

**VILLAGE OF FRANKLIN
SPECIAL VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2019, 5:30 PM
FRANKLIN VILLAGE HALL – BROUGHTON HOUSE
32325 FRANKLIN ROAD, FRANKLIN, MICHIGAN 48025**

WORKSHOP

FRANKLIN ROAD PROJECT & PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM DISCUSSION

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Pam Hansen, at 5:34 PM at the Franklin Village Hall, Franklin, Michigan.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Fred Gallasch, Pam Hansen, Bill Lamott, Ed Saenz, Mike Seltzer, Mira Stakhiv

Absent: Brian Gordon

Also Present: Jim Creech, Village Administrator

Eileen Pulker, Village Clerk

James Burton, P.E. – Vice President, Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc,

Hansen prefaced the meeting by stating that after some analysis on the topic there would be an informed discussion led by Creech and Burton. It was her hope that the outcome of the meeting would be a direction and a commitment by the Council on a path forward on the road project. Several scenarios could be considered.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Lamott, seconded by Stakhiv to adopt the agenda, as presented.

Ayes: Gallasch, Hansen, Lamott, Saenz, Seltzer, Stakhiv

Nays: None

Absent: Gordon

Motion carried.

IV. PUBLIC REQUESTS AND COMMENTS

There were none at this time.

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Franklin Road Project & Public Water System with Hubbell Roth & Clark, Village Engineers.

At Hansen's request Creech framed out in more detail the purpose of tonight's meeting. At the Council's direction the Village engineers were charged with planning out the different prospects of getting community water into the Village. There had been meetings with various entities, including SOCWA and Bloomfield Township, to discuss different scenarios to achieve this purpose. Previously, the Village engineers had given the Village some cost estimates with regards to a couple different scenarios and this meeting was a furtherance of that discussion. With the improvement of Franklin Road on the horizon this would be an opportune time to investigate if construction of a water supply service was doable at the same time. A ballot

proposal would need to be voted upon at a Special Election in 2019 to go forward on a project in 2020.

Jamie Burton, Hubbell Roth & Clark, Village Engineers, addressed the Council about exploring the opportunities and the issues of providing water service to Franklin. There were several options which he provided and outlined in his memo to the Village Administrator and Village Council Members, dated March 6, 2019. He also provided supporting documentation which included two (2) options for service opportunities: NO VOTE (Decline to take the water supply issue to a vote. Franklin Road, 13 Mile Rd. to 14 Mile Rd. to be completed in 2019) and VOTE FALL 2019 (Should the Village permit the construction of a water system within the Village? What were the necessary considerations before this could be brought to a vote? Franklin Road would be completed in 2020.). Also included in the memo were additional water system considerations: Rates, Connection Charges, Ownership of Leads, Water Quality, Connection Requirements, O&M, Regulations/Obligations, Expansion, Insurance Rate Impacts, Wells for Irrigation, Dual Meters, and Impact on Sewer Rates.

Burton briefly explained the three (3) options for water service to the Village: SOCWA, GLWA, and Bloomfield Township and included a history of each one. The engineers had conversations with each provider about all the potential ramifications involved with providing the Village with a water system. He elaborated on the details of each agency, pointing out the pros and cons, (advantages and disadvantages) and included how each agency would handle different scenarios.

Burton also addressed the specific timing of the project, whether it be in 2019 or 2020 and the price perspective of the project for 2019, especially if this issue were to go to the residents for a vote. He wanted to lay out what the impacts would be and what the next steps would be in preparation for an impending vote.

Council members posed questions for Burton regarding each option.

Stakhiv inquired and Hansen explained that the impetus for Council seriously discussing the subject of water was the evacuation of the Jones Building due to toxic air which happened over a year ago. Hansen continued that this started a conversation with MDEQ which led into another discussion about the possible contamination of the water supply (aquifer) in the future: What proactive positions should the Council take to ensure that the residents downtown have access to safe water before it became an emergency? Retaining the Village engineers was necessary to provide Council with some information so it could take appropriate steps forward. She acknowledged that the concerns new Village residents have were very different from those of previous generations. She added that according to some test drilling of wells in the downtown it was found that the wells for the businesses were found to be 30-40 ft. deep and the residents' wells were very shallow. She listed some known problems within the business district which had been created by the well situation. Concerns within the business district and the residential areas were equally important.

Stakhiv would like to get a better sense of what the residents wanted and even take a straw poll, such as SurveyMonkey.com. Another point would be to tell the residents how much it would cost each Villager for water service in the downtown area and that this might be the first step to

getting water throughout the entire Village. Saenz noted that this beginning would be used to tackle the service to the entire Village should that be what is decided, using a different source. Gallasch asked if information could be made available to show Villagers the cost for the entire project to provide water to the whole Village.

