

**TOWN OF SOUTH PRAIRIE
RECESSED COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2013, 7:00 PM
South Prairie Town Hall
121 NW Washington Street**

The following is a condensation of the proceedings and is not a verbatim transcript.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Peggy Levesque called to order and presided over the Recessed Council Meeting of Tuesday, May 28, 2013, at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL:

Council Members: Jim Frank, Laura Heideman and Stu Terry were present. Tony Caldwell and Phil Marshall were absent.

EXCUSE COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENCES:

- ❖ **Councilor Laura Heideman** moved to excuse Council Members Tony Caldwell and Phillip Marshall from the Recessed Council Meeting of May 28, 2013. **Councilor Stu Terry** seconded the motion. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Also in attendance: Betty Vance, Valley Water District; James Morgan, Town Engineer; Brenda Harter, citizen; Larry Harter, Utility Operator; Judy Tremblay, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer and Marla Nevill, Town Clerk/Treasurer.

FLAG SALUTE:

Mayor Peggy Levesque requested everyone stand for the “Pledge of Allegiance.”

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR MAY 28, 2013:

- ❖ **Councilor Stu Terry** moved to approve the Agenda for May 28, 2013. **Councilor Laura Heideman** seconded the motion. No amendments to the Agenda were requested. **Motion carried unanimously.**

WORKSHOP:

1) Betty Vance – Valley Water District:

Betty Vance, Valley Water District, met with the Mayor and South Prairie Town Council to address any questions or concerns regarding possible transfer of the South Prairie Water and Sewer Utilities to Valley Water District.

Betty Vance said everything is checking out; but they are waiting for a response from Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE). Valley Water District is concerned about the permitting. She said the District needs to know what demands WDOE would have on the permitting. Citizens are concerned about the rates; but the rates seem to be sufficient for now. If regulations change, the rates might change. We are waiting for an answer from WDOE. If we went into the process of making any improvements, it would take three to five years just to do a study. **Larry Harter** said WDOE might change the requirements if they change the permit. **Mayor Peggy Levesque** said the Town attorney initially thought it would have to be a purchase; but now they’re saying that is not the case. **Betty Vance** said our Board wants to feel better about taking on the sewer aspect. That’s really their only concern. This issue is on the agenda for

Valley Water District's meeting on June 18, 2013. Discussion followed. **Betty Vance** said the sewer is new to us, so we are a little apprehensive. **James Morgan** talked about other systems that Valley Water District had acquired. **Councilor Jim Frank** asked if there were any roadblocks on the Water System. **James Morgan** said we do not have any issues with the upper well; but we have arsenic issues in the lower well. He said that well is currently off-line. Valley Water District has already dealt with this issue with other systems. **Betty Vance** said we would assess current and future needs for the systems. Just to do an assessment would take two to five years. She said their first concern is that we follow the law and policies. Our second concern is what is best for the rate payers. We would need a letter from WDOE stating they would work with us. **Councilor Jim Frank** said you should have an answer before our July Council meeting. He said the Council also has concerns about our employee. **Betty Vance** said we would definitely make him an offer; then it's up to him. Discussion followed. **Mayor Peggy Levesque** said it is her understanding that the boundaries would not be the same as the Town boundaries. **Betty Vance** said no, it would be the service area. **James Morgan** said 60% of the property owners would have to petition to annex into Valley Water District. **Judy Tremblay** asked if that would have to be done first. **James Morgan** said the transfer would take place first. **Betty Vance** said the transfer does not have to go to a vote by the Town's people. **Judy Tremblay** said so it could just be handled in-house. **James Morgan** suggested possibly setting a Public Hearing for the July Council meeting. **Mayor Peggy Levesque** said we'll bring this up at the June Council meeting for a Public Hearing at the July Council meeting. Discussion followed. **Betty Vance** said Valley Water District has Board meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Just call our office to be on the agenda. **James Morgan** said one of the positives is that they have a larger field staff. Right now, your Utility Operator is on-call 7 days a week, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. **Betty Vance** said our staff would have to train with Larry and go through classes to get certifications. Discussion followed. **Betty Vance** said they currently only increase rates 3% a year. **James Morgan** said that might be a benefit to your citizens. He said one of the disadvantages is there would be no local office to file concerns or complaints. **Councilor Stu Terry** asked how they handle locates. **Betty Vance** said the requests would be emailed to their office. **Councilor Jim Frank** asked if Valley Water District has any programs for seniors or low-income families. **Betty Vance** said we do not have any programs at this time. We're working through different organizations; and we ask our rate payers if they would like to donate to this fund. She said we should have something in place by January 2014. **James Morgan** said there are State regulations you must meet to qualify under the financially disadvantaged guidelines. **Judy Tremblay** asked questions about the rates. **Betty Vance** said there would not be an acquisition charge; but if we have to build a new wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), it would be like a pool. Discussion followed. **James Morgan** said we have to take into consideration the life expectancy of pipes, pumps, etc. **Councilor Stu Terry** said the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) might never go away. So, the CIP charge could go well over the 3% increase; and once we get into Valley Water District that CIP would never go away. Discussion followed. **Mayor Peggy Levesque** said Valley Water District knows their stuff. **Betty Vance** said Valley Water District just wants assurance from WDOE that they're not going to have to build a new WWTP as soon as possible. We're looking at three to five years for the study and the design. **Councilor Jim Frank** said we all have to share the burden; and we might have the benefit of the pool. **James Morgan** said everyone benefits. **Mayor Peggy Levesque** said another benefit is Valley Water District covers the Hazard Mitigation Plan updates for Water and Sewer. **Betty Vance** said it would be added to Valley Water District telemetry. In response to a question about call-outs, **James Morgan** said Valley Water District has technology in place that would monitor the system and either call-out the operator or reset the system. **Betty Vance** said we have to have the letter from WDOE. It might be helpful for someone from the Town to come to the Valley Water District Board meeting on June 18, 2013. **Mayor Peggy Levesque** asked

Larry Harter if he would like to attend that meeting. **Larry Harter** said he would attend the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

- ❖ At 8:32 PM, **Councilor Laura Heideman** moved to adjourn the Recessed Council Meeting of May 28, 2013. **Councilor Stu Terry** seconded the motion. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Date Approved: June 4, 2013