



## **March 2, 2022 Meeting**

Chairman Rod Vargo called the meeting to order. Dan Wire, Rod Vargo, John Van Naarden, Elizabeth Garr, Bryan McMillian, Kody Tinnel, Bill Hartmann, Matthew Wirtz, Mike Kiester, and Frank Suárez attended the Tunnel Headquarters Building off Dwenger Avenue.

Rod Vargo noted that the September meeting is on September 7, the first Wednesday of that month. Kody Tinnel moved for approval of the December 1, 2021 meeting. It was seconded by John Van Naarden and approved unanimously.

## **Tunnel Works Neighborhood Projects Update – Mike Kiester**

Mike Kiester shared brief information from the construction report about the tunnel and then presented the Tunnel project and its related projects.

He shared that the drop shafts are all drilled and that work on the adits, the connecting pathway from drop shafts to the tunnel, was underway throughout the route.

Bill Hartmann asked how far above ground will the shafts be exposed. Mike explained that they would have access but flush with the ground or street. There will be a vent shaft that will be above ground.

Mike talked about the dewatering pump station, which will send flow to the ponds for treatment. Dan Wire asked how long is the dewatering process. Matthew Wirtz said it's about 40 hours.

Kody Tinnel asked how often will overflows occur once the tunnel is in operation.

Matthew Wirtz said we could see overflows if it would rain all day, but with the tunnel having a capacity of nearly 1 Billion Gallons and continuing to flow through gravity, pushing flow to the ponds, it would have to be heavy, consistent rain.

John Van Naarden asked if the pump shaft and connections would remain rock? Mike Kiester shared that a fiberglass pipe will connect to the drop shaft and the vent to the tunnel. Where the pipe meets the tunnel, we need to fill it with concrete, and then we will

Bryan McMillian asked if we were on schedule to complete the tunnel and its connections? Mike said challenges with inflation causing the product to go up and other tunnels in the Midwest hiring workers away could impact the schedule. City Utilities is trying to purchase products needed for construction in advance to have it ready when needed. John Van Naarden asked if buying products in advance would continue. Mike said yes.

## **Update on AMI Meter Installation - Frank Suárez & Ben Groeneweg**

Ben Groeneweg joined by phone.

Frank Suarez discussed AMI billing installation for neighborhoods in the City. He also discussed the problem with hiring new installers for the AMI system. City Utilities is short-staffed on installers with problems in retention through screening and training.

Ben Groeneweg commented that because of these problems with retaining installers that in six months, around 25% into the project timewise, only 4,000 installs have been completed putting the total amount of install at just less than 4%. He stated that the project is off to a rough start.

Kody Tinnel asked if Tribus employees are full-time employees with benefits which Frank and Ben confirmed.

Training part-time employees is also talked about as a possibility. Kody mentioned that he might have some prospects within Fort Wayne Community schools that could be interested in these install positions. Frank offered to follow up with information for some part-time jobs involving installers.

The contractor is behind, and Ben shared that our contract protects City Utilities if the contractor is behind. As of March 2, 2022, 30,000 meters were sitting in the warehouse. They are ready to be installed as soon as the labor shortcomings are resolved. The contract allows the City to fine the contractor \$2,000 a day for every day they are behind on the installation completion date of August 11, 2023.



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Frank and Ben talked about saving money by sharing transmission expenses with AEP. AEP is behind on its installation as well.

Elizabeth Garr mentioned a concern about AEP's process and going to the house to connect the new electrical meter without telling her they would disconnect her power during the process of switching to the new meter. She asked if it would be the same with the water meters. Frank Suárez stated that installers will not come to customers' homes unannounced but will work with customers on getting appointments scheduled for installation. Rod shared he had a similar issue with AEP.

Ben discussed how the installation schedule with specific neighborhoods first keeps up to date with the EPA mandates and prioritizes areas in line for grant funding for lead line replacement. Our meter installers will document the material used for the homeowner's pipe that connects to the meter. If the pipe is lead, City Utilities will let the property owner know and share information about the Utilities' Lead Line Replacement program to replace their lead pipe. In the areas where it is not AEP, such as Southwest or North, cellular systems will be used to call up the data.

## **Other Business/Items**

Frank said there would be Open Houses at the Filtration Plant on May 7 and the WPCP on the 21st, both Saturdays from 10am-noon for all ages.

Frank mentioned a new item; that City Utilities' water is top five in the world for the Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting competition, finishing fourth once again.

Rod Vargo called for adjournment. All seconded it, and the meeting was adjourned.