

**Minutes of Emergency Assembly Meeting
Held July 19, 2016**

Mayor David L. Jack called the Emergency Assembly meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., July 19, 2016, in the Assembly Chambers. Assembly Members Powell, Prysunka, Rooney, and Decker and were present. Assembly Members Blake and Mitchell were absent. Borough Manager Jeff Jabusch and Borough Clerk Kim Lane also attended.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Assembly Member Decker declared a potential Conflict of Interest to the item on the Agenda because she delivered fish to Trident and because one of her Board of Directors is an employee of Trident. Mayor Jack stated that he did not see that as a conflict of interest as it would not affect her financially directly. There were no objections from the Assembly.

ITEM OF BUSINESS

5a Discussion and possible action regarding the treated water shortage which affects the community of Wrangell and the local Fish Processing plants

PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Manager Jabusch provided a summary of the things that the City was doing to help the water shortage issue.

- City Departments taking conservation measures (pool, showers, docks, public restroom faucets)
- Looking and responding to water leaks
- Sending informational and conservation letters to all Wrangell Box Holders to save 30% to 50%; water saving tips
- Looking at ideas that Wayne, WTP operator has
- Long term plan – pilot study for a new plant in the future; type of water makes a difference

Wayne Kaer, 218 Berger Street: Voice his concern about the study that had been done with no outcome; he also voiced his concern about the upcoming plan to build the ANSEP High School. Where would the water come from to support the school? Where would you get the electricity come from?

Assembly Member Prysunka stated that nothing had been given to anyone at the Institute property; letter sent was to say that we support the idea.

Mayor Jack stated that the question was not on the subject on the Agenda.

Manager Jabusch stated that the past study had been on the reservoir; the problem today is the water that we treat coming from the Plant.

Gary Allen, 619 Evergreen Avenue: recommended that the Assembly look at extracting water from Sunrise Creek.

Amber Al-Haddad, Public Works Director and Wayne McHolland, Water Treatment Plant operator provided extensive detail on the treatment plant and the challenges that they are facing.

- Capacity to build water at the Water Treatment Plant
- We have water in the reservoir however the level is low
- Asking people to conserve water
- Dirtier Water; as banks become exposed the water coming into the reservoir is dirtier
- Not able to keep up with the amount of water going to the town
- Not a new problem, especially in the summer
- Having a problem with the filters keeping up with the water leaving the plant

Wayne McHolland, Water Treatment Plant operator provided extensive detail on the treatment plant:

- We have 2 water tanks that have a holding capacity of 424 thousand gallons; we do not have the ability to hold the total allowable capacity (approximately 50 thousand gallons less)
- Water coming into the Plant is atrociously dirty
- Sand filters that we have installed were never meant to process surface water; were meant to process ground water
- Had been a problem from the beginning
- Comes into the Plant, inefficiencies in the Roughing filtration system; clogs the main filters which then need to be cleaned every few days
- The plant was designed for the filters to last 3 months and be cleaned once a quarter
- Because the sediment settles in the sand, the bio mat does not form and therefore we have to go in every few days with a 4 wheeler w/plow and break up the sediment
- We then have to back flush the sediment out of the tanks
- When we back flush, we lose about 200 thousand gallons of water each time we clean a filter
- This time of the year (normally) we would get about a week out of the filter; hasn't been the case this year; cleaning every few days now

- When filters need to be cleaned, they overflow which causes a loss of production

Assembly Member Decker asked why this was a problem this year and not last year.

John Webby, 720 Stedman Street, Ketchikan, Trident Seafoods, asked Mr. McHolland if it was possible to install a portable sand filter.

Mr. McHolland replied that we are required by DEC to filter for multiple germs and viruses, we would have to get approval from DEC; we currently get this by ozone pre-treatment, filtration, and chlorination of the water.

Mr. McHolland said that we have one new generator that is designed to side inject ozone directly, and one old generator that does not; the old one must operate to match the new one so it is not working as it was designed to.

Assembly Member Prysunka questioned what measures the community can take; what immediate solutions are there.

Prysunka stated that it should be a policy that we do not sell water to cruise ships in the future.

Mr. McHolland stated that it would help to locate leaks and fix them. He also said that if we were to turn off the water, there is what they call inflow and outflow; everything that you put in the ground leaks; if you turn off the water; the negative pressure will cause the ground water to leak into the lines, which would cause a health risk.

