



Legislation Text

File #: 18-296, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: June 5, 2018

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: Monte Nelson, Chief of Police

Approve New Joint Funding Agreement for River Gages between the U.S. Geological Survey and the City of Northfield

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council approves the attached Joint Funding Agreement and authorizes the Mayor, City Clerk, and Chief of Police to sign the agreement.

Summary Report:

After the 2010 Flood in the Northfield-Rice County area, local, state, and federal authorities recognized the need for improved monitoring of the Cannon River. As a result, the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) installed and improved river gages in various locations along the Cannon River and the related drainage.

In 2013, the many parties impacted by the flooding issues entered into a 5-year joint funding agreement to maintain the river gages. According to the agreement, Northfield agreed to pay \$8,352 over the 5-year period, 2013-2017, to cover costs related to the river gage at County Road 29 between Faribault and Northfield. This gage has become very useful when monitoring changing river levels; both public safety staff and local business owners have learned to check the gage readings during potential flood events. The annual payments were deducted from the Emergency Preparedness line in the Police budget. The agreement expired in October 2017.

In December 2017, representatives from the various parties of the original agreements met to discuss funding options and a new agreement. James Fallon of the USGS organized the meetings, discussions, and funding scenarios. The meetings included representatives from USGS, Dakota County, Rice County, Faribault, Dundas, Northfield, Cannon Falls, Goodhue County, Carleton College, Minnesota Pollution Control, MN-DOT, National Weather Service and others.

Fallon explained new funding distribution was necessary due to changes in USGS funding and requests from some of the parties of the original agreement. In particular, Dakota County did not want to contribute to maintenance of the County Rd. 29 gage. Over the last several years, Dakota County has made significant improvements to the Lake Byllesby dam, and they do not rely on information from the County Rd. 29 gage for operations at the dam.

As a result of funding changes, USGS asked Rice County, Dundas, and Northfield to pay a larger share of maintenance of the County Rd. 29 gage. Northfield Chief of Police Nelson met with Northfield city staff and

then with Rice County Emergency Manager Jennifer Hauer-Schmitz and Dundas City Administrator John McCarthy to examine funding options. Northfield city staff decided it would be more appropriate for any future river gage payments to come from the Stormwater Fund. USGS, Rice County, Dundas and Northfield representatives eventually agreed to a 5-year funding plan that would result in a total Northfield commitment of \$20,114.

Please see the three attachments for additional details. Attachment 1 shows the proposed funding for all Cannon River gages in the area, including contributions from the various participating parties. Information related to Northfield funding and the County Rd. 29 gage is highlighted in yellow. Attachment 2 is the proposed Joint Funding Agreement between USGS and City of Northfield. Attachment 3 is a map showing locations of the USGS gages in the Cannon River Watershed area.

Staff strongly supports the Northfield City Council approval for Northfield to enter into the proposed 5-year funding agreement and the annual payments be made from the Stormwater Fund. Staff believes it is important to maintain the County Rd. 29 river gage. The information gathered from the gage is important to city staff, our community at large, and our downtown businesses that are significantly impacted by flood events. Our participation in the agreement is also an important piece of Northfield cooperation with our many area public safety entities, cities, counties and the state of Minnesota.

Alternative Options:

The Council could choose not to approve the funding agreement and ask staff to either re-negotiate the Northfield funding level or not participate at all. It would be difficult to re-negotiate the funding, because other parties have already approved (or soon will approve) their funding agreements. It might not be possible to change the funding levels.

Not participating in the funding agreement does not seem prudent in light of the frequent flooding events Northfield has experienced over the last 9 years.

Financial Impacts:

The proposed agreement would result in the following payments:

2018:	\$3,865
2019:	\$3,942
2020:	\$4,021
2021:	\$4,102
2022:	\$4,184
Total:	\$20,114

Tentative Timelines:

Upon Council approval, the joint funding agreement would be signed by the Mayor, City Clerk and Chief of Police. The signed agreement would be sent to USGS and be in effect for the 5-year period, 2018 - 2022.