

AUBURN: A YEAR IN REVIEW

Winter 2020

City of Auburn

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Council meeting- 2nd Monday

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City is awarded a \$300,000 Community Block Grant For the Water Well Project

May 2018 the City Engineer conducted a study on all four components of the water system including the water wells, water treatment, water distribution and water storage. The highest priority for the city was the city wells. The city currently has one active well constructed in 1997 and a stand-by well constructed in 1921. The water supply does not meet requirements of the Iowa DNR for long term reliability, meaning the standby well cannot be used on a regular and continuous basis.

The City evaluated rural water as an option and determined that it would be more costly to the Auburn residents and decided to go forward with a building a second active well. The new well will be located 45 feet west of the northwest corner of the city shop, allowing the city the 200 feet radius control of the land that the Iowa DNR requires without affecting the nearby agricultural property.

The City applied for a Community Block Grant and in March 2020 was awarded \$300,000, which will pay for more than half of the estimated \$571,000 well project. The remaining \$271,000 will be paid for with a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Loan. The SRF Loan program is available for improvements to the water system for a 20 year period at a low interest rate. The current interest rate is 1.75%.

Since the city was proactive in this project it allowed time to apply for funding to minimize the increase in water rates. Residents will see a slow increase over the next two years. The increase is estimated to be 5% to 8% yearly.

City's Response to COVID - 19 Pandemic and Receives Cares Act Funding

On March 17, 2020 Governor Reynolds issued a State of Public Health Disaster Emergency activating the public health response and recovery aspects of the State Disaster Emergency Plan. The proclamation also allows state agencies additional flexibility in responding to the unprecedented COVID-19 situation.

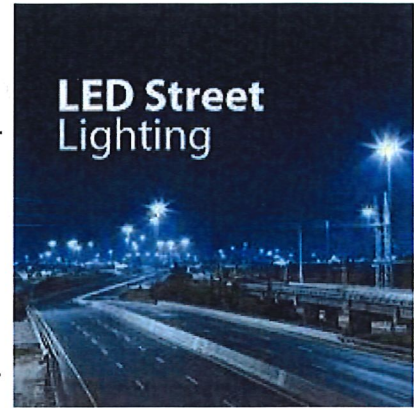
In response the City closed city hall, but allowed the library to continue to provide curbside service and the city clerk worked remotely giving the city time to create a plan to provide a safe environment for both the public and city employees. City Council and Library board also met electronically allowing city business to continue while meeting all open meeting requirements.

June 2020 the city installed a door security system to limit the number of people in the building, required masks in city buildings, and provided hand sanitizer for everyone entering the building. This system allowed the library to open to the public with restrictions, such as limited number of people at a time and limiting the amount of time you could be in the library. This system also allows the city clerk to resume working in the city office and the City Council and Library Board to meet in the building while being able to follow all recommendations from the CDC. These protocols will stay in effect until further notice.

September 2020 Governor Reynolds released funds from the Cares Act giving local governments an opportunity to apply for reimbursements for COVID related expenses. The City Clerk applied and was awarded the maximum of \$7248.80. This paid for the most of the door security system, new door in the clerk's office; law enforcement contract for the 1st and 2nd quarters; masks, sanitizer and plex-glass dividers for both the library and city clerk's office.

City Awarded a Energy Efficiency Grant for Street Lights

The city was awarded a Energy Efficiency grant from Heartland Consumer Power a to install LED fixtures in the remaining street lights. The city has 72 street light in town and began the process 5 years ago to change the High Pressure Sodium lights to LED. The city has installed 40 LED leaving 32 left. This project when completed will help the community save money:



Energy efficiency. LED fixtures use significantly less power to operate than incandescent fixtures. According to a study by the Missouri Center for Transportation Infrastructure and Safety at the Missouri University of Science and Technology (Missouri S&T), LEDs can provide a 93 percent energy savings.

Bulb longevity. LEDs contain no mercury and produce less heat than other bulbs so that the unit can work efficiently without premature bulb burnout. LED bulbs transfer heat over the area of the lamp evenly, and the unit lasts longer as a result. Missouri S&T estimates the lifespan of an LED bulb at 10 years.

Maintenance advantages. While traditional bulbs need to be replaced as soon as the bulb goes out, LED fixtures contain many small individual bulbs that create a uniform glow so it is hardly noticeable when a few of the small bulbs go out. Maintenance can be scheduled at regular intervals rather than in response to instances of street lights burning out.

Lagoon Project to be Completed in June 2021

The City received a new wastewater permit in December 2016 including requirements for the wastewater treatment facility to meet E-coli limits. The existing wastewater treatment lagoon was not consistently meeting the E-Coli limits. The City Engineer conducted a Facility Plan and submitted a compliance strategy to the DNR in December 2017.

The current wastewater facility was constructed in 1977. There had been very few improvements to the lagoon facility. In particular, the control gates have not been upgraded or replaced since the lagoon was constructed. These cast iron gates have a limited life span and have now reached a condition where they are considered beyond repair. It was determined the lagoon facility cannot achieve compliance with the E-coli limits unless the control gates are replaced.

The Lagoon project to renovate and upgrade the existing control gates will be completed in June 2021. This project is considered a repair and maintenance project and was not eligible for any grants. The city financed the project through the State Revolving Loan Fund. The SRF loan program provides loans to public entities at a low interest rate for a period of 20 years, and the current interest rate is 1.75%.