

**CITY OF EAGLE LAKE
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

- Mayor Auringer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

- Council Members present: Garrett Steinberg, Beth Rohrich, Anthony White, John Whittington, and Mayor Tim Auringer.
- Staff present: City Administrator Jennifer Bromeland, Police Chief John Kopp, Public Works Director Brian Goettl, and Deputy Clerk Kerry Rausch.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Letter from the MN Department of Health for Manganese at Well Nos. 2 and 3
 - Administrator Bromeland explained that the City received a request from MDH Drinking Water Protection on October 25, 2021, asking permission to collect water samples for manganese from each water supply entry in the water system. To learn more about our drinking water and to better protect public health, we consented to samples being collected. According to MDH, the average level of manganese at each sample location exceeds the Health Based-Value (HBV) in the drinking water supply. MDH recommends that the City notify its water customers as soon as possible about manganese in the drinking water supply. In the Council packet is the mailer that is to be sent to all customers. MDH also recommends that the City take action to reduce exposure to manganese to below the HBV in the drinking water supply.
 - Administrator Bromeland explained that manganese in the water supply is not new. It occurs naturally in rocks and soil and is usually present in Minnesota's ground and surface waters. This is not a new change in water quality, but it is not being recognized as a potential health concern. According to a phone call with an MDH representative, to date, some seventy (70) health risk advisory letters like the one Eagle Lake received have been sent to MN drinking water systems for this most recent study. There are around 1,000 community public water systems in MN.
 - Administrator Bromeland participated in a remote meeting today with Legislators to talk about the possibility of requesting an appropriation from the current bonding bill to make the necessary improvements to Eagle Lake's water treatment system to address high levels of manganese in the drinking water supply. In speaking with Senator Frenz and Representative Frederick, they indicated their supportiveness to help Eagle Lake in this regard. They stated Eagle Lake needs to provide them with more information and to include information which will make Eagle Lake stand out from other requests. They indicated their willingness to draft legislation for Eagle Lake to be included in the bonding bill.
 - The timing of such a request is good since there are funding sources available.
 - Also explained was that the public works department is in the process of coordinating random samples being collected from residences in the community to send to UB Laboratory in Janesville. Random sampling may help provide an indication of manganese levels at different locations in the community. If residents wish to test their water through UC Laboratory, test kits are available through UC Laboratory for approximately \$50 per kit. Another option is for the City to consider purchasing a handheld testing device to test manganese in drinking water when requested. City staff will need to research cost associated with obtaining a testing device and bring back pricing at an upcoming meeting if that is an avenue the City would like to explore further. MDH materials state that cities have no requirement to private testing, and that testing could be left to property owners.

- John Graupman with Bolton and Menk stated that a handheld device would provide an unofficial reading and that results would be available in approximately three minutes. These results would be fairly close to lab testing. He explained that the original samples were obtained from the point of entry into the water system and that water which goes through a properly functioning water softener will reduce the manganese level to close to zero and that additional home filtering systems would reduce it even more. It was also explained that manganese has always been at this level in the Eagle Lake water system, and that it is now something that the EPA has studied and found there are health concerns. He also stated that the current acceptable level set by MDH could change in the future. If the City is interested in purchasing a handheld device, one company he suggested looking at is Hach Co. This would allow the city to test for other items such as iron, fluoride, hardness, and nitrates. If the City proceeds with a filtration system a handheld device would be used and would be a wise investment.
- Mr. Graupman also explained that the levels of 100 for infants and 300 for adults is a lifetime exposure. For infants this is classified as the first year of life.
- Council discussion included that some manganese is needed in our bodies. A short-term option for residents would be to ensure the drinking water flows through a water softener as a treatment option. Discussion also included pros and cons to purchasing a handheld device for testing.

2. Planning for Water Treatment Plant and Next Steps

- Administrator Bromeland explained that a water treatment study was undertaken in 2020 to provide information needed to establish priorities, plan, fund, and implement required future water system improvements necessary to address water quality, color and odor concerns. A proposal was submitted to the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Program with the MN Department of Health and Public Facilities Authority for placement on the 2022 Intended Use Plan.
- Mr. Graupman explained that for the City to be best situated for funding the project needs to be shovel ready; meaning that a site needs to be identified with either a purchase order or right of first refusal in place and that project plans need to be drawn. Minnesota has a moratorium on new wells in the Mt. Simon aquifer, which means that new wells cannot be drilled in that aquifer. Five (5) acres of land would be ideal for a water treatment facility, but a minimum of two (2) would be needed. Under 5 acres may require construction easements to be obtained. He also stated that it would be recommended for Eagle Lake to have some capacity for water store on site at the treatment facility. Location of land is recommended to be in relative close proximity to existing wells as a cost saving measure relating to connectivity. When asked, he stated once the plant is constructed, there would be little noise, and that the green space on the site could be used for other purposes one of which could be parkland. The estimated population capacity for the existing water tower is 4,000 people.
- Council discussion included the importance of looking to the future needs of the city which included, but not limited to, the need of an additional water tower and its location as the community grows, additional parkland desires, planning for a possible water campus and new wells.
- Next steps include locating land, start well study with test boring, and look to start plan design within six months with final plans ready in March 2023, and close on land purchase when state legislature approves project.
- Mr. Graupman recommended that when project pricing is being finalized to estimate costs on the high side to ensure adequate funding is obtained. The project can be broken into phases, with phase one being a planning grant and phase two a construction grant. These two phases can be combined or kept separate. The legislature likes to see funding requests which include a local government match. It is estimated that the planning portion of this project could cost \$500,000 for the full design.
- Council consensus was to leave residential testing for manganese up to individual property owners. Staff will check to see if test kits can be obtained for residential use or if they will need to work with UC Laboratories directly.

- Council established a land acquisition committee comprised of Council Members White and Steinberg and Administrator Bromeland. Council asked that the committee consider opportunities for additional land for the park system.

ADJOURN

- Council Member Steinberg moved, seconded by Council Member White, to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Auringer voting in favor.

Tim Auringer, Mayor

Kerry Rausch, Deputy Clerk