**City Administrators Report**

**March 4, 2013**

**Streets**

This year we have identified several streets that need attention. Most of the streets in town are in very poor condition. There are some that with a few sections repaired and then chip sealed would save the street. There are also a few things that Corky and I have discussed that need to be addressed. After last year’s chipping of Mineral Ave. and other short sections of streets, we have noticed a large amount of chips that are coming up. This could be a result of the oil or more likely the roller that came along after the chips were laid.

Another huge disappointment was the binder (enzyme) and the Reclamite that we tested on a few blocks. Both these streets did not hold up and will have to be done over. Again we are not sure if it was the direct result of the binding product or the roller. If you remember we used the enzyme to bind the street in front of the fire hall. For the most part, this street has held up fairly well. There are some issues along the edges and on a seam where they overlap with the chipping did not take, but again over all it has held up pretty well.

This year we’re looking into using Portland cement. The biggest problem is how to apply this product to the street before using the Zipper. Corky has an idea of having a removable attachment for the bottom of our street sander. If this works we plan on redoing the section on Main and also the section on Balsam. I have also contacted a few counties that use the Portland cement and they will be sending me information on how they apply the material.

Along with the streets the plan is to do a lot of alley work as well. The Zipper works well in the alleys and we can do them fairly fast.

WWTP Update

Last month after staff from M&M looked over the Waste water treatment plant, they recommended a few changes to the operators. The most significant change was to the aeration that is applied into the grit chamber. As you may recall one of the plants major problems is grit in the system. Grit comes into the plant from the distribution system during high water events from rain and snow and also when the river level is up.

By reducing air flow into the grit chamber this has reduced the amount of grit that is suspended and then transferred through the aeration ditch and then to the clarifiers. Once it reaches the clarifiers it is pumped to the digester and then to the screw press. This is where we have our problem with the Volgelsang pump.

The large amount of grit running through the pump increases wear on the internal parts and the pump begins to lose pressure and does not operate efficiently. Travis Meyer with M&M has been in contact with Volgelsang and they have agreed to replace all the parts on the pump with new and hardened steel to handle the grit problem. They are still working out the details on the warranty, but once that is settled they will be here to replace the part in the pump. The new parts should be installed by mid March

Water Operator of the Year

Every year Montana Rural Water gives out an award for Water Operator of the Year. Jeff Haugen was chosen this year for the award. Jeff received a large plaque in the mail as he was not able to attend the awards banquet.

When you see Jeff, be sure to congratulate him on his achievement and let him know how proud we are to have great dedicated people like him and the rest our employees working for the City of Libby.

Around the City

The new heating system has been installed at Old City Hall. Frank Sweedman, of Formula Fabrication, finished installing the ducting and units a few weeks back. Ron Miller from Strom Electric, has most of the electrical finished and now we are waiting for Flathead Electric to change out the transformers and put a pole in the ally next to the fire hall. Flathead hopes to do the change over on the 5th of March. Once this is completed Ron will be able to make the change and start the new system.

With the weather being mild to this point, street crews have been able to catch up on some needed repair to equipment. Three dump trucks had their boxes repaired and painted along with other repairs to them. The 310 excavator had a swivel replaced. The damaged swivel was causing one of the traction motors to stop working. The old roller we acquired from the county had new seals and a hydraulic motor replaced in one of the drums. This machine will really come in handy as we do more alley and street work.

Mike Fraser has been working with Jeff Haugen at the water treatment plant on the problem with the turbidity at the plant. After some more research it appears that the problem is related to the valves not working properly and letting material back in to the system, and the alum feeding pump. Jeff has compiled a list of the valves that need replaced and Mike was in contact with the Bray company who makes the valves. A total change out of all the valves would cost over $70,000 (See attached) and would require a bid process. Mike had Jeff list only the ones that are not working at all. The total replacement for the non working valves is $32,100. The rest of the valves are holding their own but they are all starting to fail. Once we get the non working valves replaced, we can replace the others as we need to.

As you may recall, last year we had to replace the large air compressor and the air dryer that runs all the valves in the plant. There are 36 valves that are operated by air. The valves are controlled through a software program on the computer in the control room. The plant operators think when the air dryer quit working years ago, that water (condensation) in the lines has caused corrosion in the valves and it is just a matter of time before they will all have to be replaced. After spending time with the operators, Mike and the crew are confident that the valves being replaced and the work they have completed on the chemical feed system will get the plant back in compliance with DEQ. We have had 3 straight months of elevated levels of turbidity in the water that has resulted in letter from DEQ that we are exceeding our permit limits.

I stay in contact with DEQ and let them know of our progress and efforts in resolving this problem.

Jim Hammons