

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
Special Work Session – January 23, 2017

Pursuant to due call and notice, a special work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, January 23, 2017, at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of City Hall, Mayor Albrecht presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Albrecht, Meehlhause, Hellquist, Erickson, Larson Absent: Johnson

Staff Present: City Manager Nate Mathews, Public Works Director/City Engineer Craig Gray, City Attorney Alan Felix, Water Supt. Todd Anderson, City Clerk Kay Murphy

Others Present: Mn Department of Health - Todd Johnson, Jim Kelly (via phone)

Mayor Albrecht stated that the purpose of the work session was to discuss the City's water system.

Gray stated that in 2008 the MPCA conducted a survey of fire departments around the state to identify possible locations where Perfluorochemicals (PFC) containing Aqueous Film Forming Foams (AFFF) had been repeatedly used for training for firefighting purposes. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and MPCA staff identified Bemidji as one of those locations where nearby water supply wells were potentially at risk.

Jim Kelly, Mgr. of Environmental Assessment with Mn Dept. of Health (MDH), stated that PFCs are a large class of chemicals used to make coatings that resist oil, water and stains. In humans, the correlation studies suggest possible links between PFCs and some health risk outcomes. He stated that the PFCs got into the City's wells through fire training activities using PFC-bearing foams at the airport. The groundwater flows to the southeast and the training area is within the capture zone of the city wells. PFCs were first detected in 2009 which were well below Health Risk Limits at that time. He stated that Wells 4 and 7 exceed EPA Health Advisory values issued in 2016.

Gray stated that City staff is working with the MDH to "blend" the water from various wells to keep the PFC level low. He stated that the city needs to pump about 2,500 gallons per minute (gpm) to maintain the water supply which is done by running a variety of wells at different gpm's. Discussion followed regarding shutting down Wells 4 and 7. Gray responded that shutting down those wells would likely result in the remaining wells drawing the PFCs into them which would create a short-term solution.

Next Steps

Todd Johnson, MDH Engineer, stated that the MPCA will investigate "new" training area and evaluate current conditions in previously investigated training area. Evaluation options, which may include: 1) Blending to keep concentrations below a Hazard Index of 1, which the City is currently doing; 2) Notify city water users if Hazard Index is greater than 1 by giving them options for reducing exposure (bottled water, small filters, etc.); and, 3) Treatment – Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) noted as a proven treatment used in Oakdale, MN and two other possible treatments were also noted.

Gray stated that there was no action for the Council to consider tonight. However, he wanted them to know that in the next three months he will be seeking Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a specialized water consultant.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Larson, seconded by Meehlhause, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay M. Murphy
City Clerk