



Working In Scandia

Construction crews laid new concrete in downtown Scandia last week, east of TAG’s Restaurant. The project is being done in conjunction with community redevelopment efforts.

-Telescope Photo by Fred Arnold

Concerns At Power Plant Lead Officials To Seek Five-Year Plan

By Fred Arnold
Telescope Publisher

Belleville City Council President Mike Palmquist said it sounds “like a hammering noise.” But Belleville Power Plant operator John McChesney assured him “it was noise coming from an engine manifold.”

But whatever “it” is, a noise coming from Engine #6 at the Belleville Power Plant sparked discussion at a city planning meeting Monday night. Belleville’s plant has been put on line and is providing 100% of the power used by the city following a weekend storm to took down lines and poles in Nebraska. The system, owned by Nebraska Public Power District, the power provider for Belleville, is not projected to be repaired until late this week.

In the meantime Engines #5, #6 and #8 have been providing up to 4 MW for the community.

But, according to Palmquist, “something just doesn’t sound right with #6,” despite McChesney’s assessment.

“I’m not a diesel mechanic, but I know when something doesn’t sound right,” he told the Telescope. “I called Steve Payne (from Industrial Engines, the company doing the new engine install), and he agreed that something doesn’t sound right, but that he would have to do a site inspection to tell.” The plant has since been operating using Engines #5 and #8 primarily. Payne is currently working out of state on another project and is not scheduled to be in Belleville anytime soon.

On Monday, the council discussed that two of the three engines used to power the community have nearly 200,000 running hours on them. Earlier this summer, Engine #7 was put out of commission. This has sparked what city leaders have called a need for at least a five-year capital improvement plan.

Currently, the municipality is working to install Engine #9 and have a preliminary agreement for a #10 but

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Adam Anderson
-Belleville City Manager

the council agreed that losing any of the other two, older engines, would still put the City behind the 8-ball.

“Yes, we have one and probably two engines coming in,” Palmquist said. “And we would be fine with that, but that’s assuming we didn’t lose either of our older units.”

“If one of those other engines goes down, what are we going to do? We need to be prepared for what might happen,” the councilman added.

Preliminary discussions took place about the possibility of adding one or two more smaller units to supplement more power needs. No action was taken.

New Contract Approved

During the regular portion of Monday’s meeting, council members unanimously approved new contract rates with NPPD. The City has been in negotiations with the Nebraska utility, for higher rates, to supply power to the grid.

Based on 10MW of generating capacity, Belleville will be paid \$648,000 annually. This is up from the current \$434,000 annual contracted rate. The agreement runs over a period of 35 years. City Administrator Adam Anderson said there are out clauses if either side decides to go “in another direction.”

As power and the ability to generate becomes more important, council members re-iterated that having a local power plant is a tremendous financial asset to the community

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Thinking About Wastewater

Council Mulls Fixing Current System Vs Going To Lagoon

By Fred Arnold
Telescope Publisher

The City of Belleville isn’t ready to make a decision just yet. But members of the local city council heard a report Monday that the current wastewater facility is likely ending its life expectancy.

Belleville City Manager Adam Anderson said his office has been accepting a RFQ from engineering firms Schwab-Eaton and JEO. Anderson said the request really isn’t as much about what sort of a project can be done or an associated cost.

At least, not yet.

He said, right now, the City was looking at which

The City has worked with Schwab-Eaton previously. Most recently on the new water treatment plant.

In an unrelated story, this week’s edition of the Telescope carries a front page story on alleged cost overruns associated with a Schwab-Eaton project at Republic County Jr.-Sr. High School in Belleville, that members of the local board of education are demanding answers to.

As for any upgrade to the City’s wastewater system, City Clerk Russ Piroutek provided information noting the current facility is over 20 years old and was constructed at a cost of approximately \$1.64 million. Councilman

“ I still have a bitter taste about the overruns associated with the water treatment plant built for Belleville.”

Mike Palmquist
-Belleville City Councilman

engineering firm might be better suited to look at a possible project.

“Schwab Eaton is more regional,” Anderson said. “They have around 60 employees in four offices. JEO has 400 employees in 15 offices.” Anderson said they are located primarily in Nebraska. Neither company submitted any cost estimates.

But for at least one member of the local city council, the spectre of using Schwab-Eaton raises questions.

Mike Palmquist said he still has a bitter taste in his mouth concerning cost estimate overruns associated with the water treatment facility built north of Belleville.

“Yes, they are a local company,” Palmquist said. “But I remember that kid standing in front of us telling us it (the nitrate plant) wasn’t going to cost us much more, and it went from a \$3 million, to a \$4 million, then \$5 million project.”

Palmquist, who has experience building wastewater facilities, said, “I wouldn’t be surprised if that same plant wouldn’t cost over \$10 million today.”

Water from the current plant is used, in treated form, to irrigate the Belleville Country Club. Club officials have contacted the City concerning a sludge-like film that has been left on the golf course.

The Belleville city manager said the foam-like residue is likely a result of the country club’s pond not being deep enough, with irrigated water coming from the top and not being re-circulated through the golf course pond.

“There really isn’t anything wrong with the water we send them,” Adam Anderson said. “They may have to dredge their pond a little deeper.”

Council members did not address whether any new or upgraded pond would provide water to the golf course.

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Please drop off, mail, or email your recipes by **Friday, October 31st at 5 p.m**

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