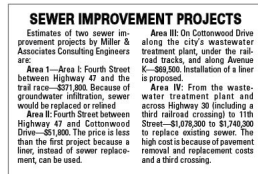


Money backing sewer improvements

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Wednesday, 27 November 2013 19:23 -



\$2.2 million NDEQ loan approved

They're putting money where their mouths are.

For several years, the Gothenburg City Council has talked about addressing sewer problems throughout the city.

In September, members passed a budget that included \$2.3 million for sewer repairs (see box for specific projects on A3).

The council approved a \$2,133,400 loan contract with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality at a Nov. 19 meeting.

Although the project is estimated to cost \$2,233,400 million, some of the project is considered "green" or environmentally aware. As a result, \$100,000 will be forgiven on loan principal.

NDEQ's loan, at 2.25% interest, coupled with a proposed 62-cent monthly increase in residential rates, is expected to pay the loan in 20 years.

City administrator Bruce Clymer said debt on the wastewater treatment plant was paid last year and some outstanding debt will be paid in a couple of years.

The NDEQ loan will pay mostly principal the first couple of years and then start paying interest,

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Clymer said.

If bids are too high to do all of the sewer repair projects planned, he said the city could wait on the estimated \$1-1.7 million Area IV project that installs a third railroad crossing to the wastewater treatment plant.

Design costs on that project alone would be \$125,000 with the other three combined at \$34,688 for a total of \$159,688.

If bids are high, city engineer Travis Mason of Miller & Associates Consulting Engineers said they could remove a couple of blocks of repair/replacement to stay within budget.

“We have options,” Mason said.

City officials hope the project will be bid in February.

Council member Duane Oliver said he’s not convinced that the city needs to do the Area IV project until the first three are finished.

City attorney Mike Bacon said new growth in the northeast part of town would intensify load on pipes through which sewage flows to the treatment plant.

Jeff Kennedy, council chair, pointed to low interest rates and noted that the economy is picking up which will begin to affect fuel prices and other things.

Kennedy and council members Tim Strauser and Jeff Whiting voted to approve the loan contract. Oliver did not.

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The council also approved an agreement with Miller & Associates for sewer improvements.

In other business, the council:

awarded a contract to demolish a house at 1804 Ave. C to Jessen Construction for \$11,460. The house has been deemed unsafe because of extensive water damage and neglect.

Other bidders were Mark Ostergard, \$13,150, and Garner's Dragline Service, \$14,800.

approved a contract with Miller & Associates Engineering of Kearney to analyze 22 city buildings in town for ADA accessibility. Miller officials said the fee would not exceed \$10,000 per hour.

accepted changes in personnel policy dealing with accrual of vacation time, sick leave, dress code and other things.

granted a request by Stephanie Ricely to use the north part of Lake Helen for the Dawson County Relay For Life July 25 and 26, 2014.

made exceptions to the city's utility policy concerning trash so that not everyone who has an electrical meter has to pay for waste removal.

However residents must meet certain criteria such as that the premise doesn't generate waste, the complex already provides commercial trash hauling or that the structure is used for storage only.

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learned that the cost to ready lots with fill for building, owned by the Redevelopment Authority, will cost about \$7,000 each.

The lots are north and south of Fourth Street between Highway 47 and Cottonwood Drive.

Fill is needed because the lots are in the 100-year floodplain.

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