

Infrastructure Committee
September 25, 2012

ATTENDEES

Councilors:

Patricia Blanchette

Benjamin Sprague

Nelson Durgin in for Geoffrey
Gratwick

Joseph Baldacci

Charles Longo

Staff:

Art Morgan, City Engineer

Cathy Conlow, City Manager

Brad Moore, WWTP
Superintendent

Dana Wardwell Public Works
Director

Guests:

Jerry Livengood, Bangor Gas

Jeff Heidnik, Bangor Gas

Josh Saucier, Bangor Gas

Suzette Furrow, Fifteenth St.

Meeting convened approximately 5:00 p.m.

1. Abatement Request: 172 Fifteenth Street, Account #7215401

Brad stated the abatement was requested because of plumbing fixture malfunctions. Upon review determined the request met the criteria for abatement and staff recommended approval.

Councilor Baldacci moved and Councilor Durgin seconded.

Vote: Unanimous Approval

2. Amend Chapter 252, Establishment of Sewer Connection Fee

Brad stated this was discussed at the last meeting and was the result of budget discussion to raise revenue in the sewer fund. An order and action had been prepared upon request from the last meeting. Additional language included: Reason for connection, fee to be updated every five years, property owner must pay before connecting to the system, and a provision for a refund was included. After a year's use, the owner could approach the City for a refund if their usage was less than initially projected. Also, there is a provision for an appeal, if necessary.

Councilor Baldacci asked if the fee schedule was a benchmark of the costs, which Brad responded it was. Councilor Baldacci was also concerned about public interest in relation to the cost. Was this fee appropriate at this time with other fees such as stormwater utility, water and sewer fee increases being imposed. Councilor Durgin requested clarification of what determined the gallons per day in relation to the establishments listed. For instance, a residence and a church both list using the same amount at 185 gpd/unit. Brad stated the listed use for the listed locations on the fee schedule were derived from the

Uniform Plumbing Code, Maine Subsurface Wastewater Rules, and experience both in southern Maine and in Bangor.

Councilor Durgin would like to have Business and Economic Development involved in the discussion on impacts to the community. He wanted to make sure impact on economic development was understood.

Brad stated he had met with Tanya in C&ED to discuss possible discounts for new businesses moving into town.

Councilor Sprague queried if this fee was of a practical or philosophical standpoint. He was concerned about good intentioned proposal might have a counter-productive affect. Cathy responded that it was philosophical because it was a business plan and they needed the capital investment to be able to provide services for those entities coming into the WWTP that they wouldn't be able to otherwise accommodate. Brad stated if they didn't provide the capacity upfront they would be saying no to developments.

Councilor Sprague said the WWTP was not a stand-alone enterprise because it fell under the City and the taxpayer. Cathy said that it was a stand-alone enterprise because it pays for itself with the sewer fee and was a user based system.

Councilor Baldacci asked if the City could leave things "as is", base on what is used. Others were already connected and paid at a lower rate and new users would pay much more. Cathy stated the existing users were charged and had paid when upgrades to the capacity were made in the late 80's and 90's.

Councilor Sprague suggested having a discussion with the full Council and moved. Councilor Baldacci doubted. Councilor Blanchette seconded. The vote would be two yes, two no. Yes vote: Councilor Sprague and Councilor Blanchette. No vote: Councilor Baldacci and Councilor Durgin.

Cathy suggested setting up a special Council workshop.

Councilor Blanchette said the fees would be incorporated into the cost of construction. She was concerned about turning businesses away if there wasn't enough line capacity to support businesses. She stated you couldn't replace a septic system for \$649.35, the cost of residential connection to the system. Councilor Baldacci did not dispute, but was concerned that there be conversations with C&ED, Chamber of Commerce, and the local business community. Councilor Durgin was initially in favor of the approach and only concerned with the economic impact and not discouraging new business because of the dramatic difference between the current fee of \$60.00 and the proposed fee of \$649.35 for new residential connections.

Councilor Blanchette was comfortable with a workshop with the whole Council.

Brad provided, for informational purpose, the surrounding community rates for a residential new connection:

Brewer	\$250.00	Ellsworth	\$500.00
Portland	\$9,400.00	Veazie	\$1,500.00
Saco	\$5,000.00	Bangor	\$650.00
Auburn	\$750.00		

Councilor Blanchette requested Cathy contact the Chair of the Council to schedule a workshop.

Vote: 2-2

3. Resolve: City of Bangor to Accept and Appropriate 319 Grant from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Urban Waters Small Grant Program

Councilor Sprague moved and Councilor Durgin seconded with no discussion.

Vote: Unanimous Approval

4. Public Services Director's Update: Bangor Gas

Art informed the Committee 440 permits had been issued thus far, which was half of the permits issued last year. But there was still great demand for service. Complaints regarding repairs during installations had significantly decreased. Cathy had commented she had some citizen complaints about customers who signed for and anticipated services and hadn't had installs yet.

Jerry Livengood General Manager for Bangor Gas stated this year they had a better process. He complimented the City for the quick turn-around on processing permits of no more than two to three days after submitting a permit request. He explained for the Committee the process of how they determine the locations that natural gas would be installed. He said typically it was a first in first out when attending to the installations. Jerry responded to Councilor Durgin's question that Bangor Gas applies and pays for the permits, not the customer.

Councilor Blanchette requested a map of the gas line installations. Jerry indicated due to PUC regulations he could not offer them publicly but if she would like to visit Bangor Gas he would show her.

Jerry informed the Committee the new Bangor Gas facility on Maine Avenue was expected to open around Thanksgiving.

Cathy asked that Bangor Gas update the Committee on the proposed CNG station. Jeff Heidnik from Northeast Ohio explained they were looking at a proposed location, owned by the City, to provide a compressed natural gas station next to the Recycle Center between Maine Avenue and Union Street. An aerial map was provided to the members.

Councilor Blanchette suggested they meet with City staff and with facts together bring back to the Committee, Councilor Baldacci concurred.

Councilor Durgin asked about the scope of the construction and anticipated timeline. Jeff stated there would be an improved surface, a canopy with fueling stations, and a freestanding compressor which would be in an enclosed building. The facility would be essentially staffed around the clock and would employ three to four people. He said they had already had the compressor, and were eager to locate in Bangor.

Cathy included that locations were being looked at and running compressed natural gas would be an opportunity for savings to the transit and fleet vehicles, as well as cleaner air. She said they would like to be the hub of this activity.

Citizen Suzette Furrow from Fifteenth Street joined the table expressing her concern about the City paving before Bangor Gas could do the installation of gas at approximately thirteen homes that had signed contracts. Art responded that paving of Fifteenth Street was taken off the list and Jerry responded that the timeframe he anticipated would be early 2013.

Vote: None needed, informational only.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:59 p.m.