

## Item 23-0140: Wastewater Plant Update

### Common Council

Wed, Feb 15, 2023 7:00PM

#### Mayor Jake Woodford 12:51

Alright, next, I will move on to an update on the wastewater plant. We shared an update with the Council and with the community at—early in 2023. And just as a reminder, we had an issue at the wastewater plant that began on December 26. A processing chemical, a polymer product, was introduced in the plant, the wrong part of the plant, and it interrupted operations at the wastewater plant.

#### Mayor Jake Woodford 13:27

As of January 23, all normal operations have been restored at the wastewater plant. There was no point where wastewater services to connected customers was interrupted. No untreated material and no treatment chemicals were released into the environment and there were no injuries as a result of the incident.

#### Mayor Jake Woodford 13:48

We still have some remediation to deal with, namely with contaminated polymer product that was isolated and will need to be properly disposed of, and Director Shaw and his team are working on the process for disposal of that polymer product. There will also be some remediation and repair of some building systems impacted during the incident. But as I stated earlier, as of the 23rd of January, normal plant operations had been restored.

#### Mayor Jake Woodford 14:17

Throughout the incident, we met our permit requirements for effluent and biosolids land application. In other words, we were within the allowable parameters throughout the course of the event in terms of the byproducts of the treatment process, which is good news.

#### Mayor Jake Woodford 14:32

An internal factfinding team was assembled shortly after the start of the incident, and their task was to assess root causes and to assist in understanding what was happening and what caused the incident. And we're engaging a third-party reviewer to review the work of that internal fact finding team—an external review of the work of the fact finding team. Risk management's also been in contact with our insurance carriers about the incident and ongoing—and the analysis of that is ongoing.

#### Mayor Jake Woodford 15:06

We've maintained detailed accounts throughout that incident and Director Shaw will be providing updates on expenses and other remediation activities at upcoming Utilities Committee meetings. We will have a Utilities Committee meeting on March 7. The next one will be an option given the primary election. So, there will be a meeting on March 7, and Director Shaw will be giving updates at that time.

#### Mayor Jake Woodford 15:34

So just want to give a few quick updates at the request of the Council. And if there are any questions from the alders, I'd be happy to take a few now. Alder Hartzheim.

#### Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 15:46

Thank you, Chair. Will Director Shaw be able to assess and provide us information regarding the extra heat expense to the city due to the lack of not being able to recycle that...

**Mayor Jake Woodford** 15:58

Yes.

**Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13)** 16:00

...exhaust?

**Mayor Jake Woodford** 16:00

Yes, yes. Director Shaw will be able to give an update on the natural gas expenses as a result, as well as the other expenses associated with the response and remediation.

**Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13)** 16:11

Thank you

**Mayor Jake Woodford** 16:12

Other questions? I will just take this opportunity to say, while this was an unfortunate incident certainly, I just want to applaud the work of Director Shaw and his team for their dedicated response to this issue. His team put in many, many long hours in the immediate aftermath and at a time when many of them were planning to be away on vacation because this happened that week between Christmas and New Year's, and in the weeks thereafter his team has really risen to the occasion. And they've helped us avoid a much more serious issue as a result of their quick actions and their focused response. So, I just want to take this opportunity to thank Director Shaw and his team for the work.

**Mayor Jake Woodford** 17:03

Still more work to be done as we continue to understand the incident and also to take steps to make sure that things like that don't happen again at our facility. But just want to make sure we keep the Council updated at every step of that process. So happy to provide more information at your request. Otherwise, Utilities Committee on March 7 there will be an update provided, and we'll keep providing updates at committee until the issue is fully resolved.