

CITY OF MISSOURI VALLEY  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY HALL  
THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2023  
6:00 P.M.

Mayor Pro-Tem Struble presided over the meeting and called it to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following Council Members present: Stueve, Swanson-Keizer, Tuttle, and Taylor. Mayor Kelly was absent. Citizens attending were Richard Gochenour and Christi Gochenour.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion to approve Agenda for June 29, 2023, made by Taylor, second by Stueve. Motion passes.

The City Council met with the DOT and USACE regarding the Highway 30 Bypass/Willow Creek Levee Project.

In a letter from Union Pacific Railroad, they explained how they cannot have any interference with train traffic. The track that runs through the City is a major run from West Coast to East Coast. They need to have control of those tracks. They also stated that they “reserve the right to raise the tracks in case of a flood” just like they did in 2019. They want the City to pay to have the tracks go over the top of the Levee system.

Many questions were asked. “How important is all this?” “What is our plan?” “Can we afford it?” “What should we go after and get done?” “What do we need to say, sorry we can’t do it?”

The Corp explained how surprised they were when they received the letter from Union Pacific. He was thinking it would go in the City’s favor. They stated that they don’t even know if it is possible to raise the tracks with all the Rail Road infrastructure in the City.

Cost estimates were discussed. The West Crossing will be roughly \$8.5 million and to raise the tracks it would be roughly \$10.3 million. The East Crossing will be more challenging roughly costing \$5 million, and raising the tracks \$9.6 million. These costs do not include the re-design of the highway and bridges. This also does not include the Boyer Crossing. The total cost is roughly about 61 million.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the bypass. The Willow Levee and the Bypass Levee come as a package deal. It was recommended that when the bypass is built, they use clay material. If somewhere down the line the City wants to pursue the Levee, the highway would have done its part to provide a little protection. If we decide to wait on the Levee, another culvert would need to be added. The Corp advocates for the continuation of the Bypass, and the use of the clay material on the roadbed.

Regarding Project 205: Greg Johnson with the USACE stated the draft report is out to another Corp district doing a technical review on that right now. Our intent is to address the comments that come through that review process and then put it out for public review. Right now, the total project cost of that is about \$16.2 million. Normal costs are 65/35; the federal limit is \$10 million, so it’s going to be more like a 61/39 proportion. That’s if we could go ahead with the

plan that we have. The economic benefit-to-cost ratio of the project is 7.5 to 1. The economic benefits of it are vastly higher than the economic investment cost. If the Highway 30 Bypass Project doesn't include a gate on the south track crossing, we would have to relook at how much residual flooding is going to come back through that when Willow Creek is high because our levee doesn't really tie off to anything. That gate is pretty important. We could run that analysis. We just weren't scoped to analyze it that way. My gut tells me it would still provide a decent amount of flood protection, maybe just the south side of town would still be at risk. We definitely could look at that. In terms of other options, if we don't do a levee, we could do non-structural floodproofing of properties which would basically be elevating them in place or floodproofing businesses. That didn't pan out economically the first time we looked at it, but we could take another look. Every other option we've looked at costs about the same. The benefits might still be high enough to justify it, but the costs are going to be well over \$20 million for any of those alternatives. The bottom line is, I'm pretty disappointed in the railroad. The gates that we're proposing, we have worked with them to use those gates in other places, like Cedar Rapids. We have a gate on this exact same track in Denison.

The Right of Way project is scheduled for Fiscal Year 2026. Grading and Bridge is scheduled for Fiscal Year 2027. Mid to Late Fall is the goal to have enough plans done to begin the Right of Way Acquisition Process. Its programmed \$10 million is for Highway and \$100 million is for Bridges and Grading.

Discussion was had on de-coupling the Highway Project from the Levee Project, which removes a lot of risks from our schedule and to our program. If the City decided it is not feasible to raise the tracks on the Willow to close structures, we would not be able to move forward with the closing structures on the Bypass.

If the City is to move forward with the Bypass, what will the City have to come up with to contribute to the Bypass without the Levee? Follow-up will occur with additional financial details.

Discussion was held on putting the Levee on hold until after the Bypass gets put in. The Council would like to finish the study so that when they want to put in the Levee, they do not have to start it all over. They will finish the report, put it out for public review, and then host a Public meeting in the middle of August.

A unanimous decision was made by Council to move forward with the Bypass with future plans for the Levee. No closure structures at this time, but will be discussed in the future with the Levee.

Motion to adjourn made by Taylor, second by Keizer. Motion passes.

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Sherman Struble, Mayor Pro-Tem

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Turri Colglazier, City Administrator