After explaining how some other communities built their water systems, Burton provided his opinion on how Franklin could structure its funding. The use of Special Assessment Districts and additional sources for water were discussed.

Hansen thought the residents needed to know the data before voting on water: How much would it cost a homeowner if the Village put in public water? How much would taxes have to go up? Public meetings with accurate information would be necessary. Creech noted that Special Elections could be held in August or November. Saenz confirmed that the actual approved ballot language would come back to the Council for final approval.

Ballot language needed to be submitted and approved by May for an August election and by August for a November election, both of which would be special elections. Burton cautioned that it would probably take a couple of months for SOCWA to have a definite number and for Bloomfield Township to commit fully. He advised Council that once the ballot language was approved, a time frame would be established for the parties to move forward with a commitment.

Hansen commented that Council's next step would be to decide whether or not it wanted to put this issue on the ballot. For her there were two (2) questions to consider: Did the Council think it was reasonable to provide public water to the downtown area without assuming the entire Village should be done either immediately or within 5-10 years? What should Council do about the quality of the water and to what extent did it want to make decisions now for an uncertain future? She was also thinking about the water pollution factor and felt it was "when" and not "if". This was speculation and based on well-documented data stating there was encroaching pollution. That was the hard part of the question; making a decision now for future Village residents. The Village would be incurring expenses now for the next generation or two. Writing a check for the next year or five (5) years would be easy but what should the Village do about an uncertain future with risks that cannot be quantified and with uncertain outcomes.

Lamott opined that municipal water in Franklin should be available to all residents or none, noting that it was not fair to offer water in one area and not offer it in another. In addition the \$1.8 million expense for Franklin Road from 14 Mile to Scenic equates to \$60,000 per property, which if extrapolated to 1000 properties in Franklin, municipal water will cost \$60 million for the entire Village, which is not worth it. He continued stating that installation of municipal water at this time would require that some of our newly paved roads would have to be torn up, not a wise thing to do. He stated in conclusion that he was not comfortable obtaining water through Bloomfield Township and that if Franklin set up a water system, Franklin should deal directly with SOCWA, not through an intermediary.

Seltzer responded that he thought Council would be irresponsible not to consider this given what it knew at this moment. Even though Council did not have firm final factual proof, it had speculation and professional advice that the water issue could be a problem in the downtown.

Knowing these facts, how could Council ignore it? The timing of doing this was important and made sense; should the Village roads be paved now and then in five (5) years ripped up to install a water system? Does Council want to be pro-active or re-active?

Gallasch wondered if digging deeper wells would remedy the problem. Burton had no knowledge of the well depths or the depth of the aquifers but would look into that. He reminded Council of the water testing years ago when 6-8 wells which were scattered throughout the Village were dug. It was discovered that some of the lots off Telegraph had shallow wells and therefore had an issue with the quality of water. The well drillers had said deeper wells would have been better. The drillers also said that since other communities were getting off well water the aquifer would be able to supply more water to Franklin.

Stakhiv wanted to know what the residents wanted as they should have a “say”. She was also concerned about the downtown area with the chemical seepage into the ground water. Eventually it would get into the well water.

Vic Cestar, Franklin Rd., questioned the possibility of drilling deeper wells. Burton would research this idea.

Connie Ettinger, River Dr., had a question for Burton concerning the jurisdiction of the line under 14 Mile Rd. and the subsequent activity a few years ago. She then asked for someone to clarify what the problem was and what was the solution for the downtown. Stakhiv stated she had been asking and waiting for MDEQ’s report to answer “what were the problems?” Hansen detailed the problem, possible source, and possible affected area. She stressed that MDEQ had been and would continue to test the area. Ettinger was curious about removing the contaminated ground and Hansen responded by saying the area was quite large and, therefore, not a pathway seriously considered. Ettinger wondered if the other possible solution of removing the contaminants from the ground had been addressed before the ripping up of the newly paved roads, uprooting trees, etc. Hansen didn’t believe there was a solution for the extent of the ground contamination since widespread acres and acres might be involved. No, this issue had not been explored.

Creech stated that ballot language needed to be approved by August for a November Special Election and by May for an August Special Election.

Chief Averbuch answered some of Ettinger’s questions about the water valve on 14 Mile Rd. He agreed with Hansen’s remarks about the environmental issues. He spoke to the water issue on behalf of a firefighting aspect of it.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Stakhiv, seconded by Saenz to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes: Gallasch, Hansen, Lamott, Saenz, Seltzer, Stakhiv

Nays: None

Absent: Gordon

Motion carried

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Beke, Recording Secretary

Eileen H. Pulker, Clerk

Pamela Hansen, President