

# CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

## City's Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Plant

January 12, 2006 – 6:30 p.m.

Council Chambers

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City Council Present: Mayor Marchand, Assistant Mayor Ferrini, Councilors Grasso, Dwyer, Reynolds, Pantelakos, Whitehouse, Smith and Hynes

Officials Present: John P. Bohenko, City Manager; Robert Sullivan, City Attorney; David Allen, Deputy Public Works Director; Peter Rice, City Engineer; Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director; Gail Cunningham, Controller; Paula Anania, Chief Plant Operator; and Kelli L. Barnaby, City Clerk

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### **I. Call to Order**

At 6:30 p.m., Mayor Marchand called the work session to order and advised the City Council and members of the public that this meeting is for educational purposes and input may be available by the public at future City Council meetings. He recognized several members of the City's Delegation, State Representatives Jim Powers, Terie Norelli, and Jacqueline Cali-Pitts.

### **II. Introduction**

City Manager Bohenko advised the City Council that the staff has put together a presentation on the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Plant to discuss the history of the plant as well as our plans for the future.

### **III. Presentation**

Deputy Public Works Director Allen provided the City Council with an outline of the meeting. He discussed the 5-year National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit, which was issued in 1985, and a draft of the new permit that was issued in 2005. He spoke to the extensive wastewater infrastructure improvement plan. He reported that the plan is based on science, economics and regulatory policy. He advised the City Council that the staff is working on a rate study and will be presenting it to the City Council in the near future. He announced that the State of New Hampshire has awarded Plant Operator of the year to our own Paula Anania. He said that we have a very professional and hard working team, which is critical to our operation. He provided an overview of the system, reporting that the City has 2 wastewater treatment plants, 115 miles of pipes, 20-pump station and 50% combined sewers. He discussed the work that has been completed over the last 6 to 7 years and the sewer separation project. He advised the Council that our Water Quality Program has evolved over time and to date the City has eliminated 11 out of 14 combined sewer discharges. He said that upgrades to the collection system have had a direct benefit to water quality and have helped minimize street and basement flooding.

City Engineer Peter Rice advised the Council that the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit regulates what is allowed out of a wastewater treatment plant into the river. He said that permits are to be renewed every five years. He reported that the Piscataqua River is listed on the 303 (d) list and the pollutants of concern are mercury, PCBs, dioxin, and enterococci bacteria however, Peirce Island is not cited as the source. He said that the pollutants are from leaking sewer pipes, failed septic systems and storm water runoff. He said we conduct Annual River monitoring. He spoke to the River Monitoring Study conducted by Dr. Allan Michael which showed there is no discernable impact caused by the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Plant on the river. He advised the Council that the EPA concurred that there was no discernable impact on the environment. He said projects completed since 1997 have been at a cost of \$15 million dollars. He discussed a future project, upgrading the Deer Street Pumping Station.

Deputy Public Works Director Allen advised the City Council that the EPA issued a draft permit with 301(h) Waiver in February of 2005 and that the permit is still under review. He spoke to the significance of a secondary treatment plant. He said that there are steps we should follow prior to secondary treatment. He said we need to complete the CSO Sewer Separation, evaluate our options and secure funding to build a new facility. He advised the Council that it will cost approximately \$35 to \$50 million dollars to build a new facility along with additional operation and maintenance costs of \$1 million to \$1.5 million per year. He said it is also important to consider the cost impact to the ratepayer. He said that the staff would prepare policy alternatives and make a presentation for the City Council to review.

City Manager Bohenko said that the City Council needs to let the staff know what options you would like us to proceed on. He asked the Council to allow the staff 30 to 60 days to look at this issue and prepare the presentation for their review. He said we would be holding a work session prior to the January 23<sup>rd</sup> City Council meeting to discuss the Madbury Water Treatment Plant.

#### **IV. Questions and Discussion**

Councilor Raynolds asked what other elements we will see in this year's capital improvement Plan. Deputy Public Works Director Allen advised the Council that they would continue to move forward with our sewer separation plans and our 201 facilities plan.

Councilor Whitehouse express concern regarding the cost involved in building a secondary treatment plant. He suggested an impact fee to developers for the construction that would have impact on our water and sewer systems. City Manager Bohenko advised Councilor Whitehouse that impact fees must be consistent and uniformed. Councilor Whitehouse said he would like us to move forward with impact fees in the next 30 days. He said that developers are impacting our treatment plants.

City Manager Bohenko announced that the rate study would be reviewed with the City Council in March.

Councilor Pantelakos asked what the next step would be for the City Council. City Manager Bohenko said that the staff would come back in 30 to 60 days with a report outlining an action plan. He said that the City Council would be asked to endorse the action plan as presented.

Assistant Mayor Ferrini thanked the Public Works Department for their presentation this evening. He said that it was a great presentation that brought a considerable amount of information. He said the Public Works Department always focuses on the needs of the City.

Councilor Raynolds spoke regarding the Piscataqua River not meeting water quality standards. Deputy Public Works Director Allen advised Councilor Raynolds that they never received any information from the Conservation Law Foundation contradicting their findings.

Councilor Dwyer said it is important to separate the impact on environment from the impact in funding.

Councilor Pantelakos said that over the last 7 to 8 years City Manager Bohenko and staff have worked hard to correct a system that had not been touched in the last 25 to 35 years. She said that we need to move forward on this matter but slowly to ensure that everything is done properly.

City Manager Bohenko announced that the next meeting of the City Council would be on January 23, 2006. He advised the City Council that the agenda would go out on Friday due to the short week.

Mayor Marchand thanked the staff for the presentation and the residents that attended this meeting.

## **V. Adjournment**

At 8:00 p.m., Mayor Marchand closed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kelli L. Barnaby, CMC  
City Clerk