

Lake Helen excavation to start this fall

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 13 June 2014 14:36 -



Council moves forward even though costs higher than thought

Despite higher-than-anticipated bids and other costs, for the rehabilitation of Lake Helen, the city will go ahead with the project.

That was the unanimous decision of the Gothenburg City Council at its June 3 meeting which was voiced by Mayor Joyce Hudson and others.

"I think we need to move forward," Hudson said.

The low bidder, which the council chose, is Meyers Construction of Broken Bow.

Meyers bid for construction was \$1,424,898.

However other costs that are not part of construction bring the total to \$1,629,298 which is \$108,974 more than what was originally budgeted, according to city administrator Bruce Clymer.

Those costs include construction engineering (\$35,000), grant reporting (\$39,400) and alum treatment (\$130,000).

Grants will pay for most of the \$1.6 million project and the city had planned to contribute \$284,761.

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Paul Brakhage, a LakeTech Inc. consultant hired by the city to help with the project, said some of the funding sources—like the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission—have offered to pitch in a little more.

“I don’t think the changes impact the project,” Brakhage said, noting that some of the components can be scaled back such as waiting to install a sidewalk and parking lot and cutting back on rip-rap along the shore.

Clymer described the project as still having “moving parts” such as a fish ramp, floating dock, boat ramp and pier that have been left in the budget.

“I think we’re close enough that we don’t want to turn back,” he said, suggesting that the council authorize the mayor to sign the contract.

The other bidders, for the construction part of the project, were BSB Construction of Curtis, \$2,834,627, and VanKirk Bros. Contracting, Inc. of Sutton, \$1,915,722.

Brakhage said prep work for excavation of the lake will likely begin in August.

Excavation, or deepening the lake, will follow as will the filling in of the northern lobe of the lake.

A screen to keep out undesirable fish will be installed when the canal that feeds the lake is filled, he said.

“Our goal is to have the work done by early spring of 2015 so the lake can be filled with canal and well water,” Brakhage said. “Once work starts, they’ll do things quickly.”

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The lake will be stocked with game fish next summer, he said, with alum treatment scheduled for the fall of 2015.

A high amount of phosphorous contaminated the lake and was the reason the council decided to rehabilitate the body of water. Treatment with alum removes phosphorous from the water, Brakhage said.

The consultant said the council is still working on a plan to keep waterfowl away from the lake.

Feces from geese and ducks contributed to the high phosphorous levels.

Brakhage said the council will address problems with both resident and migratory waterfowl populations.

He said he's working with the Alliance city officials on a waterfowl management program, noting that they've seen benefits from painting eggs to keep them from hatching and from using noise like guns and dogs to scare geese and ducks.

In other action, the board gave the Gothenburg Chamber of Commerce permission to have its annual Farmer's Market in Ehmen Park.

The market, where vendors sell homegrown vegetables, fruit, baked goods and other items, will begin July 17 and end Sept. 25.

Community Development Office director Anne Anderson said the majority of vendors liked the park location.

The market moved to the park from a downtown street last summer because there was shade

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and a place for children to play.

Anderson said a market manager is on the premises to make sure vendors are adhering to rules.

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