

REGULAR MEETING OF THE OACOMA TOWN BOARD
November 20, 2023

The Oacoma Town Board met in regular session at 7:00 P.M. on November 20, 2023, in Meeting Room #2 at the Oacoma Community Center. Board members present were Gary Dominiack, President; Richard Kirkpatrick, Vice President; Kyle Fuchs; Robin Hutmacher; and Justin Rabern. Also present were Valerie Moore, Finance Officer; Bryan Mahrt, Utilities Manager; and Weston Blasius, Banner Associates, Inc. Community members present included Kellan Clark; Jack Dooley; Roger Twamley; Merrill and Karen Karlen; Brian Harmon; Duane DeBoer; and Delores Arbach.

MINUTES

Motion by Rabern, second by Kirkpatrick, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on November 6, 2023.
Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Time was reserved for public comments pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1. No comments were offered.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR SOURCE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Dominiack announced it as the time and place for which notice of public hearing was given to consider one of two projects involving improvements to the Town's source water infrastructure, proposed financing, and the source of debt repayment. Dominiack explained the two projects under consideration include extension of the Town's source water intake line to the river channel at an estimated cost of \$6.3 million and connection to the West River/Lyman Jones (WR/LJ) Rural Water System by installing 16.5 miles of 8-inch pipe at an estimated cost of \$6.9 million. The need to complete one of the two projects is due to rising sediment levels at the Town's current source water intake site which will threaten the Town's ability to continue pumping source water by 2030-2040.

Weston Blasius, Project Engineer with Banner Associates, provided background information on a facility plan Banner Associates prepared for Oacoma based on their comprehensive review of the Town's water system. The water facility plan identified improvements to Oacoma's source water intake system as a priority due to rising sediment levels which forced the current intake point to be extended above the sediment level several times over the last 20-25 years until reaching its maximum operating elevation in 2020. Blasius explained both projects, including estimated construction and financing costs, currently under consideration and presented a Fact Sheet highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of each of the two projects. Following the engineer's presentation, the hearing was opened for questions or comments.

Various questions about the two projects and other possible alternatives were addressed by Blasius and city officials. Discussion was held on the Oacoma's water treatment plant capacity and costs to purchase bulk water from WR/LJ Rural Water System compared to continued operation of the Town's independent water treatment system. Comments about the lack of control over future water allocations and rates were heard from several community members concerning connection to the rural water system. Questions about possible grant funding were asked and Dominiack reported Oacoma may not meet the eligibility requirements for grant funding due to water rates and median household income requirements; therefore, a debt surcharge rate is likely to be added to customer charges if all or a portion of a project is financed. Merrill Karlen shared comments in support of Oacoma extending the current intake line and continuing to operate its own water treatment system instead of joining the rural water system. No comments were heard in support of connecting to the WR/LJ Rural Water System. One written comment was received and shared with the board however the comment did not pertain to the source water infrastructure projects.

Following further discussion, Dominiack called for any final comments or discussion from the public. Hearing none, Dominiack closed the hearing for further public comment at 7:40 P.M.

The board continued discussion regarding a timeline for choosing the most appropriate project to serve Oacoma's needs. City officials will meet with state officials to discuss funding eligibility. The board will select one of the two projects as soon as the next meeting on December 4 and no later than December 18 as the funding application is due by January 1.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Motion by Kirkpatrick, second by Hutmacher, to appoint Kurt Kelsey to the Oacoma Planning Commission to fill the seat vacated by Donna Neeman. Motion carried. Kelsey's term will expire in May 2026.

RECONCILIATION OF CASH ASSETS

Dominiack verified the Reconciliation of Cash Assets for the month of October.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Dominiack offered thanks to the public works staff for hanging Christmas lights on the I-90 Business Loop. Several streetlights which are not working will be reported to West Central Electric for repair.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Fuchs, second by Rabern, to adjourn. Motion carried. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 4, 2023, beginning at 7:00 P.M. in Meeting Room #2 at the Oacoma Community Center.

Gary Dominiack, President

Valerie J. Moore, Finance Officer

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