

CITY OF COSMOPOLIS
Workshop for Stormwater Utility
August 18, 2021

Mayor Kyle Pauley presiding.

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT

Candice Makos, Stana Cummings, Debbi Moran, Miles Wenzel, and Jim Ancich.

STAFF PRESENT

City Administrator Darrin Raines, Attorney Steve Johnson, Public Works Superintendent Jeff Nations, and Finance Director Julie Pope

Administrator Raines stated that for the last several months we have been discussing the possibility of a stormwater utility. He said currently it is funded by the Street department. Shared revenues from the State are being dispersed to Streets, Stormwater, and Flood Control. The shared revenues have been decreasing. Back in March, he sent the Council a packet stating what a Stormwater Utility is and what is needed. We do not currently have the funding to do everything that we need to do. Creating a stormwater utility would give us additional resources to take care of Stormwater and free up money in the Street fund to be able to get some projects done.

We looked at a Transportation Benefit District a few years ago. We would have either had to raise sales tax or license tab fees. We are so small that we would not receive much of a benefit from either of these.

We would charge a stormwater utility fee based on Equivalent Residential Unit. We are requesting to do a 5000 square foot residential unit. Since we have many lots that are 10,000 square feet, we would write the ordinance to make it one residential unit. A Residential Unit would have a charge of \$6.50 per month. The estimated revenue from the utility would approximately \$73,000 per year. This rate would put in the middle compared to the other cities around us.

Yesterday we found out we will be receiving \$145,000 from the Flood Authority to do an analysis of Mill Creek. This will tell us what needs to be done. The funding from the utility will help pay for any issues.

We have only cleaned out the storm drains one time in the last 34 years. This should be done at a minimum of every five years.

With the current funding we have, we do not have enough funds to do anything in streets or stormwater.

Councilmember Wenzel asked how much we would receive in 2022. Administrator Raines stated approximately \$73,000.

Councilmember Ancich asked if by creating the stormwater utility, would this free up money to relieve the street fund to help put in ADA ramps and other projects. Administrator Raines stated that about \$32,000 would remain in streets instead of being used for stormwater.

Councilmember Ancich asked if this the money has to be used only for stormwater or can it be used in other areas. Administrator Raines stated that it could only be used for stormwater.

Carl Sperring asked about equitability of ESU. He stated that his home is tied into the stormwater sewer, but others are not. He says that the ones that are not would be paying the same fee as he does. Administrator Raines states that the other properties that aren't tied into the system still impact the system as it rolls down into the system. Mr. Sperring asked if they get credit for the City's stormwater retention pond. Administrator Raines stated that if the pond was on his property and he was maintaining it then he would get credit.

Councilmember Ancich stated that the Public Works Committee has met to discuss this. He stated that the City hasn't had any money to do street repairs or sidewalk repairs. If we don't find any new funding sources, we will be in trouble. He stated that it is still cheaper to live in Cosmopolis than in any of the surrounding areas.

Jeremy Winn stated that he is a newer resident of Cosmopolis. He stated that some of the street issues is because of poor drainage. He thinks that drainage is going to be a bigger issue in the future. This seems important to protect our town.

Mayor Pauley stated that the ordinances are on the agenda for tonight's Council meeting.

Steve Davis stated that he agrees that we have to fund stormwater and it should be treated as a separate utility. He is concerned about equitable charging. He is hoping that this will give the Street fund more money for repairs.

Carl Sperring stated that he doesn't disagree with the utility and we have talked about it for years.

Mayor Pauley adjourned the meeting.

Finance Director

Attest:

Mayor