



City will consider increase of sewer impact fees

BY ADAM WALLWORTH Northwest Arkansas Times

Posted on Saturday, October 1, 2005

URL: <http://www.nwanews.com/story.php?paper=nwat&storyid=32796>

The Fayetteville City Council will be asked to approve a contract Oct. 18 for a study to increase the sewer impact fee based on the increased cost of the planned westside sewer plant.

The contract received a favorable recommendation by the council's Sewer Committee on Thursday with two of the three members attending voting in favor of the contract.

The fee was calculated based on the cost of the westside sewer treatment plant and effluent line, which was estimated at \$42.5 million, said Tim Conklin, director of planning and development management.

The effluent line was removed from the plant project, which reduced the price to \$39.6 million, but the project now is estimated to cost more than \$61 million. The council is set to hold a special meeting Oct. 20 to approve a contract with Brasfield & Gorrie to build the new plant, which has the potential to come in less than \$61 million depending upon possible sales tax exemptions and product purchases.

The city has been negotiating with the firm to build the plant since the lowest bid came in \$14 million more than the city's certified amount. The project as it was originally bid included construction of Broyles Road and wetland mitigation, which had a low bid of \$62 million.

The new project does not include the road or wetland mitigation.

Ward 3 Alderman Bobby Ferrell cast the lone dissenting vote, arguing that the increase would not be needed had the sewer plant been constructed on time. Had the project been completed on time, it would not be as expensive, he said

The plant was proposed to be completed last month, but is now expected to be finished in 2008.

Conklin said that in communities that have impact fees, it is standard to review them every few years. The proposed contract would be the first phase, which would be followed up with a request for study on

what to charge for increasing the capacity of the sewer collection system.

Steve Davis, director of finance and internal services, told the committee a decision also must be made as to whether impact fees should be charged to new development or new sewer connections. The current law is not clear as to whether a person that has been on a septic system should be charged the fee when they hook on to the city's sewer system, he said.

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