Ms. Al-Haddad stated that they have taken steps to locate and fix leaks.

Assembly Member Powell asked if there was anything that we could get within the next two weeks (on a barge), that could help produce water that the fish processing plants could use.

Ms. Al-Haddad brought up an idea that Mr. McHolland had thought of to modify the Roughing Filter since it was not working very well; could possibly promote cleaner water; not a sure thing but might be worth a try.

In response to Assembly Member Decker, Mr. McHolland said that the water usage between the public and the fish processing plants was about 50/50.

Greg McCormack, Shoemaker Loop Road, asked is we could bypass the treatment plant and temporarily use unfiltered water.

Mr. McHolland said that would be a bad idea because the public would have to boil their water and because of EPA/DEC requirements (once the water was brought back online) we would have to test every single water line.

Zack Taylor, 630 Council Drive, asked if there was an ordinance or some sort of law enforcement for those who were wasting water.

Ms. Al-Haddad stated that there was no ordinance in our code at this time.

There was some discussion regarding the equality of the water consumption between the fish processing plants.

Mr. Webby stated that whatever the volume was, he was looking for a more equitable divide.

Ms. Al-Haddad stated that both of the fish processing plants were taking measures to effectively conserve water and use saltwater for their processing of fish.

Mr. Webby stated that they had to divert vessels to Ketchikan to process fish; costs a lot of money and lower quality fish. He stated that there was no way that they could stay in business this way; needs the Assembly to do something.

Vern Phillips, 114 4th Street, Sealevel Seafoods, stated that we need to come up with a solution to this problem; changes being made tonight where Sealevel would use 60% less fresh water.

Assembly Member Decker stated that Sealevel Seafoods does not have another fish processing plant where they could divert fish to; must come up with some sort of solution.

After more extensive discussion; Prysunka made the following motion:

M/S: Prysunka/Rooney, to authorize the Borough Manager to procure materials and supplies and labor to make improvements to the water processing system, as he sees fit.

M/S: Decker/Rooney, to amend the motion to add: to authorize the City Manager to reduce the flow of water to the Wrangell public, to offer reduced water rates to users

who reduce their water usage by 30%, explore options for solutions discussed tonight which include, but are not limited to: the catch basin filtration at the early stages and purchasing water, and to sit down with City Staff and the processors to establish daily or weekly water limitations.

Ms. Al-Haddad stated that if we reduced the flow to the public, we would be reducing the flow to everyone; reducing the flow of water to the processors would mean that we would have to close their water valve at the water main to stop the flow.

There was discussion that if we adjusted the rates, there would need to be an ordinance drawn up and taken through the process of adoption.

Emergency meeting recessed at 6:53 p.m.

Emergency meeting reconvened at 7:03 p.m.

Doug McCloskey, Wrangell Police Chief, reported that after looking in our Disaster Manual for the City, if the Assembly chose to, we could start the Incident Command System.

Chief McCloskey explained that by declaring a Water Crisis, this would allow the Borough Manager to access State resources. He read in our policy that loss of water does constitute a declaration of a local emergency.

Prysunka stated that by declaring an emergency, it would elevate awareness and promote the seriousness of the situation.

Rooney stated that we need to tread lightly because if we declare an emergency, the State could come in and take over; could require things that we may not want.

Chief McCloskey replied that we could always say no and withdraw our declaration.

After more discussion, the Assembly agreed that it would be a good idea to declare a water crisis.

Decker spoke in regards to her amendment to the pending motion; asked Manager Jabusch if he felt comfortable making the tough decisions if they came up. Manager Jabusch stated that he did feel comfortable with that responsibility.

Assembly Member Decker withdrew her amendment to the main motion, the seconder (Assembly Member Rooney) agreed with the withdrawal of the amendment.

Main motion approved unanimously by polled vote.

The Assembly requested that if we declare an emergency that the letter that was going out to the public, to be amended to add that verbiage.

Decker requested that we start to talk about a long-term fix; Seafood processors to come up with a long term fix and what their contribution to that fix could be.

Mayor Jack requested that there be an item added to the next agenda to discuss a new water treatment facility.

Manager Jabusch reported on the efforts to look at replacing the water treatment facility; may be an opportunity to get a USDA Loan/grant.

M/S: Prysunka/Powell, to authorize the Borough Manager to sign a declaration of a disaster in Wrangell, on behalf of the Assembly. Motion approved unanimously by polled vote.

Emergency meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

David L. Jack, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk

