

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
June 15, 2026
City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Steve King, Council Members Laura Helle, Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Michael Postma and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Council Member Jason Baskin and Oballa Oballa

STAFF PRESENT: Public Works Director Steven Lang, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Parks, Recreation, & Forestry Director Jason Sehon, Library Director Julie Clinefelter, Finance Director Emily Burns, Human Resource Director Trish Wiechmann, and City Clerk Brianne Wolf

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald

Mayor Steve King opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Item #1– WWTP Expansion & Phosphorus Reduction Project, Activated Sludge Blower Update – Steven Lang

Public Works Director Steven Lang gave an update to Council on the Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion & Phosphorus Reduction Project, Activated Sludge Blower. Mr. Lang stated the activated sludge system is a major part of the wastewater treatment facility project, representing roughly one-third of the total project cost, and the City has been working through several significant startup and operational issues over the past 14 months. These issues include air system movement during startup, excessive blower noise, gasket failures, high operating temperatures, variable frequency drive concerns, bearing failures, and possible electrical or harmonic issues. A noise consultant found sound levels inside the blower building at approximately 110 decibels and identified potential sound-reduction options, including pipe wrapping, a silencer, and pipe modifications, at an estimated cost of about \$200,000. However, that work has not been authorized because they want to determine the root cause of the noise and equipment failures before spending money to simply reduce or mask the sound.

To better understand the problem, engineering, the consultants, the contractor, and manufacturers have been troubleshooting the blower and air system, including electrical monitoring and equipment inspections. Staff believe vibration or harmonic issues from the blowers may be contributing to the noise, heat, and premature equipment failures. The next proposed step is to have Mechanical Solutions, a New York-based diagnostic firm, evaluate the system using

specialized equipment to monitor vibration and system performance. The contractor has agreed to move forward with the approximately \$50,000 diagnostic proposal, which is expected to take about four to six weeks to complete, including onsite review and a written report. Staff are seeking Council's support to continue this approach so they can identify the root cause, determine whether the existing blowers can be corrected, and decide whether a different long-term solution may be necessary.

Item #2 – Open Discussion

None

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Helle, to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brianne D. Wolf, City Clerk