Mr. Herzog added that just as Cincinnati Water shut down their intakes from the Ohio River to protect themselves from possible contaminants from East Palestine passing through Cincinnati, we are able to shut down our own wells as a course of caution.

As an additional layer of protection, Wyoming could potentially build a relationship with Lockland's Water Department so that if we need water or they need water, we can help each other out. Also, by working with Lockland, we could potentially have access to their wells, well fields, and aquifers, some of which are located in Sharonville. So that if there is ever a contamination in our aquifer, we could have an additional layer of resources at our disposal.

Mayor Monich asked if the City has shared its emergency preparedness plan with the community. Do residents know where they will receive messages for or how to sign up to receive them if they are not already. Mr. Herzog stated that he is unsure if the emergency plan has been shared with the community other than those that have signed up for Nixle know that they would receive communication there. He explained that the Nixle system has two levels of communication where we can notify a particular street or area of town, or the emergency feature of Nixle can send a notification to every phone number that is registered in its system within our area, this would include phone numbers that are not specifically registered in the Nixle system by the owner. This is the same way that Hamilton County EMA can get emergency messages out to the entire County without having people specifically registered for their notifications.

Mr. Hoffman suggested that the City send out a reminder every six months or so, of what the Nixle system is and how to get registered.

Ms. Stankorb Taylor asked if the staff still conducts drills for certain types of emergency events. Mr. Herzog stated that some staff members participate in tabletop drills and the next one is coming up in April. The Fire Department generally leads the drills where staff from the Fire/EMS, Police, and Public Works Departments sits down in the conference room and an emergency type scenario is presented to see how everyone would respond. The type of emergency is not shared with anyone beforehand. The last time the tabletop drill was held was in 2019 which involved a train derailment exercise. District Chief Wilson added that the County EMA also assists with laying out the scenario exercise.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Nicolls reported that Hamilton County has approached the City to advise us that they intend to repave their portion of Bonham Road. As some may know, there are portions of Bonham Road that are in the City of Wyoming and some that are considered Springfield Township, maintained by Hamilton County.

While all of the equipment is on site by the County's contractor, they would like to extend the opportunity to Wyoming to have that contractor pave Wyoming's portion of Bonham road which would cost the City \$200,000.

Mr. Nicolls explained that the advantage or benefit to the City of having this done as part of the County's project is that we would save money on maintenance of traffic mobilization and with the administration of the contract. It will be cheaper for the City to take advantage of piggy-backing on this project rather than us doing it from scratch.

Ms. Robles asked for the timing of the repaving because Vermont School will be under construction over the summer, and she expressed concern if residents on West Avenue would be able to get out. Mr. Nicolls stated that the work will occur this year and that the scope is one and a half inches milling the road surface and resurfacing it. If it were a total reconstruction project it

would likely be timed outside of the Vermont work. Mr. Herzog added that the funds for the project will come from the gasoline tax fund which has \$450,000 in it for road projects.

Mr. Herzog noted that if City Council is in favor of the project, and it appears that it is, the issue will come before them in the form of a Resolution at the March City Council meeting.

Mr. Herzog noted that Committee of the Whole will not meet in March due to spring break. There may be a possibility that City Council will need a special meeting to approve the contract for Vermont Avenue reconstruction and possibly the Village Green projects if the bid documents do not get finalized before the regular monthly meeting.

Mr. Herzog shared that Springfield Township has a grant program for small business owners who own the building where their establishment is located. The Economic Development Commission will be discussing the program at their next meeting, and it was suggested that an overview be provided to Council at the April Committee of the Whole meeting.

Adjourn

With no other business to discuss, Ms. Woffington moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hoffman seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn the meeting carried with all voting yes. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debby Martin, Executive Assistant

Melissa Monich, Mayor