

Memo to City Council, Staff and Public regarding Water Treatment Plant

From: Chad Beumer City Council Member for Ward 2

Council, Staff and Citizens of Northfield,

I have taken some time to review the plans and specs for the water treatment plant and have some notes that I feel prudent to bring to your attention especially now that we know the bids are roughly \$20M over the projected costs for this phase of the project. Below are some observations I have made that could present an opportunity to save the city and the citizens some money. I will list them all first then give my recommendations at the end of this memo. The page number references are to the PDF page in the plan set.

Page 84 is the Restoration Planting pg. There are 361 ball and burlap (B&B) trees of a 2.5" diameter. These trees depending on species are \$700-\$1000 per tree planted.

Pages 85-89 Talks about a water feature and has a note about interpretive paving, this paving is spec'd to be stamped concrete. There is a large quantity of this scheduled to be done. Pg. 88 shows the sidewalk section details and spec's the stamped concrete in addition to sandblasted etching along with water feature details. As a note stamped concrete costs 2-3 times what standard concrete costs. Pg 89 shows details for a 2' tall concrete curb walls for public art.

Page 152 is the Code analysis plan and shows the general floor plan layout. It shows a meeting room at 1099 sq. ft. It also shows a training room of 512 sq. ft. along with an exercise room at 551 sq. ft. This plan also shows a parking garage at 14,482 sq. ft.

Total project costs were determined to be around \$60M. The winning bid was \$61,840,000.00, this bid does not include the entire project, the infrastructure work, the extension of Jefferson Parkway, the sanitary trunk line to the north and the RO membranes are not included. This project appears to be nearing the \$83 million mark which is nearly \$23M over the original projected project costs.

Staff is recommending we approve the bids, I have some major concerns with doing so.

1. The low bid was \$61,840,00.00. The highest bid is \$75,573,112.00 That is a \$13,733,112.00 spread. This should be a red flag. What was missed?? How many change orders will we see for items that were not accounted for in the bid phase?? This is not a referendum project which would hold a price.
2. Per the report in our 1/21 packet Bakertilly is recommending that we raise the rates for FY's 2026 and 2027 to now 50% vs. the previously recommended 28.5%. This is substantial and now puts us at a projected higher rate than our comparable cities other than Robbinsdale.
3. We are now over what was projected as a total project cost by nearly \$2M and we haven't bid out the entire project. What will these bids come back at? My assumption is that they will be higher to some extent.

I recommend a no vote for the approval of this project, not to kill it but to allow staff to regroup and find some cost savings. I feel this project best be taken in a phased approach instead of all at once. I also have some major concerns with security here and strongly feel that this building should not be built to create a public attraction or destination, but be built with the intent for it to do what it needs to do, treat our water. This building is in desperate need of having Bolton and Menk do some value engineering, this will cut out the wanted items and focus on the needed.

I also propose that we eliminate the RO treatment portion of the project and any building sq. footage and mechanicals involved with this portion of the building. Per Justin the primary reason for adding this is for water softening and just in case we need it in the future for PFAS. We do not currently have a PFAS problem we have a manganese problem which the gravity filtration will address. This will reduce the cost more than \$11M. It is not the city's responsibility to soften the water for its residents. By eliminating this portion it will open the door down the road to gain more federal funding and may also allow the science of treating PFAS to come up with more effective ways to doing so. Maybe we get a more water friendly way to treat it without wasting 15-20% of the water used in the process.

I also propose that we reduce the size of the parking garage or eliminate it all together for now. We (the citizens and council) were sold on a parking garage to house the hydro-vac truck which is understandable. The garage as currently planned could house a fleet of them. The staff vehicles do not need to park inside, look in the city hall parking lot on any given day or just take a drive around town, cars and trucks park outside all the time.

I propose that the meeting room and the building portion is removed from the plans and that the lobby is shrunk massively. This shouldn't be a building where we have people visiting it. This should be secure with a controlled and limited access.

The exercise room must be eliminated, it is not the citizens responsibility to supply a workout facility for staff. If you eliminate this portion of the office space it will allow the training room to be combined with it to make a larger meeting/training room which should not be open to the public.

The stamped concrete with sandblasted etching along with the water feature and public art wall should also be eliminated. These items suggest this building should be open to the public in which it should not and are a very nice want but no a need.

Security seems to be lacking as well. Eliminating the above listed items is a start but there in my opinion should be a fence around the property with security cameras. This building should not be a public destination as some of the plan details would suggest. The entirety of the city's water will run through this facility. There is no easier way for someone wishing to do harm on a large scale to do so than through this building. Cyber security should also be applied if not already. We have fences around the waste treatment plant and I feel that it is even more important to do so here.

The façade of the building is another area where we could gain some cost savings. It looks fantastic as planned but that comes with a cost that is not necessary.

In short, I will not support accepting the bids for this project as planned and doing so will place a huge burden on the already overburdened citizens of this city.

Sincerely,

Chad M. Beumer

City Council Ward 2 Representative