Tippecanoe County Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting
2nd Public Hearing
Master Utility Plan for the Buck Creek Area

Minutes
Monday, September 23, 2019
6:00 pm
Tippecanoe Room, Tippecanoe County Office Building
20 N 3rd Street, Lafayette, Indiana

Commissioners present: Vice President Tracy A. Brown and Member Thomas P. Murtaugh. President David S. Byers was absent.
Also present were: Neal Brook from Kleinpeter Consulting Group, Mike Gangstad with the Lochmueller Group and Commissioners’ Assistant Paula Bennett.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Vice President Brown called the meeting to order and introduced Neal Brook from Kleinpeter Consulting Group.

II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED MASTER UTILITY PLAN FOR THE BUCK CREEK AREA - Neal Brook & Mike Gangstad with the Lochmueller Group.

Mr. Brook stated that this was the final public hearing to present the master utility planning study that evaluated the potential for regional drinking water, waste water and storm water systems servicing the Buck Creek, Americus and Colburn areas. The plan was funded by a grant from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs ($50,000) and Tippecanoe County ($5,560).

Mr. Gangstad stated this is the sixth meetings with citizens to discuss their concerns and needs. Mr. Gangstad indicated that the completed Master Utility plan should be considered a roadmap that Tippecanoe County can use to resolve the utility related issues in the three communities. The plan considered three alternatives for drinking water and waste water and two alternatives for storm water systems. The drinking water and waste water options were:
1) a centralized system, 2) individual systems for each community and 3) obtaining service from an existing utility (either Delphi or Lafayette). Specific details were developed, and life cycle costs generated for each. The Plan recommends a centralized system for drinking water and waste water (located in the vicinity of Americus) with pipes connecting to Buck Creek and Colburn. Storm water systems have different characteristics, and the plan recommends individual systems for each community with two options considered: swales and culverts vs buried pipes. In Americus and Buck Creek the recommendation is for a centralized enclosed pipe, as a backbone, with swales and culvers feeding into it. Colburn is different because buried pipes are not as logical, and the recommendation is to clean out existing swales and install new culverts.

Commissioner Murtaugh asked for further details about the Life Cycle Cost analysis and Mr. Gangstad stated that it included the initial costs of construction (for piping, a centralized plant, swales and culverts) as well as operation and maintenance costs (electricity, repairs & replacements, certified operator, testing, etc.) for the life span of the facilities with all costs calculated to present day.

Mr. Gangstad then elaborated on the two alternatives considered for the centralized waste water collection system: gravity vs pumping options (step and grinder systems). The study
recommends that pumps and grinders be installed at each residence with a buried gravity fed collection basin and a grinder that would lift the waste and feed it to a forced main and onto the new treatment plant.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kevin Weimert asked why the central systems would be in the Americus area. Mr. Gangstad replied that for waste water the Wabash provided a better location to discharge because of the more stringent regulatory requirements for discharge into small streams. For drinking water, the elevation difference is less of a factor because it will be under pressure anyway and a deep well system is preferable. Commissioner Murtaugh stated that the most pressing need is for waste water and that drinking water will probably be put off until sometime in the future.

Commissioner Brown summarized why the Plan was developed stating that most small towns in Tippecanoe County have small platted lots and were developed when there were few standards for installing septic systems. Those systems are now aging and replacing them on small lots is often not possible. Additionally, some of the septic system overflows tie into old agricultural tiles and then into surface water streams causing at least one IDEM complaint. The Commissioners felt that it was appropriate to have the Master Utility Plan done now and what they might cost home owners as well as began the planning process knowing that in Romney the centralized waste water system took 15 years from planning to construction.

Kay Miller said that she lives close to Americus and has a 120 foot well that has sulfur water from the underground shale layer of rock.

Harold Bechner has several properties in the Buck Creek area and was curious about the time frame, the location of the treatment plant and the cost to home owners. Commissioner Murtaugh stated that the next step would probably be the formation of a sewage treatment district and governing board which is at least a year off.

Barb Knochel asked for clarification about the priority of the projects and Mr. Gangstad replied that the highest priority was waste water, then storm water and then drinking water.

John Metro asked if there is a map showing who is in the area affected. Commissioner Brown stated there is a map in the Plan and there was discussion of what properties were in and what were outside the study area.

Harold Bechner asked if the project was going to be funded primarily with grant funds or property owner assessments. Commissioner Murtaugh stated that construction of the Romney sewer was funded through grant money, a forgivable loan and a Tippecanoe County contribution, and that property owners pay only the monthly operating costs.

Commissioner Murtaugh stated that the Plan is online and too large to email, but a copy of the map will be displayed at the fire station and the post office if that can be arranged.

- Commissioner Murtaugh read Resolution 2019-25-CM Utility Master Plan for the Americus, Colburn and Buck Creek Area and moved to approve the resolution, second by Commissioner Brown. Motion carried.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – None
Commissioner Murtaugh moved to adjourn and Vice President Brown adjourned the meeting.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE COUNTY OF TIPPECANOE

Absent
David S. Byers, President

Tracy A. Brown, Vice President

Thomas P. Murtaugh, Member

ATTEST:

Robert A. Plantenga, Auditor 10/7/2019

Minutes prepared by John Thomas, Recording Secretary