

Dear Residents of Lafayette,

October 1, 2002

Your Council has been hard at work since you elected us to office last February. In addition to our regularly scheduled meetings on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, we have had many other meetings: special, executive session, meetings to interview city lawyers and administrators, a Saturday retreat, so that on a number of occasions we met 3 times a week. It had been our intention to start a monthly newsletter directly from the Council some time ago but getting started is always the hard part! We hope you will find this letter informative. We would really appreciate any comments you have.

SEWER PLANT

Our biggest challenge upon taking office was to divert the sewer design direction put in place by the previous council to a much more affordable solution. The first design came in at \$3 million over budget and nearly a year late and would have necessitated a very substantial increase in our already high utility rates. As of August 22, 2002, we have secured an engineer with a signed contract who has committed to designing a plant in the range of \$5 million. This will leave us enough money out of the funds already in place to deal with what is called our I and I problem, infiltration and inflow (the amount of water that leaches into the sewer system through faulty manholes and drainpipes.) This situation puts an increased load on the plant which then would have to be built bigger to deal with the larger volume, thus increasing the cost.

This has been a major achievement and the council has come through it stronger because we now see what can be accomplished given the determination to work for the benefit of the citizens.

FORMER AND INTERIM CITY ADMINISTRATOR

To set a new direction for the city, the council dismissed the former city administrator. Although we were contractually obligated to severance pay this amounted to just over \$24,000 and afforded gave us a new start. We have learned from this experience how to write contracts so as to better protect the city and your tax dollars.

Luckily for the City after dismissing the city administrator, the Council of Governments was able to provide us with an interim city administrator who we interviewed several days later. Richard Van Orman was on board very quickly and his lifetime of experience in local government is serving us well.

Other staff changes include the hiring of a new city attorney after our previous lawyer resigned. This council intends to closely watch the city's legal expenses so they stay at a reasonable yearly amount. For small cities this is around \$14,000, rather than the \$70,00-80,000 we were incurring.

PERMANENT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

We are in the process of selecting a new full time city administrator and are waiting for the application process to close on September 6. We anticipate having a new administrator able to start in November at the start of our new budget period.

SODA ASH/TELEMETRY

We also have just signed a contract for the construction of a soda ash injection system (to deal with the high lead content of our water) and a telemetry system putting our wells and reservoir on a computerized system to maintain their balance. This was another issue of unfinished business which we brought to conclusion.

WATER PROJECT

Our joint water project with the city of Dayton begun 4 years ago is actually well on the way to being constructed. Our biggest setback in proceeding with the project was opposition from the neighboring farm community who kept this dispute in the courts for several years. Since the city issued a \$4 million bond issue in 2000, work is going ahead, although the total fund is somewhat diminished by legal fees. The wells have been drilled but testing is not yet complete on water quality. Construction bids for the pipeline connecting the well to Lafayette's water system will close late September and by mid October Council should have the recommendation from staff on the company to select. Construction could begin in February of 2003, taking 1 year to complete. A little over a third of the money has been spent to date.

RULES AND CHARTER AMENDMENT FOR NOVEMBER 2002 BALLOT

In addition to grappling with the above large issues, the Council has tended to its daily "housekeeping" chores of revisiting the Charter and Council Rules and has made changes to them to better aid the Council in accomplishing its business. One significant change is the dispensing with Roberts Rules of Order which is not at all used by small cities or even large ones. It is such a detailed document that it often hampers the process of government. We are working on developing our own rules to guide us. We are also developing rules of conduct for our parks and they will be posted there when ready.

You will see some of these changes on your ballot in November, the most significant being the adoption of spending limits on capital improvement projects of more than \$1 million requiring the vote of residents. This is a change of far-reaching consequence intended to protect residents from taking on expense they can't afford. This will also require the involvement of you, the voting public, to stay abreast of the issues and become part of the solution.

FUTURE

Some issues on the horizon are an analysis of our utility rates. This was originally part of the Citizen Utility Board's job description, but when the previous Council disbanded the Board before its work was complete, this analysis fell by the wayside. Once the CUB is reactivated, which Council is working on, this study can begin. A notice will be posted on the reader board in front of city hall for residents to apply to join the Utility Board.

Another project is how to fund a new reservoir. The site for one was bought several years ago, but now money needs to be found for the construction of one.

STATUS OF SUBDIVISIONS

Work on the 3 subdivisions along Bridge Street continues; total units is approximately 200.

These subdivisions were approved a number of years ago and were included in the present sewer plant's capacity. With major improvements just completed on the existing plant at a cost of \$21,000 (to keep the plant functioning well until a new plant can be constructed), we feel we are in good shape to take care of increased population from the Bridge St. developments. It has yet to be determined just how much increased capacity the existing plant might hold because of the improvements.

We have a new subdivision, Green Hills Estate, containing 83 lots, next to Wascher Elementary School. The developer expects to break ground in the spring of 2003.

Properties remaining to develop are fast dwindling; we still have Phase 4 of Hamilton Estates; a 20 acre parcel adjoining Hamilton Estates and several small parcels on Bridge St. and an 8 acre site near the east end of Seventh St. Extension. By far the largest piece of land available, one which would have a major beneficial effect on Lafayette, is the industrial site which sits north of our current sewer plant

COUNCIL MEETINGS

A few changes have been made in the running of our meetings with the residents in mind. We have changed the "citizen input" section to the beginning of the agenda rather than at the end. Many people who have something to say to Council do not want to wait 2 hours for their 5 minute input. Meetings now start at 6:30 and we try to meet a deadline of not going beyond 9pm. There are now complaint forms available at the front counter of city hall which come directly to council. We always look for new faces at council meetings, and we hope these changes will make it easier for you to attend.

In addition, we plan to hold town hall meetings on a regular basis and to continue with our monthly newsletter. They will be shorter than this one which has tried to account for our work since March! The Council wants to keep you apprised of what we feel to be the important issues we are working on for you.

Sincerely,

Bob Cullen

Gary Filpi

Lotis Hanks

Joe Geisbers

Richard Jewell

Marianne Mitchell

Ron Ross